

## 2014 Kellerman Lecture for Victoria

# RE-THINKING THE ORIGINS OF MODERN FREEMASONRY

*Murray Treseder*

### Introduction

To many of the members of Lodges of Research, wherever situated, it has been a veritable Holy Grail of Masonic research the dream of a supportable, cogent account of the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 and a comprehensive and realistic explanation of the events which transformed this new organization into what it later became, and how its format still exists to a large extent even to this day. Realistically it has long been realized that there will never be a totally provable explanation, but Freemasons have hoped that an explanation based on fact, or at least on clearly supportable conjecture would one day evolve. Ever so slowly this dream has been materializing assisted by a developing hypothesis which effectively accounts for all of the events and happenings that occurred at the time of Grand Lodge's foundation, and which has not been proved to be definitively wrong by any new subsequently forthcoming information.

Lawrence sums up this position rather appositely. “ *An important element of such an approach involves the need to show that all the data supports that hypothesis and that there are no glaring anomalies suggesting it to be false.* ” P. 407

It is my belief that over the last couple of years this dream has taken substantial steps towards realization. Two books, both of which have been recently published, deal with more or less the same major topic - namely the origins of Freemasonry, with particular emphasis to the events of 1717 and the immediate few years that followed, during which time period Freemasonry as it is now known and presently understood developed and expanded. Because the two books have very much in common, having been extensively researched in the most thorough investigative manner and each contain quite detailed analysis of new and revealing information covering, as they do, almost exactly the same territory, I have analysed them together on a quite specific basis. However there are also some areas where they have some substantial variances of interpretation and in some cases quite profound divergence of opinion and even disagreement as to the weight given to happenings and the influence of important personalities of the particular time. These variations of weighting of evidence are not however mutually exclusive or go in any way to weakening the basic hypothesis.

The two books are : -

“ *The Foundations of Modern Freemasonry - The Grand Architects. Political Change and the Scientific Enlightenment 1714 – 1740* ”: Ric A. Bergman. ( Sussex Academic Press 2012 ) This book has its foundations in, and is an extended form of a PhD thesis at the University of Exeter submitted in 2010.

and : -

“ *The Key to Modern Freemasonry - The Hidden Mysteries of Nature and Science:* ” Professor Charles C. Lawrence. ( Hamilton House 2011 )

This paper is an endeavour by me to further assemble the now available information and postulate an even clearer overall view of the initial development of the Premier Grand Lodge and its purpose of this paper is to concurrently analyse and consider the two books on a ‘ compare and contrast ‘ basis. To me this proved to be a fascinatingly interesting exercise, and in my view, the combined drawing together and even amalgamation of ideas and explanations as expressed in the two works takes us much nearer to understanding more precisely what may have actually happened over those vital three to five years, the formative period of the establishment of modern Freemasonry by the creation of the Premier Grand Lodge.

Most surprisingly it appears it is not impossible that in the period from the literal foundation in 1717 until about 1720 or 1721 nothing of any material importance actually occurred. This seems to be the clear view of Gould from his reading of Anderson's belated history of the time ( 1 ) and

can be strongly inferred from a very compelling contemporaneous comment from Stukeley's diary which Gould quotes with substantial weight. ( 2 ) Perhaps we have been worrying about what was happening Masonically during all of that period of time when, quite possibly the simple answer is nothing, except for an annual installation of a new Grand Master and perhaps most probably some behind the scenes activity to prepare for the founder's originally avowed aim, the installation of the first aristocratic Grand Master, in the person of the Duke of Montague. .

Although in a general historical sense, both authors cover very similar ground, they do so in a substantially different manner, with different specific detail examined and weighed and vastly different emphasis placed on various aspects of their research. Bergman goes into much more personal biographical detail of the characters involved in the actual changes that were occurring, systematically directly linking the main players by dates and specific connections of the combination of philosophical, political and intellectual interests, whereas Lawrence gives a much more philosophical exposition, outlining the how's, why's and wherefore's as to how all of the events and happenings came together and lead to the establishment of a strong, stable Premier Grand Lodge, a legacy which successfully carried on into the future, and basically still endures. In some ways this format is much more thought provoking, and on many criteria the outstanding chapters of Lawrence's book is his description of how, given the changing circumstances of personalities and ritual, the form of the entity and style of the meetings quite rapidly morphed into something quite different from what it had been pre 1717. pp. 165 – 171. and into a form which is to this day still readily recognized

### **The physical structures of the books**

The first thing that registered with me was not in the detailed contents of the two books, but rather in a physical comparison of them and how they were actually organized, constructed and put together

In a direct comparison of the two books one is immediately struck by the great disparity in the presentation and authorship of the two books. Lawrence covers the topic in about 350 pages of closely argued theoretical and practical application, written in intense close typescript which, with failing eyes, is not easy to read. On the other hand Bergman takes just over 200 pages of easily readable script in a writing style which although it is not nearly as intense nevertheless argues particular aspects of his theory much more cogently. Two other striking differences are provided by a comparison of the number of references provided with the works and the indexes. Bergman's references are voluminous, as would be expected from a doctoral thesis, running to almost 90 pages, whereas Lawrence confines himself to an infinitely smaller list, presented unfortunately in the diminutive AQS format which is a difficult to read style of script.

The other significant presentational contrast between the books is in their indexes. Despite the fact that Lawrence thinks his indexer Brent Morris “ *undertook the considerable task of indexing...for which he is particularly qualified.* ” the index of the over 450 page closely printed book, runs to less than six pages, and has repeated and manifest omissions, which could barely be considered in any way adequate, and in my view does not meet the bill or do justice to a major research work dealing with such intricate human, political, religious and Masonic matters. Many detailed references, to which frequent consultations are essential in order to absorb the detail of an intricate work such as this are not recorded. I realize that the compilation of a detailed index is tedious work, but with the repeated cross referencing of detail that is required to study such a fact filled book as this such an index which details names, places and dates would make for so much more enjoyable and satisfying usage. Bergman, on the other hand has compiled a most profusely detailed index which covers an intense amount of detail such as is necessarily required with the constant referral to people and events of interest with which these books abound. Such an index makes tracking characters a much simpler, straight forward task,

which to me is an essential requisite to being able to absorb the contextual detail with certainty and precision.

Another aspect which I immediately found quite striking and indeed fascinating on reading and studying the two books together and comparing them was that although authorship of both books was roughly contemporaneous and Bergman's university thesis had been presented well before Lawrence had published his lengthy work, in neither publication is there a single identifiable cross reference to each other's work. This is quite surprising particularly because of Lawrence being an academic himself his specific acknowledgement that: "*There are a number of universities that formally acknowledges Masonic studies, a major part of the output of which are the dissertations leading to higher degrees*" p 422. and firstly, this is exactly what Bergman's book - indeed his whole work - is all about and secondly, from the opposite viewpoint and even more surprisingly that Bergman makes no reference whatsoever to Lawrence's brilliant exposition of the likely happenings that occur at exactly the same time ( 3 ) and which was presented contemporaneously with the writing of his thesis. It seems to me as a non-sophisticated academic, that even a trifle more sharing of research and cross pollination of factual matters and ideas could well have lead to a more complete, and perhaps an even more authoritative re-analysis of the most interesting historical topic. ( But such Freemasonic co-operation on historical matters has never been a strong organization wide tradition. ) To me a possibly co-operative melding of aspects of their works could have given better balance and even more definitive and powerful all-compassing conclusions on the most vexing of all Masonic research subjects. I have to say that there appears to me to be many such illustrations of this lack of co-operation occurring in Masonic history writings.

### **Definitional differences**

Because there is a difference in the definition of and relating to the exact scope of their studies it is important that initially the position of each author is set out, which means that it is appropriate and indeed essential to here initially clarify some of the terms and general definitions used by Lawrence to describe groups who make up important sections of his book, and how these definitions vary from those that Bergman uses.

" The Founders " is a term Lawrence uses to describe the four men whom he says were responsible for the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 in the following terms as follows : "*...two appear to have had little or no bearing on that which was to follow* (presumably Anthony Sayer and the un-named fourth man who only rates a passing reference, and of whom he admits that he has no real inkling as to his identity.)

Conjecture over who the fourth man has been is raised not only by Lawrence but also as far back as 120 years ago by Gould, who postulates the proposition that the fourth Grand Master involved with the historical Grand Lodge would certainly have been Anderson (instead of George Payne – who from now on somehow regularly keeps re-appearing ) for a second term as Grand Master) but perhaps as Piatigorsky suggests this was because Anderson, who being a Scottish Mason, he was not a member of an *English* Lodge and therefore mercifully precluded from holding office.( 4 )

" *Sadly however there appears to be no actual ( specific ) information on the fourth member of this interesting group* ' at p. 185 *It will be argued that one of the remaining pair is recorded throughout as occupying a range of ostensibly important positions, only to find on closer analysis, he appears to have remained passive and ineffectual ;( George Payne presumably, who on more detailed analysis was not in fact passive and could never be said to be ineffectual - see other later comments ) whilst the fourth was to have a massive impact and literally engineered the ultimate structure of what we would now recognize as formalized Freemasonry ( undoubtedly Dr. John Desaguliers - a matter on which both authors strongly concur. )* " p xii.

Lawrence follows on by formulating what to me, at first appearance is a rather contrived special definition of the term ' Premier Grand Lodge ' He states that by his definition this term

is not referring to the definitive chronological version of the Premier Grand Lodge of 1717 as is most generally utilized as the accepted official inauguration of the body. He describes that period of its formation, i.e. June 1717, probably quite accurately as follows : -

*“ ..it appears to have started as a ‘ rather nice thing to do ’; namely to have a regularly ( quarterly) gathering of a group of the more significant lodge members to discuss matters of common interest of concern ....However, once under way and appearing to work quite well, it took on the trappings of a formally regulated ( constitutionally and initially styled as the “ Premier Grand Lodge ’ ) body “p. 165.*

But for the understandable purposes of the main tenor of his book he specifically prefers a quite substantial variation from that generally used by most writers on the foundations of Grand Lodge. He definitively states that: *“ the definition of the Premier Grand Lodge used throughout this study (which) refers to the body formed by the usurpation of the original Premier Grand Lodge.( June 1717) “ p, 169 and later “ This section is predicated on the proposition that formalized Freemasonry was in a state of flux until the pivotal election for Grand Master in 1723 “ p. xii*

The reasoning for Lawrence’s artificial starting date, early in 1721 is easily able to be supported by an examination of Masonic happenings from 1717 until late 1720. After the initial appointment and installation of Anthony Sayers in June 1717 nothing of any major moment occurred with the exception of the three installations, of Payne ( twice ) and Desaguliers until early in 1721. This situation is canvassed by many authors who all seem to indicate that this is not an improbable scenario : -

Bergman highlights this situation at p.121, using as a basis the number of instances when Freemasonry as such was mentioned or even alluded to in the press during the two separate and distinct periods, i.e. before 1721 and subsequently, after the appointment of the Duke of Montague as Grand Master in mid 1721

Lawrence throughout his writings is repeatedly critical and highly sceptical about anything Masonic happening during that period, hence his choice of the differing date as significant for his analysis of the historical event.

Gould, as long as 120 years ago, damns with faint praise, Sayer, Payne and Desaguliers activities during that specific period: ( see footnote ( 1 ) earlier )

Anderson in the history portion of his *1738 Constitution* when recording some of the history of that period he is conspicuously silent and therefore, as in many instances on crucial subjects, useless: and Stukeley’s diary ( a completely disconnected and external comment ) is powerful evidence of a complete lack of any significant Masonic activity during that period. ( see footnote ( 2 ) above )

Having regard to these various reason one could be forgiven for believing that Lawrence’s adoption of this apparently contrived date deliberately followed on from Gould’s thinly veiled proposition of nothing much really happening during that period. Lawrence is a strong supporter of Gould and has openly expressed his dissatisfaction that each and every time that Gould’s landmark work is revised and reprinted it has been done by a Mason seen to be strongly philosophically aligned with Grand Lodge’s view point on its historical foundations.

Hence the apparently random date selected was much more specifically contrived. ( There are many other neat intellectual subtleties throughout Lawrence’s work. )

However from early in 1721 events which were quite vital to the long term establishment of the Premier Grand Lodge did start occurring, beginning with the fulfilling of their stated intended long term goal of the installation of an aristocrat as Grand Master. But the critical time frame of the ongoing foundation of the Premier Grand Lodge is much more specifically definable. Both authors readily agreed that this date 24 June. 1723 as being the pivotal election which occurred at Grand Lodge. Previously the Grand Master the Duke of Wharton had waived his right to name his successor. The young Earl of Dalkeith was elected Grand Master and

proceeded to name Desaguliers as his Deputy Grand Master. Wharton insisted that a vote be taken to approve Dalkeith's nomination. The vote was declared in favour of the Grand Master by a single vote with Desaguliers acting as Grand Master *pro temp* in Dalkeith's absence voting in favour of the resolution

This point made by both of the authors is in essence, that this was exactly the crucial turning point in the future of the Premier Grand Lodge, although they do give different emphasis to external influences and the importance of critical Masonic identities leading up to that defining moment in modern Freemasonry. In a separate and detailed paper Lawrence canvases the likely possible future outcomes of this ballot. ( 5 )

### **Subjective differences between authors**

Structurally, in Lawrence's book there is a much heavier weighting, indeed a preponderance of references to the changes to the ritual which he alleges took place simultaneously with the organizational changes that occurred over the period which both books discuss, and the lasting significance of these changes. These refer to the shifts in emphasis to matters of nature and science which were advanced by the presentation of technical and scientific papers to lodge meetings, and which according to Lawrence were rapidly inculcated into the ritual. Since there is no parallel consideration by Bergman, and this is a specialist topic for Freemasons who know and understand the Holy Royal Arch (of which I am not one) I will not venture into this area, although many others may find Lawrence's thesis and explanations totally absorbing.

In direct contrast Bergman has taken a quite contrary attitude to this aspect of the history of the Foundations of Freemasonry about the time of 1717 and subsequently excludes them from his work. “ *A detailed examination of Masonic ritual and its spiritual and quasi-religious components has similarly been bypassed,* “Bergman p. 4.

The principal points of difference between the two can be expressed as Bergman placing great store on the influence of the Magistrates and Justices of the Peace ( one of his particular personal lines of research) which Lawrence does not mention to any extent and Bergman also gives George Payne much more prominence in the general running of Grand Lodge in its early years, about which Lawrence is quite dismissive. He makes nothing except the vaguest of references to the *1723 Constitution*, or of Payne's contribution to it, and indeed there is no index reference to them whatsoever, nor to other basic Masonic operational measures, such as his contribution to the appointment of an aristocrat Grand Master.

Lawrence makes nothing except but the vaguest of references to the *1723 Constitutions*, indeed there is no index reference to them whatsoever,

These basic differences in approach do not appear to have lead to any substantive disagreements; it simply means that in relation to these aspects to of their considerations their paths do not cross

### **The London Magistracy**

However Bergman, whilst covering much of the same ground as Lawrence on the organizational and personality changes that occurred during the early days of the new style Freemasonry and its early formative period places much greater emphasis on the influence of Freemasons in the Magistracy and as Justices of the Peace in and around London, especially in Westminster, Middlesex and Southwark, a facet not alluded to at all anywhere by Lawrence.

Bergman explains his proposition ; -

*“Freemasonry's association with the government and its supporters on the Westminster and Middlesex benches may have been typified by men such as Cowper, Blackerby and Chocke, (all close friends and acquaintances of Payne) but reached an apogee in Charles Delafaye..... a member of Richmond's Horn Tavern ( as were all of the above, plus Desaguliers ) ...his influence was far more significant..... Delafaye's presence reinforced Freemasonry's pro-Hanoverian public profile and provided confirmation to the*

*government that Freemasonry could and should be regarded as a politically steadfast and dependable organization“ p.77*

A matter of high priority amongst senior Freemasons of the period (1719-1723) including the newly joining aristocratic members was to promote and maintain close social, political and philosophical connections to the Hanoverian elite and the Whig supporters. The Hanoverian succession in 1714 and the Jacobite rising in 1715 were still of recent memory so at a time of lingering political and religious disharmony these trusted and reliable connections were paramount in the minds of Masonic leaders such as Desaguliers, Montague, Payne, Richmond and many others, and indeed were to remain so at least until Culloden in 1745. Some of the earlier Freemasons had been amongst the early magistrates appointed in the Hanoverian period. Before 1719 Payne and Delafaye were already senior magistrates and in the 1719 intake of Commissioners of the Peace a significant proportion were or later became Freemasons. In fact four of them became very senior Grand Lodge officers in addition to Payne who at the time was already the Grand Master. A large number of retirements and deaths of magistrates occurred in the four years to 1723 plus many others were excluded for political reasons largely to retain firm control over the political situation. In the three substantial batches of appointments of magistrates from 1719 onwards a sizeable proportion of the appointments were Freemasons, several being holders of Grand Rank of significant seniority. This is a time of great Masonic influence on the bench with prominent Freemasons such as Payne, Cowper, Delafaye and Chocke all at various times being Chairman of their particular bench, all of whom were pro-Hanoverian in their outlook and sympathies.

Payne and Delafaye had been first listed as Westminster justices as long ago as 1715. In the intakes of Justices of the Peace in 1719 and 1721, at the very time when the new premier Grand Lodge was about to, or was commencing to blossom, an amazing percentage of the appointments made were Freemasons, a high proportion of them from the Horn Lodge in Westminster. In 1719 the intake included Freemason members destined to become a Grand Master, two Deputy Grand Masters, a Grand Secretary and a Grand Treasurer. Bergman makes great play of listing the considerable inflow of Freemasons into the magisterial appointments, and ties them into definite patterns of behaviour which clearly lead to great respect from the normal populace and hence to the advancement of the Premier Grand Lodge in that important period of its initial development and expansion.

*“Given the explicit political remodeling of the bench that followed the Hanoverian succession, it is probable that the presence of so many Freemasons on the Westminster and Middlesex benches would have required as a minimum the acquiescence of the Whig government and, more probably its approval. In this context and in others, publicly averred magisterial support for the Craft provided a powerful judicial imprimatur, “ p. 76.*

This powerful influence of Freemasons on the Magistracy with their solid pro Hanoverian background, outlook and sympathies and the publicity which sprang from their decisions involving total loyalty to king and country were to rapidly become one of the strong influences upon the establishment and expansion of the Premier Grand Lodge

### **The importance of George Payne**

Lawrence tends to be somewhat dismissive of the influence of George Payne, relegating him to the status of being a mere Masonic functionary, whereas Bergman details his various positions of influence, and how they inter acted with the new establishment.

A greater acknowledgement and better treatment of the importance of George Payne in the overall scheme of things; especially his longer term, behind the scenes activities, would I believe have improved the balance of Lawrence's explanations of the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge, even under his slightly contrived definition. Personally I find it difficult to understand

how Lawrence, a man who clearly understands just how things ‘ happen , ’ does not recognize more fully the importance of George Payne

In contradistinction Bergman devotes considerable space, pp. 70 - 75 to dealing with Payne’s activities. On any reasonable view Payne, in addition to his wide array of close Masonic friends was largely instrumental in the assiduous establishment and development of the fledgling Premier Grand Lodge culminating in the powerful England wide organization into which it rapidly developed. Indeed according to Bergman, who expresses the view that Payne was: “ *one of Desaguliers’ closest Masonic collaborators*”. P. 70, a statement which because of Desaguliers pivotal role in the Premier Grand Lodge’s formation quite clearly indicates the importance that Bergman places on Payne’s place in the process of Freemasonic development : -

*“ In addition to Desaguliers, the more central players within Grand Lodge and London Freemasonry included George Payne, Martin Folkes and William Cooper alongside the lesser known Alexander Chocke, Nathaniel Blackerby, John Beale, George Carpenter and Charles Delafaye. All were linked via several overlapping political, social and professional networks.....Desaguliers, Payne and Folkes provided the three interlinked foundations for a range of Masonic alliances which were the principal vectors for change and influence over the next two decades. “p. 64 and that group was : - “at the helm of the Craft’s organizational transformation. “*

Bergman thus places considerably greater emphasis on the importance of George Payne in the total scheme of modern Freemasonry, whereas Lawrence dismisses him as being of slight significance

This downplaying of Payne’s contribution seems to me to be a major omission on his behalf because of the intimate and well established connection between these two very senior Freemasons and their great knowledge of, and influence over matters which occurred in the general operation of the new Premier Grand Lodge organization. Lawrence seems to place little emphasis on the extensive and close relationship between Desaguliers and Payne covering an extended period including considerable connections well before events of 1717 and certainly subsequent to that date the, in which they were both inextricably involved

It is a matter of interest that during the period when they both held the position of Grand Master little of any significance Masonically happened except their installations. This may well overlook the possible exception that they were working away quietly preparing the ground for the long awaited installation of an aristocratic Grand Master. It was he who finally announced that he proposed Montague as his successor as Grand Master on 25 March 1721 p. 125 and it was at his Grand Feast that Montague was chosen as Grand Master p. 110. This was really leading the way from the front. It seems quite clear that the relationship between Payne and Desaguliers, as well in addition to a major contribution from Martin Folkes over the whole period of the formation and development of the premier Grand Lodge has never been adequately analysed. The friendship between Payne and Desaguliers went back to well before the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717 and: “*It is possible , perhaps even probable that either George or Thomas Payne ( with whom Desaguliers shared the same college at Oxford ) introduced Desaguliers to Freemasonry....The more probable of the two was George “* p. 73.

They clearly established a close quasi-business relationship immediately

Desaguliers arrived in London to live in 1713. p. 72 and probably they were Freemasons together in the Lodge at the Rummer and Grapes at the times when the first moves to establish the Premier Grand Lodge were being mooted

The intricate historical Masonic relationship between these two senior members may in fact be relatively simple to explain.

“ Payne’s earlier entry to Freemasonry could provide an explanation for his Masonic seniority at the Horn and the rationale for him having been selected as Grand Master before Desaguliers.”

and subsequently: -

*“Although perhaps as a function of his self-promotion and networking , Desaguliers became the more visibly influential of the two, Payne and Desaguliers were equally senior within Grand Lodge.” P. 74*

and even further

*“Payne had a relatively low public profile and in contrast to Desaguliers does not appear to have had an active self-promoter. “*

This statement probably best puts things into a correct overall perspective, Desaguliers as well as being a first class achiever also successfully self promoted, whereas Payne was happy filling in the often powerful background administrative roles

It is nevertheless interesting to note that when the need arose to find a Grand Master to fill the position *pro tempore* in the year ( 1720) before the aristocrat Montague, ( a close friend of each of Payne, Desaguliers and Folkes, and a fellow member of the Horn ) accepted the appointment; it was Payne who was chosen and filled the position in the interim..

The importance of Martin Folkes by way of his involvement in Montague’s initial aristocratic appointment and then his intimate involvement due to his strong and ongoing friendship with the powerfully influential Duke of Richmond’s accepting of the position of Grand Master after the damaging sojourn of the ill disciplined pro-Jacobite Duke of Wharton is of the greatest significance to the long term development of the Premier Grand Lodge. Next to Desaguliers and Payne he was probably the most influential non aristocratic Freemason of the period. He is regarded as a highly significant character by both authors.

Bergman sums up his importance quite unequivocally but nonetheless very succinctly : -

*“ As with all organizations , a small number of members were more prominent and influential than their peers. Amongst this group was arguably one of Desagulier’s closest collaborators : Martin Folkes. “ p 98.*

*“ Unlike Desaguliers, a Huguenot and a servant of the Royal Society paid on a piece-work basis.. who. could be rebuked by the Council for any real or imagined disregard of his duties, Martin Folkes was a privately wealthy and clubbable intellectual .. whose intellectual abilities, particularly in philosophy and mathematics resulted in his election as FRS in 1724 ( aged 24 ) p. 99.*

*“ Folkes was integral to Freemasonry’s development in the 1720’s and ( intensely ) supportive of Desaguliers, Payne and the inner core within Grand Lodge “ p. 101.*

Lawrence gives emphasis to his influence on the structure of the new philosophy being adopted:

*“ It is virtually certain that he ( Folkes ) would have supported the concept of the enhancement of knowledge as a basic tenet within the cultural ethos of Freemasonry from that time onwards and that he was most likely to have been an influential part of that process. “ p. 207*

The importance of this trio of senior Freemasons is accurately defined in summary by Bergman :

*“Payne’s main contribution to the development of Freemasonry appears to lie in his networks and relationships within Westminster, which were complimentary to those of Desaguliers and Folkes within the learned and professional societies and among the Whig aristocrats. “p. 74.*

These were the three bastions of influence which established the new Premier Grand Lodge in its position in London and later English society and enabled it to flourish into its future world wide stature.

Payne enjoyed a long ( well over 40 years ) and often vitally important Masonic career : “ *that was as active and arguably as important as that of Desaguliers – and one that lasted some ten years longer.* “ p. 70.

In terms of his overall lifelong contribution to the Premier Grand Lodge his contribution could be judged as even greater.

Right throughout his Masonic life, which was very extensive, in terms of time as well as depth, Payne, seems to have always exerted a powerful presence. He was, after all, the second and fourth Grand Master, and the last non aristocratic holder of that exalted office. He stood ready to do the hard work behind the scenes. Such preparedness is powerfully illustrated by, firstly, being willing to hold the fort until Montague when he was ready to become the first aristocratic Grand Master agreed to accept the position, and thereupon as Grand Master he proposed him, his fellow Horn member, to become his successor.

It was Payne who was in the front line when it became incumbent on senior Freemasons to take the necessary Masonic political action ( at significant personal jeopardy ) to ensure that Wharton did not serve a second year as Grand Master which could so easily have snuffed out its future development.

In conjunction with Desaguliers, Payne was specifically appointed to research and compile the original *Regulations*. It was Payne that compiled the General Regulations in 1720 p. 70. and p, 68. which were incorporated in the *1723 Constitution* and then together they ensured that it and a new Constitution, to which he also contributed formulating in large measure, were incorporated into Anderson’s otherwise fatuous faux history of the *1723 Constitution* and which became the cornerstone of modern Freemasonry. He was certainly one of the paramount driving forces of the *1723 Constitution*, and its adoption, the importance of which became quite paramount in the ongoing affairs of the Premier Grand Lodge.

In the *1723 Constitution* the Rules and Regulations are expounded with a high degree of clarity (almost scientific clarity as if prepared by a scientist or perhaps even a senior government officer) rather than a waffling Scottish church minister. When the Regulations are once more explained by Anderson in the *1738 Constitution*, which this time prepared without any outside assistance or input they are waffly and prolix, in Anderson’s renown style, and with no editorial restraints his History of Freemasonry is even more a jumble of mythical miss mash, and often downright incomprehensible totally unbecoming to the, by then, well established Premier Grand Lodge. For their own satisfaction Grand Lodge just had to have an ancient history, as they do today, even if it was all laughable bunkum,

“ *From the early 1720s, Grand Lodge began to regulate and control Freemasonry and to connect it to the Hanoverian and Whig political establishment. In the first instance, influence was exerted via the introduction of the 1723 Constitution and, in particular the new Regulations and Charges.* “ p. 64.

This 1723 document has to be placed in correct perspective to the proper development of the underpinning of the Premier Grand Lodge,

“ *the 1723 Constitution did not provide an updated or modernized version of the Old Charges .It did far more, setting the parameters for a new operating structure and establishing the boundaries of what would rapidly a national organization ‘* p. 65.

The *1723 Constitutions* as published (especially the confected historical section which has so mislead many very gullible Masonic historians, and unfortunately still does so, even to this day ) does not contain any mention of events immediately preceding and following the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717. No Grand Lodge minutes were taken until the appointment of William Cowper as Grand Secretary, and an influential member of the Horn Lodge fraternity.

By then Payne and Desaguliers and a small group of connected individuals by means of their recently adopted *Regulations, Constitution and Charges* had set, in its totality. the new Grand

Lodge and Freemasonry, on its profoundly distinct future path

There is no doubt that George Payne was one of the most influential and effective Grand Lodge Members who played a leading and determined ( and a highly orchestrated strong team of Freemasons ) to help the successive aristocratic Grand Masters, i.e. Dalkeith and Richmond to overcome the earlier excesses of Wharton,

The influence of Payne and his fellow members of the dominant Horn Lodge resulted in having Cowper installed as Grand Secretary to run Grand Lodge more successfully and proficiently and with continuity, and at the same time ensured that all of the senior Grand Lodge officers were filled with reliable people who held similar views about the establishment of the Premier Grand Lodge.

This alteration to the conduct of Grand Lodge largely pushed forward by Payne and Desaguliers no doubt added significantly to its ongoing operative stability.

In like manner the establishment of the General Bank of Charity, formed by the self same group of members,( p. 94 ) Payne was to have a strong influence on the future operations of the Grand Lodge. Richmond deliberately sought his advice and assistance at a specially convened meeting in helping to establish the highly influential General Bank of Charity which at that time considerably added to the prestige of the Premier Grand Lodge, most especially in the press publicity of how its charitable activities were pursued in public. Some years later in 1727 when the charitable fund had some difficulties it was Payne that the then Grand Master the Earl of Inchiquin appointed him to the Board to help right the ship.

Undoubtedly one of his most influential successes were his back room activities wherein he undoubtedly nursed several aristocratic Grand Masters into their exalted position and then assiduously protected their backs. After the Wharton fiasco Payne helped ensure that Desaguliers was Dalkeith's deputy and that Sorrel and Senex were his Grand Wardens, both of whom were Desaguliers and Payne supporters. These appointments ensured that the Grand Mastership was back on a firm footing. " *his( Wharton's ) was not an image that Desaguliers, Payne, Cowper, Delafaye or Folkes ( many of the heavies of the new breed ) would have wished to project in connection with Freemasonry* " Bergman p. 140.

Payne was also a prominent member of the team ( Beal, Folkes, Cowper, Sorell and Senex - all Fellows of the important Royal Society ) with which Desaguliers supported Dalkeith and Richmond to recover the situation. "*Dalkeith allowed Desaguliers (and his supporters) to reassert stability and provided political reassurance after Wharton's short and disruptive tenure.*"

Richmond followed Dalkeith as Grand Master with the total weight of his supporters behind him, and more importantly his personal friends, Desaguliers, Payne, Folkes and others.

" *Richmond...appointed Folkes, one of his closest friends, as Deputy Grand Master, and Francis Sorrel and George Payne ( that man again ) as his grand Wardens.....William Cowper was also retained as Grand Secretary. It was not surprising : Sorrel, Payne and Cowper were all members of the Horn.*  " p. 146. ( as was Dalkeith, Desaguliers and Montague. )

Folkes was a member of Bedford Head Lodge which, besides the Horn was at the time one of the most influential lodges in London.

In later years after the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge, Payne provided a steady background of support to weak, ineffectual and non attending Grand Masters such as Paisley, Inchiquin and Weymouth. He effectively was acting Grand Master during most of Viscount Weymouth's year of office.

To top off his Masonic career in 1754, when he was quite an old man he was called upon to assist with the revision of the Constitution after the tragic and shambolic split between the ' Antients ' and the ' Moderns ' in late 1740's

Without many of these activities in which George Payne was involved the new Premier Grand

Lodge founded in 1717 would have had a very rocky road to survive and indeed it is doubtful if it would have survived to flourish in its first twenty years of existence.

Payne also played an active part in the construction of the Westminster Bridge, which because of the involvement of many senior Freemasons was seen as a Masonic project. His involvement with the Premier Grand Lodge continued for over forty years, as, subsequent to the traumas of the split of the 'Antients,' he was also responsible for the reviving of the *Constitutions* in 1754.

On the other hand Lawrence limits his comments to little more than one full page pp 179 – 181 and on occasions damns Payne with faint praise. " *he was clearly a most active freemason and appears in several senior positions* " p. 180, a modest description for a person whose Masonic career is as so fulsomely outlined by Bergman in his work.

Consider

*" It was somewhat later, once this initial structure had proven to be so effective, that the initiative was seized by certain parties, ( Desaguliers, et al, and including Payne serving two terms as Grand Master ) enabling the whole ethos of this ad hoc association of lodges to be usurped and changed into something completely different and the coup d'état accomplished "* Lawrence p. 413,

and which on the way

*" could explain why George Payne ( he did remain active within the group, albeit somewhat sidelined ) occupied the Post ( Grand Master ) for the second time at the last minute as a temporary expedient "* p. 414

rather a handy twelfth man to have in your team ?

Of course without Payne's and Desagulier's efforts Grand Lodge in any form would have hardly survived, especially when together they provided the *Constitution and Regulation's* parts of the 1723 *Constitution* on which the revised Premier Grand Lodge entity operated. They kept the show on the road and ensured that Wharton's bid to continue as Grand Master, which would have ended in bottomless perdition for Freemasonry, was not allowed to be put into effect.

### **John Theophilus Desaguliers**

It is common ground with both authors that they attribute the whole transformation of the 1717 version of the Premier Grand Lodge to the body that morphed around and about Freemasonry by 1723 was driven and achieved by Desaguliers. His attributes together with his connections at all levels of society, even as high as the Monarchy are detailed at great length by Lawrence pp. 414 - 7 whilst his importance in Bergman's eyes is rated by a whole chapter pp 38 - 63 plus innumerable references throughout the whole book, but the whole importance of his position can be summarized.

As for Desaguliers he is quite specific; -

*" Although for Freemasonry and the public and private lecture theatres gave Desaguliers a milieu that allowed him to shine , even within Masonry it was necessary for him to stand behind the façade of Grand Lodge's aristocratic leadership and to combine his efforts with those of well-connected ( Masonic ) colleagues. (Payne, Folkes, Blackerby, Sorrell and Cowper) His effectiveness lay in accepting the necessity of such support and in using it effectively. "* p.62

Desaguliers, Payne, Folkes and others, together with the aristocrats, particularly Montague and Richmond formed an inner core within Grand Lodge that was essential. p. 101

*" The officers that ran Grand Lodge under Richmond's leadership were particularly close. Desaguliers' tight connection to the five principal Grand Officers ( Folkes, Deputy Grand Master, Cowper, Grand Secretary, Sorrell and Payne, Grand Wardens, plus Desaguliers himself ) was probably the key factor in their agreeing at the next quarterly*

*meeting that 'all who have been or at any time hereafter be Grand Masters of this Society may be present and have a vote at all Quarterly meetings and Grand Meetings'."* 155.

Of the four original foundation Lodges who combined in the formation in the Premier Grand Lodge it has to be said that there was a great disparity in their size of the lodge and the standing and influence of their members. The Horn with over 70 members had almost more members than the combined membership of the other three lodges, and the make up of the membership was much more aristocratic and well connected, both politically, scientifically and socially than any one in the other three lodges. This skewing of influence is highly observable in the holders of important positions in the ongoing Grand Lodge. During this period the Horn Lodge must have been the most powerful and influential lodge in the history of Freemasonry.

*" Under Richmond's Mastership and probably with Payne and Desaguliers' active assistance , the Horn became a focal point of ' gentlemanly ' Freemasonry and a feeder organization for Grand Lodge. "* p. 154

It is of interest to note that during Richmond's period as Grand Master it was Payne who, because of his Masonic seniority, acted as Worshipful Master of the Horn Lodge rather than Desaguliers.

Desaguliers and Dalkeith had a close Masonic and scientific collaboration being both members of the Royal Society.

*" Dalkeith's conduct while Grand Master suggests that he was influenced strongly by Desaguliers. Indeed, his actions as prospective Grand Master with the appointment of Desaguliers as his Deputy and Francis Sorrel and John Senex as Wardens, both of whom were supporters of Desaguliers, reinforces the assessment. " Dalkeith allowed Desaguliers to reassert stability and provided political reassurance after Wharton's short and disruptive tenure "* Bergman p. 145.

Desaguliers had been created a Fellow of the Royal Society before the activities of 1717 and was in fact upon the staff of the Society as a lecturer and demonstrator. In his position he knew several other Freemasons who were members. Several other prominent Freemasons were already F.R.S before 1717 ( Folkes, Paisley, Montague ) and they participated in no small measure to the influence of the Royal Society on the formation and development of the Premier Grand Lodge

It was these non aristocratic Masons were the drivers of the administrative and operative side of the new Premier Grand Lodge and they carried on their duties notwithstanding, while at least one aristocratic Grand Master attended only one Grand Lodge meeting during his term of office – his installation, and several others were almost as dilatory towards their Masonic duties..

### **The paths of Nature and Science**

Another of the three main driving forces to the development of the Premier Grand Lodge which is highlighted in these two books is the manner in which scientific and mathematical lectures and discussions, particularly Newtonianism and the New Enlightenment were rapidly incorporated into the activities of the Premier Grand Lodge.

Commencing well before the foundation of the new Grand Lodge, meetings and lectures were being held, frequently under the auspices of a Masonic lodge, to listen to, and participate in technical, scientific and mathematical discussions and particularly those pertaining to aspects of Newtonianism. These provided great interest and were important public talking points especially in the press of the day. Not only were these meetings often being held under the auspices of Masonic meetings, but the speakers and demonstrators were regularly Freemasons themselves ( often being Desaguliers himself or one of his acolytes. ) As these meetings increased in number and began spreading widely in the more established sections of London society, so the numbers of Masonic meetings as well as the new members of Freemasonry increased substantially. This

proliferation was certainly strongly augmented by the well publicized attendance of members of the aristocracy and leading industrial figures at these meetings. Many of whom were keen to convert this newly developing fund of knowledge to their own commercial advantage.

Both of the authors go to considerable pains to point out that one of the salient features of the establishment of this newly created and ongoing Premier Grand Lodge was to incorporate into the lodge activities, and even the ritual, an actual inclusion of, or allusion to ‘ the hidden mysteries of nature and science. ‘

As to whether the influence of changes to the ritual by including and incorporating matters pertaining to ‘ the paths of nature and science ’ would enhance the explanations of actual changes occurring in the Lodges is in marked contradistinction between the authors,

Curiously it is frequently referred to at length by Lawrence , but is not given the same emphasis and is not so emphatically covered by Bergman, who limits his comments to : “ *under the aegis of Desaguliers and his colleagues, Grand Lodge provided the impetus for the inclusion of scientific lectures and entertainments at lodge meetings.* “ p. 66.

These developments greatly promoted Freemasonry amongst the middle classes and it was in these aspects, especially the publicity attached to these meetings, to which Desaguliers made such an outstanding and unequalled contribution to Freemasonry’s development and expansion. His propensity for self publicizing worked not only towards his personal aggrandizement, but also to the immediate benefit of the institution of the Premier Grand Lodge and Freemasonry in general.

Lawrence’s work devotes almost all of the last four chapters to analysing how ‘ the hidden mysteries of nature and science ‘ were incorporated into the new activities and ritual of the Premier Grand Lodge. His exposition although often heavy going, I found most rewarding., and he sums it up so neatly.

*“ That by the very early 1720s, the circumstances surrounding the Premier Grand Lodge originally formed in 1717 were such that a whole new structure and ethos emerged (herein called the Premier Grand Lodge. ) “ p. 407.*

He later goes on to set the whole scene for the long term origins of the Premier Grand Lodge with the most succinct summary : -

*“ It was clearly somewhat later, once the initial structure had proven to be effective, that the initiative was seized by certain parties, enabling the whole ethos of this ad hoc association of lodges to be usurped and changed into something completely different and the coup d’etat accomplished. “*

Being slightly facetious one could almost say; - “ Voila ! There it is, the whole story of the 1717 - 1723 era. All of the rest is just the very interesting details. ”

But that would diminish the many hours of fascinating study that I have undertaken.

Earlier Lawrence had written a separate paper on technical aspects of this subject and presented it to Quatuor Coronati Lodge, a paper which caused considerable angst amongst the Grand Lodge school of Masonic historians. The paper is well worth consulting and his detailed responses and particularly his detailed destruction of many of the paper’s commentators, especially the Lodge’s Worshipful Master, make for fascinating reading. ( 6 )

Lawrence’s book then goes on to list quite comprehensively the various aspects of ‘ the prevailing social climate. ’ Quite extensively on p. 408. he lists eight separate factors he considers important

### **The importance of the aristocrats**

The ongoing strength and continuity of the Premier Grand Lodge was established, built on and reinforced by the efforts of the strong and powerful mixture of effective, active Freemasons and most essentially continuing influential aristocrats.

One interesting aspect of the involvement of many of the aristocratic Freemasons was how high a preponderance of illegitimate offspring of Charles II, of whom there were many. Montague, Dalkeith and Richmond were three of these direct illegitimate offspring. ( Dalkeith and Richmond were in fact cousins ) of whom several others were prominent in early Freemasonry..

### Montague

The proposition on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1721 of the young, wealthy and well connected John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Montague as Grand Master to succeed George Payne was the culmination of the aims of the original founders to appoint a Grand Master from their own ranks only until such time as an aristocrat could be found to take the position. Montague's abundant attributes are extremely well documented by Bergman, who obviously regards him as of outstanding importance in Masonic history. pp 124 – 135 . Lawrence is not so effusive in his support of Montague but does argue strongly in favour of his importance. “ *It is the thesis of this study ( his whole book ) that the appointment of the second Duke of Montague was the first watershed of Freemasonry in its present form* “ p. 186, a statement that is without any equivocation to which he further added to, expanding and reinforcing : “ *and was cemented in place very shortly afterwards by the unusual selection of the Earl of March ( shortly to become Duke of Richmond ) in 1724.* ”

An indication of the support for Freemasonry engendered by appointing Montague as Grand Master is provided by a newspaper report of the installation of his successor which states the membership of Freemasonry to be an astonishingly large total of 4 000

Montague was a F.R.S and in close contact with both Desaguliers and Folkes, both prominent Freemasons. They both undoubtedly played most important parts together with Payne in the history changing achievement of persuading Montague to accept the position of Grand Master in 1721

### Wharton

Phillip, Duke of Wharton ( created 1718 ) was an extra-ordinarily wealthy, good looking young man. ( he was only 22 when he became Grand Master ) He was ‘ an eccentric and a classic rake....a founder of the Hell Fire Club, ’ and in 1721, before he became Grand Master ‘ was proscribed for blasphemy by the Lord Chancellor. ’ He had been a Freemason for less than a year before he was made Grand Master.

It had clearly been the intention of the senior organizational Freemasons that having at last succeeded in obtaining an aristocratic Grand Master they intended Montague to serve for a longer period than one year. However Wharton. being ambitious of obtaining the Grand mastership “ ( he ) sought to usurp rather than succeed Montague and either to commandeer what he may have perceived as a potentially influential organization, or simply cause a nuisance. ” p. 138

As a matter of interest, and perhaps significance, Wharton was the only one of the early aristocratic Grand Masters who had no interest whatsoever in Newtonianism or matters pertaining to the New Enlightenment. How he ever succeeded in obtaining the position speaks volumes for his personal drive and charisma, and the power of his extreme wealth.

Amongst Wharton's many weaknesses and foibles was the apparent appearance that he actively supported the Jacobite cause. Whether he was an active supporter of the Jacobites is not definitely established, but he was clearly known to support their cause and some of his pro – Jacobite activities were anathema to pro – Hanoverian accession Whig supporters. Strangely enough his father, the Marquis of Wharton, was a man who had ‘ great political eminence and influence ’ and had been a ‘ leading supporter of William of Orange and a vociferous opponent of King James, ’ and as a result had ‘ exceptional royal and political connections ’

Hamill canvases his Jacobite influence and connections and puts the ultimate situation in full perspective.

*“ The great influence on early Grand Lodge Freemasonry in England was Desaguliers. As Grand Master in 1719 and Deputy Grand Master in 1722, 1723 and 1726 he with George Payne ( Grand Master 1718 and 1720 ) and John, 2nd Duke of Montague (Grand Master 1721 ) set the basis upon which the premier Grand Lodge was to function for the whole of its existence. None of this triumvirate had Jacobite connections ” (8 )*

Hamill makes no mention of the persona of Charles, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Richmond, ( Grand Master 1724 ) who was probably the most influential of all of the aristocratic Freemasons.

For the Jacobites with such a mighty phalanx of opposition it was, in modern parlance, ‘ GAME OVER. ’

Wharton later in his short life, after he had converted to Roman Catholicism, openly espoused the Jacobite cause including participating in their military actions, and was eventually outlawed, after fighting for the Spanish against the British,

### **Richmond**

Richmond was a very powerful and influential man with a vast range of friends, and most importantly a man of great loyalty. As an excellent example : -

*Richmond’s patronage of Payne lasted virtually throughout the latter’s life p.146*

*“ He appointed Folkes, one of his closest friends, as Deputy Grand Master, and Francis Sorrell and George Payne as his Grand Wardens... William Cowper also retained his position as Grand Secretary. It was unsurprising: Sorrell, Payne and Cowper were all members of the Horn.”.p.146. ( of which Richmond was the Worshipful Master )*

Richmond and Folkes were life long personal friends, thus Folkes efforts in having Richmond made Grand Master in 1724 was not surprising, just as his Richmond’s appointment as F.R.S in the same year was hardly unexpected. The links between all levels of Freemasonry and the Royal Society were very powerful. Much Masonic research has been carried out on this subject, particularly enumerating the cross connections between the two, but the close connection and influence upon formation and development of the Premier Grand Lodge seems never to have been as firmly expanded and sheeted home as by these two authors.

### **Other views**

In my view it is interesting to note that probably one of the least fashionable authors on the origins of Freemasonry seemed to comprehend more of the nuances, especially the non-Masonic nuances of the historical foundations of the Premier Grand Lodge ( 7 ) although even he skirts round the edges of the involvement of politics and religion in influencing the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge and its development over the next six or so years ( This is an excellent example of the misplaced and misconstrued prohibition on Freemasons not being able to discuss the topics of politics or religion. Without an historical examination and understanding of both of these topics the early days of Freemasonry will remain a dark mystery.

In 15 pages pp. 34 – 48, Robins details the history of the first six years of Modern Freemasonry with reasonable perspicacity, except by his complete neglect of the influence of science and invention on the politics and religion of the time that he fails totally, Over 80 years ago he almost had this mystery of its origin all fathomed out but no one ever bothered to help him fill in the missing, undiscovered details, possibly because it did not agree with the views the Grand Lodge of England of which he had been president of the Board of General Purposes for 17 years.

Perhaps it could be said that he places too much reliance on the historical work of Anderson, but for all of that he gets most matters correct.

*“ The Masons who constituted the first Grand Lodge, as far as can be traced, were of simple and single-minded type : and, if the movement had not attracted others more*

*subtle and strong, it would speedily have become nothing more than a large social club, limited to the English capital, and likely to wither away. P.50*

Where Robbins just fails to complete the full story is that he makes no mention of the type of member who rapidly swelled the ranks of the new Freemasonry, those who had a strong and influential interest in the political situation of the time and above all powerful influence of those steeped in the developments of the New Enlightenment, and it was these groups who took over the future development of the changing organization.

Another author who examines the history of the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge is Piatigorsky See reference ( 4 ) In my view his work suffers from the fact that he is not a Freemason and does not understand some of the nuances of fully understanding Freemasonry. As a result he places enormous store on Anderson's writings, including quoting aspects of his work which are obvious to any intelligent person are purely myth or even worse. Selective quoting of Anderson is fraught with great difficulties, and from my view for most matters he is better ignored.

### **Brief conclusions**

There were so many elements in existence which were affecting the whole gamut of influences on the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge; Listed are some of the enormous power and influence affecting so many aspects of London life at that time :

- the influence of the courts
- the avowed loyalty to the Hanoverian cause ( and indeed the personal friendships with the monarchs ) and to Walpole's government
- the ongoing effects of the enlightenment and how they were being conveyed to the people
- the scientific and technical benefits which were becoming manifest
- the stand against the recurring problems posed by the Jacobites
- The influence exerted by highly public and popular members of the aristocracy/

And above all, was the overriding influences of the press and other publicity that each and every one of these aspects were regularly receiving, inspired by the fervour of the general public for any information of any member of the aristocracy or anyone with commercial prominence.

But overarching all else were three great influences. It seems that three main aspects influenced the dramatic changes which occurred at this period.

1. The absolute necessity for political stability particularly in delivering sound support of the Hanoverian monarchy and the Whig government was paramount.
2. Religious stability in the face of the matter of power between the Stuarts and the Hanoverians and the religious civil wars promoted by the Jacobite rebellion
3. The importance of Freemason members in the London and Westminster magistracy and the influence they were able to bring to bear on political and religious stability at the time.

Above all my aim is to encourage thinking Freemasons to read and contemplate these two books. In so doing it is certain to promote in their minds and activate their thoughts on this fascinating topic, as they have done for me.

You may not agree with the two author's conclusions ( and if you do I would be interested and pleased to know why ) but you will receive great mental stimulation, as I have, in detecting nuances or even substituting alternative theories. To me that is what Masonic research is all about, the very challenge issued by Lawrence in his very first paragraph, and his final wished for hopes for achievement. p 435.

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