

A Templar Abroad

In April, my wife and I were fortunate enough to visit the British Isles as chaperones for a local high school group and along the way visited several sites that are masonic in origin or may be related. The first site we ran into was in northern Wales at Castle Beaumaris that was started in 1295 by King Edward I on the Isle of Anglesey. As we wandered around the ruins of the castle we ran into a statue that was erected to honor the operative stone masons who built the castle. The statue was obviously done by speculative Freemasons, as it showed most of the symbols we use today such as the square, compasses, plumb, level, and setting maul.

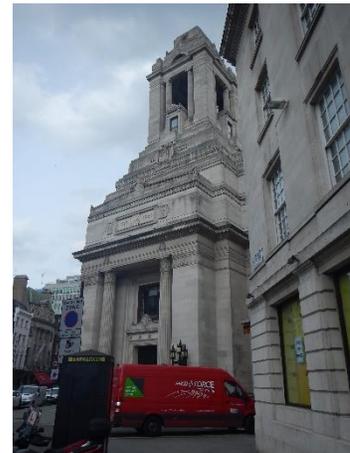


While we were in London, I happened to notice on a tour map a place called Freemason Hall not far from Trafalgar Square. We visited the site and found that it was what we would call the Grand Lodge of England. Upon entering the site, I asked if it was the Grand Lodge of England and was told that the site is the home of the several Grand Lodges of England. The building contained dozens of



lodge rooms and a museum. At any one time, day or night, there is almost always a lodge that is active. In fact while we were there we encountered numerous masons entering the hall in mid-afternoon, formally dressed in coat and tie, each bringing their own apron.

The museum was large and contained a library and museum with artifacts going back several centuries including some of the original lodge equipment, charters, and manuscripts.



One of our stops was at Avon on Stratford, the home of William Shakespeare. I happened to see and purchase a set of masonic cufflinks in a local store and wondered about the connection to Shakespeare. On further research I found that in Shakespeare's First Folio of plays published



in 1723, that there were numerous ties to Freemasonry in his plays and would seem to link Shakespeare to either the operative or speculative freemasons of his era. His ties with Sir Francis Bacon who has been linked to Freemasonry, are well known and makes the connection to Freemasonry even more intriguing.

Finally, we made it to Stonehenge.

This was my second trip to Stonehenge and it continues to amaze me. There are all kinds of theories trying to link Stonehenge to the Druids and to Freemasonry. Stonehenge is part of a



larger plain where archeologists are just now beginning to connect many different historical sites and events. One of the intriguing parts is in the design of Stonehenge, where the entrance to the henge parallels the summer and winter solstices that occur on the longest and shortest days of the year. The solstices are related to the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn and these in turn are related to the masonic pillars, Boaz and Jachin.

Circumambulation around the henge was apparently a part of the worship of the Druids and it is tied into almost all of the major religions and Freemasonry.

Another link to Freemasonry is the fact the Cecil Chubb, a Freemason, purchased Stonehenge in 1915 and later donated it to England as a national and later World Heritage Site.

Are all of these sites, events, rituals, and people interrelated to Freemasonry?

Stay tuned, we shall see.

Greg Conner, PM