

**Combined Chapter Meeting - Chingford Masonic Hall, Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2006 - hosted by  
Waltham Abbey Chapter No. 2750**

The Annual Convocation of Combined Chapters was hosted by the Waltham Abbey Chapter No.2750 at the Chingford Masonic Hall on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006. With the Chapter opened the M.E.Z., E.Comp Fred Lloyd welcomed everyone to the meeting, after which E.Comp. Michael Patmore, Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies, was admitted to announce The Deputy Grand Superintendent of the Province of Essex, Excellent Companion Allan Kemp, accompanied by APGP's E. Comp J. McCreadie and E. Comp. Bernie Wills, along with E.Comp. Ken Elmes PSPGP and E.Comp. J. Simons ProvAGSE., who were admitted and took their seats.

The Roll of Chapters was called by Scribe E, E.Comp. Brian Dalton, after which, E.Comp. Allan Kemp rose to say how pleased he was to see so many members supporting the Combined Chapter, and was also concerned about the two Chapters who did not attend, and he was aware that these Chapters have difficulties with membership, but went on to say he was pleased that the meeting had been so well supported.

The Companions were treated to an excellent presentation by E.Comp. Patrick Wilkins entitled "Masonic Poetry - Its Philosophy and Humour". Patrick apologised for having a "nasal" sound, as he was just getting over a heavy cold, but he certainly did not want to let anyone down at the last moment by not being able to attend because of his "cold".

Patrick informed the companions that he has interacted with poetry for many years, and even as a young boy, born in Limehouse, East London. In presenting his paper, Patrick posed the question, "What is poetry in Freemasonry"? Perhaps it's the ritual, as it is free verse and it does not have to rhyme, and referred to the Masonic opening and closing odes as poetic. Poetry is also the sentiment of saying the right words at the right time, and is the best description he thought was relevant, and was sure, that we have stated at some time in our life, that a particular statement was poetic.

The earliest known poetry is from speculative masonry, and is often found on Victorian jugs, plates and other pottery at that time. Well before that time at the excavation at the Baal's Bridge, in the City of Limerick, in November 1830, a brass square was found. The position in which the square was found indicated that one of our Masonic Customs was practised in Ireland over 400 years ago, and was engraved with the words "I will strive to live, with love and care. Upon the level, by the square" 1507. Patrick also mentioned that the square and compasses were even mentioned in classic Chinese poetry in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Another famous piece often used in Freemasonry is from the Laudi Spirituali, 1545.

*For these and all Thy mercies given  
We bless and praise Thy Name, O Lord;  
May we receive them with thanksgiving,  
Ever trusting in Thy word;  
To Thee alone be honour, glory,  
Now and henceforth for evermore.*

He went on to explain how Masonic Poetry started to grow, and referred to Rudyard Kipling, who was an enthusiastic, beautiful and dedicated Mason, and brought out by poetry what we try to do, and thought that his poem written in 1892 "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted" - was superbly written.

*When Earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are twisted and dried,  
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic has died,  
We shall rest, and, faith we shall need -- lie down for an aeon or two,  
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to work anew.  
And those that were good shall be happy; they shall sit in a golden chair;  
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair.  
They shall find real saints to draw from -- Magdalene, Peter and Paul;  
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired at all!  
And only The Master shall praise us, and only The Master shall blame;  
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,  
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,  
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They are!*

There are many other Masonic poems, "Where Hiram Knelt", "Last night I knelt where Hiram knelt, And took an obligation. Today I'm closer to my God, And I'm a Master Mason" Anon. Bob Hogarth's "Brown Suit", and poets, Henry Engelsman, and Walter Hoxton, not forgetting Pam Ayres with a Masonic parody on "I wish I'd looked after me teeth" re-written as "Oh! I wish I'd looked after me Ritual", which Patrick recited to much enjoyment and amusement by the companions (this poem was published in the CAMSG Newsletter No.12 - is available for access on the website - [www.casmgnewsletter.org](http://www.casmgnewsletter.org)) Patrick then referred to Charles Causley's poem "Timothy Winters",

recounting to the companions of his own personal involvement with deprived children. This poetic description of “*Timothy Winters*” is so good, that we could draw pictures in our own minds from it.

*Timothy Winters comes to school  
With eyes as wide as a football pool,  
Ears like bombs and teeth like splinters:  
A blitz of a boy is Timothy Winters.  
His belly is white, his neck is dark,  
And his hair is an exclamation mark.  
His clothes are enough to scare a crow  
And through his breeches the blue winds blow.  
When teacher talks he won't hear a word  
And he shoots down dead the arithmetic bird,  
He licks the pattern off his plate  
And he's not even heard of the Welfare State.  
Timothy Winters has bloody feet  
And he lives in a house on Suez Street,  
He sleeps in a sack on the kitchen floor  
And they say there aren't boys like him any more.  
Old Man Winters likes his beer  
And his missus ran off with a bombardier  
Grandma sits in the grate with a gin  
And Timothy's dosed with an aspirin.  
The Welfare Worker lies awake  
But the law's as tricky as a six foot snake,  
So Timothy Winters drinks his cup  
And slowly goes on growing up.  
At morning prayers the Headmaster helms  
For children less fortunate than ourselves,  
And the loudest response in the room is when  
Timothy Winters roars 'Amen'  
So come one angel, come on ten:  
Timothy Winters says, 'Amen  
Amen, amen, amen, amen,'  
Timothy Winters, Lord, Amen*

There are many “dialect” poems and “*Sam Small and his Gavel*”, by an unknown author is also one of his favourites. Again this poem is a parody of the poem by Stanley Holloway “*Sam Small*”, and with the words ‘*Sam, Sam, pick up thy musket*’ being replaced with “*Sam Small and his gavel*”. The Masonic version being superbly recited in the regional accent by Patrick, and on conclusion, thanked the Companions for their quiet attention he received for his presentation on his “*Masonic Poetry - Its Philosophy and Humour*”, finishing with the poetic words “*Happy have we met, happy have we been, sorry to part, and happy to meet again*” with all the Companions joining in the recitation.

E.Companion Allan Kemp rose to thank E.Comp Patrick for his presentation, and he too, had remembered with great affection the late great Stanley Holloway, and related some of poems he recalled, to include “*Brahn Boots*”, *Sam Small (Pick oop tha' muskett)*, and “*You do look queer*”, (a title probably not politically correct these days), and suggested that Patrick should be a “round the hall act” so that everyone can enjoy this presentation in the Province of Essex, which was received with much acclaim by the Companions.

E.Comp. Brian Wright informed the Companions with regard the book “*History of Freemasons in Essex - The Masters Chair*” which has now been published. The book weighs four pounds, and had brought along copies for the Companions to view. It will be a limited edition and suggested that the Companions buy now to avoid disappointment, and especially to submit their order before Christmas 2006.

The Combined Chapter. was closed and everyone adjourned to the bar and the festive board and happily dined with a starter of grapefruit cocktail, followed by roast lamb and seasonal vegetables, bread and butter pudding. There was a total of 76 Companions attending this years Combined Chapter Meeting. The Combined Chapter Meeting for 2007 will be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at Chingford Masonic Hall and will be hosted by Epping Chapter No.2077.

*Allan de Luca - Fiducial Chapter No.8753*