

The Journal of the 18th Masonic District

18th District Light

Masonic Light, Happenings and Events
From Around the District

LODGES OF THE 18TH DISTRICT

Audubon-Parkside #218
Collingswood-Cloud #101
Laurel #237
Lazarus #303
Merchantville #119
Mozart #121
Rising Sun #15
USS NJ #62

INSIDE

Irish Freemasonry

Yes, Virginia . . .

The Traveling Gavel

DLI

**Masonic Profile:
Oscar Wilde**

and much more!

MARCH 2019

In This Issue



FROM THE EDITOR

ARTICLE: Irish Freemasonry

EDITORIAL: Yes, Virginia . . .

ARTICLE: The Traveling Gavel

PHOTO OP: District Lodge of Instruction

MASONIC PROFILE: Oscar Wilde

SCHEDULE: 2019 Official Visits of the DDGM

SCHEDULE: 2019 DLIs/GLI

SCHEDULE: 2019 Masonic Home Visits

SCHEDULE: Communications of 18th District Lodges

DEPARTMENTS

Monthly Calendar of Meetings & Events

This Month's 18th District Event Flyers

Looking Forward/Upcoming Events

G. L. & Appendant Bodies

Entertainment Pages



18th District Light - Journal of the 18th Masonic District
Editor: WB David A. Frankel — dafrankel@comcast.net

From the Editor

Brethren:

Maybe it's just the approximately one-eight Irish in me, but March, with St. Patrick's Day at its heart, has always seemed to me to be the right time for all of us to celebrate any connection we may have (or contrive) to Ireland, even if its only a good excuse to eat corned beef and cabbage and drink green beer. I'm a great believer in celebrating all the cultures that have contributed to the American melting pot, so this March issue of the 18th District Light is, at least in part, Irish themed. Our feature article is on Irish Freemasonry and our Masonic Profile is on an Irish Freemason.

On another note, the 18th District Bluebook has been released. The book contains a wealth of information about all our 18th District Lodges and their Officers, as well as your District Officers and the 18th District Masters and Wardens Association. Its like having "the scorecard" when you go to visit another Lodge; and everyone knows, you can't tell the players without the scorecard! To save money the Masters & Wardens Association is not printing hard copies of the Bluebook this year. But you should be able to get a digital copy from your Lodge Secretary. If you don't have digital capability, your Secretary should be able to print one out for you. For the digitally inclined, you can always find the most current version of the Bluebook, as well as previous years' Bluebooks, online at the link at the bottom of this page.

It's another busy month, with SIX Official Visits — so get out there and travel, and we'll see you around the district!

Dave

The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.

— Thomas Paine



THE TRAVELING GAVEL



Possession of the Traveling Gavel is the 18th District's symbol of honor for Lodges that fulfill the spirit of Masonic Travel. The Gavel, along with its accompanying logbook, remains with the Lodge last able to capture it until claimed by another Lodge under these rules.

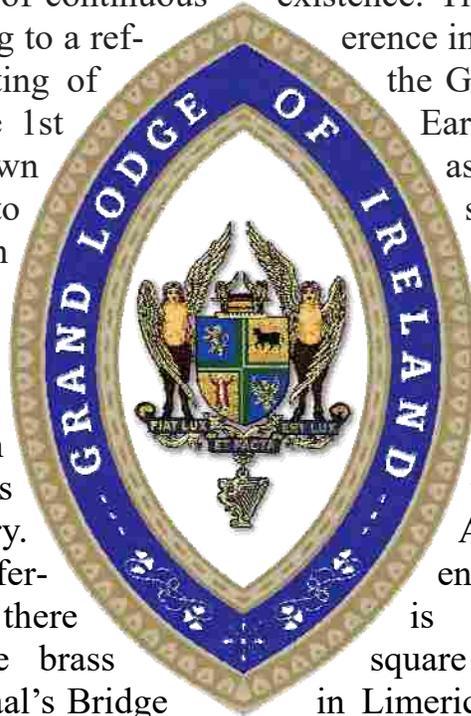
A Worshipful Master and any other four (or more) Master Masons from his Lodge may claim the Gavel by visiting the current Gavel-holders for any regular or emergent communication. The claimants must all be present from the Opening through the Closing of the Lodge. In the case of competing claims, the Gavel shall go to the visiting Lodge with the largest contingent. If still tied on that basis, the Master of the host Lodge shall decide the tie by coin flip.

Once claimed the new Gavel holders should record their claim in the logbook, and report it to the Deputy and the 18th District Light at the first opportunity. The Gavel should be prominently displayed in the East during all communications until claimed by another Lodge.

HAPPY TRAVELING!

Irish Freemasonry

The Grand Lodge of Ireland has regular Masonic jurisdiction over all Freemasons in Ireland via thirteen Provincial Grand Lodges and also oversees another eleven provinces internationally. Although there is no specific record of its founding, the **Grand Lodge of Ireland** is nevertheless authoritatively regarded as the second most senior Grand Lodge in the world, and the foremost in length of continuous existence. The accepted “not later than” year of its formation is 1725, owing to a reference in the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, June 24, 1725, describing a meeting of the Grand Lodge for the purpose of installing Richard Parsons, the 1st Earl of Rosse, as the new Grand Master. Parsons is also known as a founding member of the Hell-Fire Club (a name applied to several high society clubs established in Britain and Ireland in the 18th century).



Widely accepted evidence of Ma-Ireland prior to the 18th century, beth Aldworth, “The Lady Free-Leger, her tale is immortalized in *Freemason*. She is to all accounts ated into Regular Freemasonry. ity College, in Dublin, contains refer-Dublin as far back as 1688. Then there

Baal’s Bridge Square. The brass 1830 reconstruction of Baal’s Bridge in Limerick, where it was found beneath the foundation stone of the old bridge. Bearing the date of 1507, the Mason’s tool is inscribed with the phrase, “I will strive to live with love and care, upon the level and by the square.”



sonic Lodges meeting in includes the story of Eliza-mason.” Born Elizabeth St. the *Memoir of a Lady* the first woman to be initi-Also, a speech given at Trin-ences to Lodge meetings in is the Masonically famous square was recovered during an

The above-referenced story in the *Dublin Weekly Journal*, contains strong implications that the election of the new Grand Master was by no means the first such election, but since no earlier verifiable record of the Grand Lodge’s formation has been found, the Grand Lodge of Ireland dates its foundation to 1725.

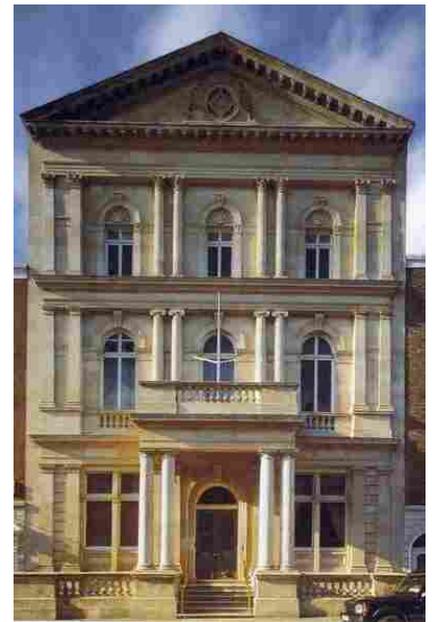
The Irish Grand Lodge was the first to issue lodge warrants in their present form, and unlike the Grand Lodges in London and Edinburgh, Ireland had no problems in issuing warrants to traveling lodges. Initially, the Premier Grand Lodge of England was opposed to issuing “traveling warrants” and did not

always consider soldiers men of good “moral standing and order.” Military units desirous of forming Masonic Lodges found it easier to apply for warrants to the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and later, the Grand Lodge of Scotland. The majority of Masonic lodges in the British Army, therefore, were warranted under the Irish Constitution. Thus, the form of Freemasonry that the British Army spread throughout its colonies was predominantly Irish. It was also an English regiment with an Irish warrant that started the Lodge from which Prince Hall Freemasonry sprang. There are still, to this day, two active Masonic Lodges in the British Army operating under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

As mentioned earlier, the Irish Grand Lodge, though the second oldest, is the longest in continuous existence. This mild paradox is due to the oddly coincidental fact that it was Irish Freemasons who set up the rival Grand Lodge in England known as the *Antients*, which lead to the schism and later reunification of the *Moderns* and the *Antients* into what is now the United Grand Lodge of England. The *Antients*' regulations were based on Spratt's Irish constitutions, and it was the *Antients*' ritual form that prevailed upon unification in 1813.

During the 18th century, Irish Lodges met in inns and taverns and other such establishments, while the meetings of the Grand Lodge were generally held in civic and guild buildings. In the early nineteenth century, the Irish Grand Lodge encountered a series of setbacks. A dispute over the higher degrees resulted in the 1805 breakaway Grand Lodge of Ulster, which operated for nine years. In 1823, the Irish Famine caused great unrest, and some Masonic Lodges became centers of “Republican” activity, to the effect that Freemasonry was proscribed by the Government until 1825. In 1826, the Papal condemnation, *Quo Graviora*, though only the latest in a series of anti-Masonic measures by the Catholic Church, was the first to be rigidly enforced by the Irish clergy. Catholic Freemasons were threatened with excommunication, and many resigned as a result.

During the early 19th century the Irish Grand Lodge began leasing buildings as semi-permanent Masonic facilities. The Grand Lodge itself held residence at No. 19, Dawson Street in Dublin, the current home of the Royal Irish Academy. From there the Grand Lodge moved to Commercial Buildings on Dame Street, until the Grand Lodge, along with most metropolitan Lodges moved to a new facility on Molesworth Street. In 1869, the current headquarters of Irish Freemasonry, Freemasons' Hall on Molesworth Street, was opened. It houses beautifully decorated Lodge rooms, a library, museum, offices, and dining areas. 🏠



The Grand Lodge of Ireland
Freemasons' Hall
17-19 Molesworth Street
Dublin 2, Ireland

Yes, Virginia . . .

An editorial by 18th District Light Editor, WB David A. Frankel

In 1897, an eight-year-old named Virginia O’Hanlon wrote a simple letter to the editor of *The Sun*, a New York newspaper, because she had heard her father say, “If you see it in The Sun, it’s so,” and she was hopeful of receiving an honest and true answer. Her letter posed



what was no doubt, in a child’s mind, a simple question: Is there a Santa Claus? The response, printed in the September 21, 1897 edition of *The Sun* as an unsigned editorial (actually penned by veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church), became the most oft-cited and reprinted newspaper editorial in history, appearing in whole or in part in uncountable references across the entire spectrum of media both domestic and international. It may surprise you to know that the famous response, “Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus,” is not how the answer begins. Those words are, in fact, the opening sentence of the second paragraph. And here, for now, that part of our story ends.

By now I trust you are wondering why I am relating this tale, especially so far removed from the Christmas season. I retell the story because it instantly came to mind recently when a Past Master of one of our 18th District Lodges shared with me a simple letter he had received from the daughter of a departed Brother. The letter below has been slightly edited to omit the Brother’s name and the writer’s address and phone:



Virginia O’Hanlon

Hello! My father was . . . a member of your lodge. He passed away in 2007. Since then, I have a son. I would like to teach my son about the Masons. Is there any literature you could send me or anything about my father that some elders may know.

Anything would be appreciated. Thank you for your time.

Holly (last name omitted)

Perhaps you understand what brought Virginia's tale to my mind, and perhaps not. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but think of the countless children who learned of Santa Claus from their parents, and later had to face what must have seemed a frightening disinformation campaign as their friends one-by-one learned the truth of the matter. The parallel I see to Freemasonry may seem somewhat inverse, as most people suffer the disinformation *before* learning about Freemasonry, but it is I think, nonetheless, instructive.

I've been a Mason for 45 years now. Which means I grew up at a time when Freemasonry was extremely secretive about its inner workings. My father was by all measures a Mason's Mason: actively involved in all aspects of the fraternity and rising ultimately to be District Deputy Grand Master of the 29th Masonic District (since rolled into the 18th), a Grand Lodge Trustee, a 33° in the Scottish Rite, and a winner of the Daniel Coxe Medal, among many other Masonic titles and honors. Yet, for an intelligent and articulate man, he could never (or would never) explain to me exactly what the Masons were. On the occasions when I visited a Masonic Temple, the lodge room was locked and off limits. Non-masons were not welcome to even look within. (Think about a phrase in our ritual that warns the initiate how, under certain circumstances, he might have been removed from the Lodge without ever seeing the inside of the Lodge room.)

When I was already looking at my 21st birthday in the rearview mirror (the "lawful age" to become a Mason was 21 at that time), it was my mother who approached me and asked if I ever planned to become a Mason. My answer shouldn't surprise; it wasn't, "*Why yes, mother, I am prompted to solicit the privileges of Freemasonry by a favorable opinion conceived of the Institution, a desire for knowledge, and a sincere wish to be serviceable to my fellow creatures.*" It was more like, "*I dunno, mom, dad would never tell me anything about it.*"

Well, that's all history now. But Holly's letter had me thinking about her son and herself, and the many children who know nothing of Freemasonry because the Masons in their families never told them anything about it. In consequence, most of what too many people learn about the fraternity is based upon images of the fraternity, warped and distorted by prejudice and ignorance, that are portrayed in popular media. How many young men have come to us because they had a Mason in the family and were now anxious "to learn more about Freemasonry" because they really knew so little about it, or because they had romanticized ideas of Freemasonry learned only from popular culture? I intend no religious slight to anyone, but I feel compelled to observe the fact that to this day I have Catholic friends who look at me slightly askance when Freemasonry is mentioned, despite having known me, in some cases, for well over fifty years, because of what they have been taught by their parents and clergy.

For 45 years I have been inculcated with the lesson that Freemasons don't recruit and don't tout Freemasonry — we live lives of quiet example, in the hopes that others will admire us and seek out membership in the fraternity. Meanwhile, since the late 1950s, our numbers in New Jersey have dropped by more than 85%. I'm not arguing that our general creed needs to change; though Grand Lodges are beginning to see the need for broader public relations. But Holly's letter was, for me, a clarion call that silence about Freemasonry definitely needs to change within our own families.

If you have youngsters in your family — your own children, grand children, nephews, nieces, kids of cousins — whoever they may be, at every opportunity you should be letting them know why you are a Freemason and the role Freemasonry plays in your life. At every teaching moment — whether it's about learning right from wrong, dealing with people of a different race or religion, why honesty is important, charity — whatever it may be, you can remind them that your own personal wisdom comes in some measure from your belief in the Masonic ideals of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

I truly hope I will live to see the day when a young man comes to us seeking a petition because his father or grandfather was a Freemason who taught him about the fraternity and what it stands for, instead of because they knew someone in their family who was a Freemason, and now they're curious to learn more, because that Mason told them nothing!

That, as they say, is my opinion, and I'm sticking to it. 

For the curious, the full text of Church's editorial is reproduced below:

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.



Francis P. Church

Yes, **VIRGINIA**, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no **VIRGINIAS**. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, **VIRGINIA**, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

The Traveling Gavel

It would appear that the spirit of the Traveling Gavel is really catching on. After resting on its laurels at Laurel (paronomasia intended) for 14 months, the Gavel moved three times in the first month after the new rules went into effect at the beginning of this year. The first two moves were reported upon in February's 18th District Light.

The third such move saw the Gavel captured by USS New Jersey Lodge No. 62 on Wednesday evening, February 6, 2019, at Rising Sun Lodge's Official Visit. The crowd for the OV was large, with a ton of visitors—representing seven of the eight 18th District lodges—present. There may have been more than one qualifying contingent, but USS New Jersey's group of nine brothers, pictured here, took the prize with superior numbers.



USS New Jersey No. 62 members claim the Traveling Gavel from Worshipful Master Timothy Boyle of Rising Sun Lodge No. 15. Pictured from left to right are: Evan Vasilion, WB Jim Butler, WM Tim Boyle, USS NJ WM Fred Martin, Jr., Casey Huston, Harry Pison, WB Jack Myers, Alex Orbe, Mike Marcial, and WB Scott Vicari.

Showing due respect for decorum and protocol, Worshipful Master Fred Martin, Jr. waited until the evening's official activities were nearly complete before addressing Worshipful Master Tim Boyle and formalizing USS NJ's claim to the 18th District's proud symbol of mutual unity and support as well as the spirit of Masonic travel.

Speaking not only as the editor of the 18th District Light, but also simply as a proud 18th District Mason, it truly warmed my heart to witness the tangible, indeed, palpable brotherhood and joy that manifests when a dining hall and lodge room are filled with Masons breaking bread together, sharing our ritual work, and supporting one another. Kudos to all who attended and made it a special evening—aptly symbolized by the transfer of the Traveling Gavel. 

Photo Op: District Lodge of Instruction



These attendees (too many to name) at the 18th District's February DLI were all "purged" from the Lodge

Increased interest in the Traveling Gavel isn't the only sign of the ever-growing Masonic spirit in the 18th District. Attendance at February's 18th District Masters & Wardens Association meeting (open to all), and the District Lodge of Instruction that followed, was off the charts, and everyone present remained riveted and engaged throughout the evening. Guest speaker RW David I. Steiner, Grand Sword Bearer, kicked off DLI with remarks on the importance of remembering our obligations to widows, widowed and aging brothers, and brothers whose attendance has begun to lapse, as well as the wisdom of engaging candidates in Lodge affairs from the moment they are initiated. The assemblage then engaged in a discussion and exemplification, both active and interactive, on the proper procedures for purging a lodge, and on how a Worshipful Master might handle a situation in which the Brethren are not "satisfied with each other" when so asked during the Opening ceremonies — ably administered by RW "Bud" Madgey, DDGM, and crafted and led by RW Keith Herman, DRI. It was an evening of fellowship and instruction that will be remembered and revisited in the coming months. Stay tuned! 🏠

Masonic Profile: Oscar Wilde

Editors Note: March being the month of St. Patrick's Day, widely (and wildly) celebrated in America to honor actual Irish heritage and the spiritual Irishman in many of us, as well as to appease ubiquitous lovers of green beer, the 18th District Light thought it was appropriate to honor one of history's most famous—or infamous—Irish Freemasons. This article, though adapted from various sources, owes hugely to a paper by WB Yasha Beresiner, a Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No 2076, a.k.a. the Premier Lodge of Masonic Research, which is abridged in the material below. The 18th District Light would also like to acknowledge the website *Irish Masonic History and the Jewels of Irish Freemasonry* as the source of WB Beresiner's paper. (See, <http://www.irishmasonichistory.com/>)



Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (October 16, 1854 - November 30, 1900), during his brief Masonic tenure, was a member of Apollo Lodge No. 357 and Churchill Lodge No. 478, UGLE. He dropped his middle names in 1877.

It is a great understatement to simply say that Wilde was an Irish poet and playwright. He was to all accounts a figure larger than life; some might call him an iconoclast. He wrote in various forms throughout the 1880s and by the early 1890s had developed into one of London's most popular playwrights. He is best remembered for his epigrams and plays, including *The Importance of Being Earnest*, his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and the circumstances of his criminal conviction for homosexuality, imprisonment, and early death at the age of 46.

Wilde's parents were successful Anglo-Irish intellectuals in Dublin. Oscar became fluent in French and German early in life and, while attending universities in Dublin and Oxford, proved himself to be an outstanding classicist. Led by tutors Walter Pater and John Ruskin, he followed the rising philosophy of aestheticism and graduated into fashionable cultural and social circles in London. He published poetry, lectured abroad on the “English Renaissance in Art” and even tried his hand at interior design. Returning to London, he worked as a journalist, becoming known for his razor-sharp wit, his flamboyant sartorial style, and his perspicacious conversational weaponry; he was one of the best-known personalities of his day. As the 1880s gave way to the 1890s, Wilde refined his philosophy and, while producing works in multiple genres, became one of the most successful playwrights of late-Victorian London.

At the height of his fame and success, Wilde charged the Marquess of Queensberry, the mother of his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, with criminal libel. But the gambit backfired and brought to light the very evidence that led to Wilde's arrest and trial for gross indecency with men. A protracted legal battle ended with his conviction and sentencing to two years' hard labor from 1895 to 1897. During his imprisonment, Wilde produced *De Profundis*, published posthumously in 1905, which illuminated a gloomy reversal of his earlier philosophy. On his

release from prison, he left Britain, never to return. His last work, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, was a long ode to the harshness that was imprisonment. In Paris, at the age of 46 and utterly destitute, he died.

As WB Yasha Beresiner writes in his paper on Wilde's brief Masonic life:

Today no one will deny the genius of Oscar Wilde. Yet during his own lifetime he was spurned and humiliated in spite of the success of much of his work. He was a victim of the society into which he was born. The Victorian middle-class, whose sacred institutions of morality Wilde was to infringe, simply had no patience or tolerance for him. The saddest of the tragedies that Wilde was to write could not match the events that were to unfold and Freemasonry, which did play a significant part during his time at Oxford, was also to reject him and let him down.

Talent and intellect attract powerful friends and Oscar Wilde, a brilliant undergraduate by any standards, was befriended by various individuals of consequence who influenced his future in many ways. Amongst them were Walter Pater, John Addington Symonds, and John Ruskin. He was also very likely to have been on friendly terms with Prince Leopold, sixth son of Queen Victoria, and this acquaintance will have encouraged his introduction to Freemasonry. Prince Leopold was an accomplished Mason. In addition to his acquaintance with prince Leopold, Oscar's father, Sir William Robert Wills Wilde had been an active Mason in Ireland.

Oscar Wilde's Masonic career only spanned the four-year period that he studied at Magdalen College in Oxford, where he was initiated into Apollo University Lodge. It began and ended there, but he did take freemasonry as second nature to his character. He was fascinated by the Craft and the degrees beyond and participated in many of them.

The Apollo University Lodge was then, and is still today, a prestigious Lodge. It continues to practice its ritual in an historic style and traditional costume. Officers wear knee breeches, tail-coats and white tie and silk stockings and pumps as they have done for two centuries—an attire that would have very much appealed to Oscar Wilde's embellished sense of dress. So much so that he took to wearing his Masonic attire in public, his audience unaware of the significance of what was, effectively, Apollo Lodge dress.

Oscar took his freemasonry seriously and was a keen and active participant in Lodge affairs. Having been passed to the second degree on 24 April and made a Master Mason on the 25th of May 1875, he joined Churchill Lodge in November of the same year. The Churchill Lodge number 478 was and still is the University Lodge frequented by past graduates and senior members of the University staff. His introduction by his very good friend William Ward and by Bro James Harding, will be seen as an indication of the high regard he had already

gained as an undergraduate student.

As his second year in Oxford began, his Masonic activities took on new vigor. For reasons that are unexplained, considering the affinity of the Royal Arch to Craft Masonry, Oscar Wilde never became a Royal Arch Mason. Instead, on 27th November, 1876 he was perfected into the 18th degree of the Rose Croix - The Ancient and Accepted (Scottish) Rite - at the Oxford University Chapter No 40.

This year in Oxford was a period of religious consequence to Oscar. The Roman Catholic Church was an especially strong influence on him and he had decorated his rooms at Magdalen College, Oxford with pictures of the Madonna and various Saints. The Rose Croix and the strong religious Trinitarian content of its ritual (particularly so under the English Constitution) will have appealed to him. This Masonic Order in particular allowed his spirituality to surface and in it he found the High Church with Christ, death and resurrection, which suited him at this time in his life. Oscar took active office to participate in the ceremonial ritual. Some months after his perfection, in a letter dated 3 march 1877, he wrote to his close friend and fellow Mason, William Ward: I have got rather keen on Masonry lately, I believe in it awfully — in fact would be awfully sorry to have to give it up in case I secede from the Protestant Heresy.



Oscar Wilde
at Magdalen College, Oxford
April 3, 1876

The Order seems also to have brought out in Oscar his extravagant streak and tendency to overspend, which was to cause him some embarrassment. On three separate occasions he was summoned before the University Chancellor's Court where action was brought against him for non-payment of outstanding debts. The second of these summonses is of direct relevance because it entailed the purchase of Masonic regalia.

On 22nd March, 1878 Oscar progressed further in the Orders beyond the Craft. He was advanced into the Mark degree at University Mark Lodge No 55. This seems, however, to have been merely in response to a temporary burst of enthusiasm. Oscar's friend and proposer, Bodley, was elected Master of the Lodge at the same meeting, but neither Oscar nor Bodley ever apparently returned to the Lodge. It would appear that Oscar's membership in the Mark expired naturally, as this is the one order in which there is no evidence of his expulsion or exclusion.

Oscar's membership of the Apollo University Lodge ceased in 1878, due to non payment of dues, his demise from the Churchill Lodge was a more deliberate expulsion. In 1881 when Bro Lt. Col. Thomas Moseley Crowder was appointed Secretary to the Lodge he decided on an "efficiency drive" to collect arrears of subscriptions due to the Lodge. Amongst the

eleven members who were finally excluded in 1883, were also the two brothers, the Marquess of Blandford and Lord Randolph Churchill, in addition to C W Spencer-Stanhope, Aretas Akers Douglas and Oscar Wilde. Whilst explanations and excuses of active service abroad were accepted from all the Brethren concerned who were readmitted to the Lodge, Oscar Wilde's fate is recorded in the Lodge minutes for 4th June 1883 “Bro. Crowder Secretary proposed and Bro GL Hawkins seconded that the expulsion from the Lodge of Bro. Oscar Wilde be reported to Grand Lodge, he having failed to acknowledge the three communications forwarded to him. This was carried unanimously.”

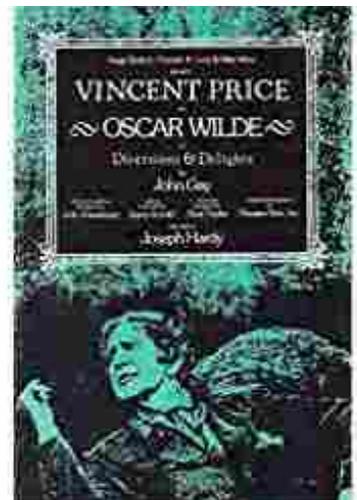
The expulsion from the Churchill Lodge effectively sealed and ended Oscar Wilde's Masonic activities. He had not yet been disgraced by society and the action taken against him in the Churchill Lodge and the remainder of the Orders from which he was finally excluded, appear to have been a matter of neglect on his part rather than deliberate action taken against him.

In meeting Alfred Douglas, affectionately referred to as Bosie, in June 1891, Oscar was to be put to the test and he failed. In February of 1895 Queensberry left the famous open card at the Albemarle Club accusing Wilde of sodomy. Oscar's failed trial against Queensberry on 3rd April, lead to his arrest just two days later. His subsequent trials ended with his imprisonment, first at Pentoville in May, followed by his transfer to Wandsworth in July and his final move to Reading Gaol in November, a month after being officially declared bankrupt.

On his release from prison in May 1897 Oscar Wilde made his way directly to Dieppe. He was to spend the last three years of his life in exile and hiding, his fate not eased by the untimely death of his mother a year earlier, his wife Constance in April 1898 and his brother Willie a year later. Oscar died in his room at the Hotel d'Alcase on 30th November, 1900 diagnosed as having suffered from cerebral meningitis. He was forty-six years old.

How much more of his extraordinary talents we might have enjoyed, had he only been born in our present tolerant, if not permissive, generation. 🍀

Editors Note: During my second year at Cornell Law School, 1978-1979, I was privileged to see the Great Vincent Price portray Oscar Wilde in *Diversions and Delights*, as it toured following its critically acclaimed 1978 Broadway run at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre. Styled as an imaginary lecture being delivered by Wilde to a Paris audience, Price portrayed Wilde in his post-prison years — broken, exiled, disgraced — reflecting upon everything from the height of his literary greatness to his obsession with Absinthe to his great love, Bosie, as he referred to Lord Alfred Douglas. His performance has stayed with me, both for its effect on my views of Price as an actor (known by too many only for his horror film performances), and for its being a primary source of my knowledge and impressions of the real Oscar Wilde. For a long time, I hadn't given it much thought, until I zeroed in on Wilde as the subject of this Masonic Profile. Realizing that I still had the souvenir program among my mementos, I scanned the cover and present it for your interest.



2019 Official Visits of the DDGM

February 4
(Monday)

Lazarus No. 303
(@ Haddonfield Temple)

February 6
(Wednesday)

Rising Sun No. 15
(@ Haddonfield Temple)

March 1
(Friday)

Laurel No. 237
(@ Laurel Temple)

March 5
(Tuesday)

Mozart No. 121
(@ Audubon Temple)

March 8
(Friday)

Merchantville No. 119
(@ Merchantville Temple)

March 12
(Tuesday)

Collingswood-Cloud No. 101
(@ Audubon Temple)

March 14
(Thursday)

Audubon-Parkside No. 218
(@ Audubon Temple)

March 18
(Monday)

USS New Jersey No. 62
(@ Merchantville Temple)