

# Revisiting John Browne's Ciphpered Masonic Works

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*(The Norman Spencer Prize Essay for 2018)*

**A**S WE HAVE JUST PASSED OR ARE APPROACHING THE TERCENTENARY OF the formation of the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster which, according to some but not all recent research, possibly took place in 1721 rather than 1717,<sup>1</sup> it may well be appropriate to revisit the ritual of this Grand Lodge, the Premier Grand Lodge, at the turn of the nineteenth century. This is approximately eight decades after the Premier Grand Lodge was formed and close to a dozen years before its union with the Antients.

<sup>1</sup> Universal Freemasonry, Tag Archives: Dr. Andrew Prescott, 'Do you think Freemasonry started in 1717? Think again', <https://bloguniversalfreemasonry.wordpress.com/tag/dr-andrew-prescott/>, 30 May 2018; A. Prescott, 'Searching for the Apple Tree: What Happened in 1716?', The Dr Charles A. Sankey Lecture Series in Masonic Studies, 2016 Lecture, <http://sankeylectures.ca/lectures/2016-lecture/>, 30 May 2018

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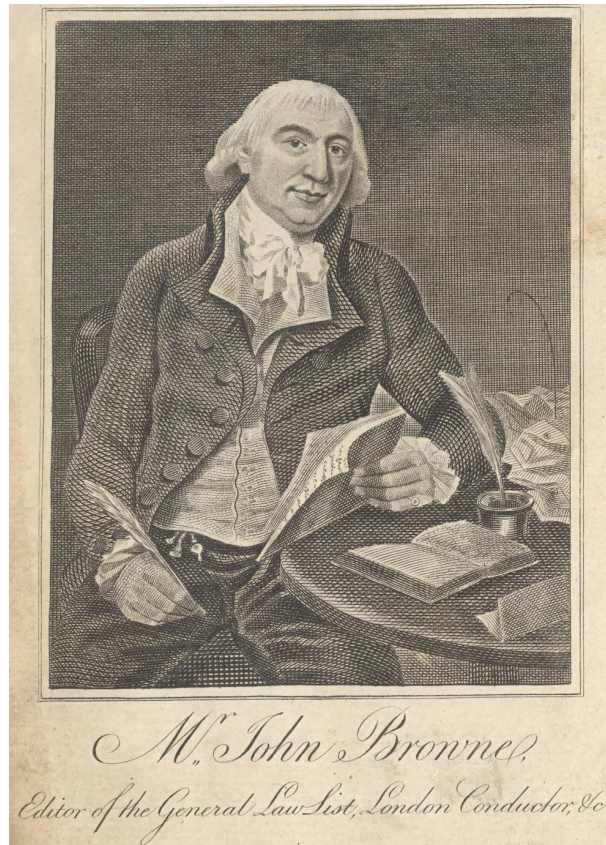


Fig. 1. The picture of John Browne from the 1802 edition of his *Master-Key*

For the years 1798 to 1802 there are five documents, all with large parts of their text disguised by ciphers or codes. John Browne wrote three of these works, the 1798 and 1802 editions of his *Master-Key* and four quarto pages that accompany his Tracing Board. William Finch wrote the other two, his *Masonic Key* published in 1801 and the updated version of this work, his *Masonic Treatise*, published in 1802. This paper covers Browne's works alone, both editions of his *Master-Key* and the quarto pages accompanying his Tracing Boards. Both his *Master-Keys* have information in addition to the Craft question and answer lectures. The 1798 edition includes lists of lodges, Grand Lodge Officers, Red Apron lodges, lodges of instruction and Royal Arch chapters, and the 1802 edition includes the charges given by the Master to his officers at the time of their election, all in plain text. Both have introductions and both have what Browne calls 'eulogisms', what we would call charges. These appear together after the ritual in the 1798 edition and interspersed with the ritual in the 1802 edition.

Not much is known about John Browne. What is known about him and his possible influence on our ritual can be read in Douglas Vieler's paper 'The Third Man, A Study of Browne's Master-Keys.'<sup>2</sup>

### Sources for this paper

The full titles of the works of John Browne that are the subject of this paper are:

*The Master-Key through all the Degrees of a Free-Mason's Lodge*,<sup>3</sup> *Browne's Masonic Master-Key through the Three Degrees by Way of Polyglot*,<sup>4</sup> and four quarto sheets that accompany *Browne's Tracing Boards*, c.1800.

### Reasons for these ciphered texts

There had been no exposures published for approximately forty years before the turn of the nineteenth century, apart from later editions of *Three Distinct Knocks* and *Jachin and Boaz*, so Browne could well have felt there was a market, remembering that at this time there were no printed rituals issued under the auspices of the Premier Grand Lodge. The rituals covered in this paper fill a gap. Probably a high proportion of these texts is in cipher to ensure that Browne would not be accused of breaching his obligation as a Freemason, never to reveal the secrets of the Craft. I suspect that the time it takes to decipher them would also mean that Freemasons would take a long time to make sense of them; at least that has been my experience of deciphering them. John Browne has himself written that readers

will at first, think it so abstruse and difficult to make out, that they will put it aside on their first attempt; instead of which, were they only to study the Words and Construction of the Lock, for twenty four Hours, at different Periods, they would learn more of this occult Science, than if they had attended Lodge for several Years, and many even all their Life-time.<sup>5</sup>

I agree with the first part of this statement but really wonder whether twenty-four hours would be enough and whether the time taken to decipher could not have been more judiciously spent visiting lodges and learning the ritual by listening to it there. But who am I, who has spent much time, off and on, deciphering and examining these texts, to make such a comment? Perhaps the enjoyment of solving these ciphered texts was just as satisfying to Freemasons of the turn of the nineteenth century as it has been to me. We can assume from Browne's statement that he saw his works as being of use to Freemasons, a

<sup>2</sup> D. Vieler, 'The Third Man. A Study of Browne's Master-Keys', *AQC* 105 (1992), 1–20.

<sup>3</sup> J. Browne, *The Master-Key through all the Degrees of a Free-Mason's Lodge* (London, 1798).

<sup>4</sup> J. Browne, *Browne's Masonic Master-Key through the Three Degrees by Way of Polyglot* (London, 1802).

<sup>5</sup> J. Browne, *The Master-Key through all the Degrees of a Free-Mason's Lodge* (London, 1798), III.

means of getting to know ‘this occult Science’. It is also probable Browne saw the publication and selling of his *Master-Keys* as a source of income.

In his 1798 edition Browne did not provide any answers, even in cipher, to the questions in that edition. As the secrets are revealed in the answers, he could point out he was not guilty of divulging them. I suspect that he decided to include the answers after William Finch had published his *Masonic Key* in 1801. It would have been difficult to sell a text without the answers when there was one available where answers were included.

### Scope of paper

This paper is concerned with the process of ciphering and deciphering Browne’s texts and the difficulties and errors involved rather than producing the ritual that can be derived from these works. Previous attempts by various decipherers of Browne’s works are examined and commented upon.

### John Browne’s *Master-Keys* and an explanation of the ciphers

There are two ciphers used in Browne’s *Master-Keys*. One of these is used for answers and the other for questions, rubrics and descriptions. The cipher for the questions etc. is a transposition of the vowels, as well as the letter ‘y’ whether it is being used as a vowel or a consonant, to the letters of Browne’s name. That is {a,e,i,o,u,y}→{b,r,o,w,n,e}.

The 1798 edition of Browne’s *Master-Key* has only questions, so this is the only cipher that is used. The 1802 edition also has answers, for which a cipher is used in which the same letters (that is the vowels and ‘y’) use another keyword, the letters from the word ‘unlock’ reversed. That is {a,e,i,o,u,y}→{k,c,o,l,n,u}.

It can be noted that in both ciphers the vowel ‘i’ is transposed to ‘o’ and the vowel ‘u’ is transposed to ‘n’. It should also be noted that upper case letters are treated differently. In the 1798 edition there is no difference between upper and lower case letters; they can be considered as equivalent. In the 1802 edition the letters are there to confuse; they are of no significance and can be deleted. In both editions words can be spread over more than one text string.

Below are samples of both of Browne’s *Master-Keys*.

#### SIT LUX, ET LUX FUIT.


  
 Splrbsrtwbs Sostmronwprnongthrlwdgr—Brwthr Rarn  
 ovrw bdrdn vhb Tosthrfo Rstcbr Rbrfwr Rthrmbsrt Rbrw Rdstw  
 wprnhoslwdgr—Brwth Rrjnnowrwdnplrbstwr Rthbtdntedwnr  
 —Wwrs Ho Pfalsrnovrwbdrnwhrnewnwbsmbdrblwhr Rrstw wd  
 thrmbsrt—Hosbnsonrssthr Rr—Brwthr Rsonthrbmrwthrgrbnd  
 —Brwthr Rsplrbsrt Wbrchbrgrd—Brwthr Rsplrbsrtwat Trndth  
 rchbrgr—Tlrko Ngbdthrc Rbftwoth \* \* \*

Fig. 2. The first block of questions in Browne’s 1798 *Master-Key*

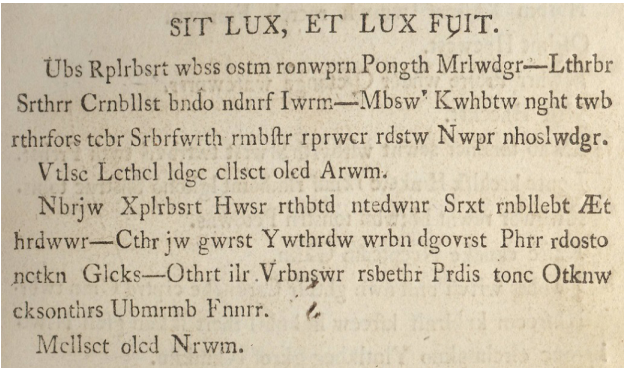


Fig. 3. The first two questions and answers in Browne’s 1802 Master-Key

Errors in Browne’s texts

There are many errors in Browne’s text, which is not surprising when one considers that the typesetting is of non-plain text and therefore it is not as easy to ascertain any errors by proofreading.

The basis of Browne’s ciphers is the replacement of the vowels with other letters. By looking at the vowel transpositions and noting any errors gives an idea of the accuracy of the ciphered text. In the analyses and tables below, although examples are taken from any degree, the percentages are based on only First Degree transpositions.

Vowel transpositions in 1798 edition of <i>Master-Key</i> that should use ‘Browne’ as the Keyword	Types of vowel transpositions	Examples			Percentage of approximately 4,039 vowel transpositions in First Degree
		Line no.	Word	Transposition	
	Correct transpositions {a,e,i,o,u,y}→{b,r,o,w,n,e}	3.03	attend	Bt Tīnd {a,e}→{b,r}	98.7
	No transposition applied Vowel not changed	1.07	attend	At Tīrnd {a,e}→{a,r}	1.0
	Other	3.11	brought	brwght (missing ‘n’)	0.2

Note that upper case letters are treated as though they were lower case. With the 1802 edition there is another complication. The incorrect transposition may be used for either the whole word or just one or more of the vowels.

Vowel transpositions in 1802 edition of <i>Master-Key</i> that should use 'Browne' as the Keyword	Examples			Percentage of approximately 4,123 vowel transpositions In First Degree
	Line no.	Word	Trans-position	
Correct transpositions {a,e,i,o,u,y}→{b,r,o,w,n,c}	5.24	architect	b Xrchotrect {a,i,e}→{b,o,r}	96.7
Keyword 'Unlock' used instead of 'Browne' {a,e,i,u,o,y}→{k,c,o,l,n,u}	9.33	please	Gplrb lc {e,a,e}→{r,b,c}	1.4
Transpositions not applied	7.20	how	h ow	0.7
Other	28.16	why	Dwhc {y}→{c}	1.1

Note that in this, and all examples from Browne's 1802 *Master-Key*, upper case letters are deleted. Also note also that the long medial s, 't', is used on occasions.

Vowel transpositions in 1802 edition that should use 'Unlock' as the Keyword	Examples			Percentage of approximately 6,299 vowel transpositions
	Line no.	Word	Trans-position	
Correct transpositions {a,e,i,o,u,y}→{k,c,o,l,n,u}	11.03	architect	krchotc Act {a,i,e}→{k,o,c}	97.3
Keyword 'Browne' used instead of 'Unlock' {a,e,i,o,u,y}→{b,r,o,w,n,c}	6.08	particularly	p Skrtocnlb rlu {a,i,u,a,y}→ {k,o,n,b,u}	0.7
Transpositions not applied	15.12	desired	dcfirc Pd {e,i,e}→{c,i,c}	1.1
Other	25.36	which	Whc h (missing 'o')	0.9

Vowel transpositions for 1° in 1802 edition that should use either 'Browne' or 'Unlock' as the Keyword	Percentage of approximately 10,422 vowels transpositions
Correct transpositions	97.1
Using wrong Keyword	1.0
Transpositions not applied	1.0
Other	1.0

From these tables it can be seen that the correct vowel transpositions takes place in 98.7% and 97.1% of cases for the 1798 and 1802 editions of Browne's *Master-Key* respectively. Other errors occur in Browne's Master-Keys, examples of which are shown in the table below. This table covers only the 1802 edition, but similar errors occur in the 1798 edition.



## REVISITING JOHN BROWNE'S CIPHERED MASONIC WORKS

Description of some common errors	Examples			
	Line no.	As written	As should be written without upper case letters or spaces	Deciphered text
Doubling of letter	5.08/09	br Srth <u>rr</u> C <u>rn</u>	brrth <u>rr</u> n	brethren
Reducing double letters	42.08	drgr <u>r</u>	drgr <u>rr</u>	degree
Reducing letters where transposed letter is the same as a consonant	88.20	br Fbdth	brrbdth	breadth
Letter acts as last letter of word and first letter of next word	42.23	t hgvcong	thcgvcong	the evening
Omitting letter	38.28	bccr ptd	bccrpt <u>r</u> d	accepted
Swapping letters within word	91.29	b <u>f</u> wr Fr	br <u>f</u> wrr	before
Swapping letters across words	30.19/20	cw mpbrofw D <u>b</u> <u>n</u> rtwr rn	cwmpbrofw <u>n</u> brtwrrn	comparison between

To take into account these errors, as well as the vowel transposition errors for the 1802 edition, a count was made of words which are correct, those that had at least one transposition in which the wrong keyword is used and those with some other error. The results are:

1802 First Degree	Words with correct transpositions	Words with at least one incorrect transposition	Words with other errors
No. of words	6,317	53	374
Percentages	93.7	0.8	5.6

The percentage of words not in error, 93.7%, is a little less than the percentages of correct vowel transpositions. So we can rely on the integrity of the ciphered texts, although, as we shall see, errors in the ciphered text do result from decipherers making errors.

### Differences between 1798 and 1802 texts

Of interest is that the questions asked differ between the 1798 and 1802 editions of Browne's *Master-Key*, some examples of which are given below.

1798 edition of Master Key	Line no.	1802 edition of Master Key	Line no.
Brother Junior Warden, please to see that duty done.	1.04	Bro. JW, please to see that duty done externally <u>at the door</u> .	5.12/13
Why is a Mason's Lodge of this vast extent?	3.21/22	Why is <u>it said that</u> a Mason's Lodge is of this vast extent?	18.08
What covering <u>do we have to our</u> Lodge?	3.33	What <u>is the</u> covering of a Mason's Lodge?	23.09

We will now look at each decipherer in turn.

## Karl Christian Friedrich Krause

Bro. Karl Krause was a German philosopher who lived from 1781 to 1832.<sup>6</sup> He coined the term ‘panentheism’. In 1805 he was initiated in the lodge *Archimedes zu den drei Reißbretern*. In 1811 he wrote *Die drei ältesten Kunsterkunden der Freimaurerbrüderschaft*. (‘The Three Oldest Articles of the Masonic Fraternity’).<sup>7</sup> This work was prepared in 1809 and the edition to which I referred was published in 1817. In this work he quotes from *The Great Mystery of the Freemason Discover’d* (an exposure of 1724), Prichard’s *Masonry Dissected* (1730) and John Browne’s *Master-Key*, 1802 edition. Here we have the earliest published deciphered First Degree of Browne’s *Master-Key*, in English as well as being translated into German. Krause developed a numbering system for referring to Browne’s work, later adopted, adapted and expanded by Sonnenkalb and used by Snoek. This consists of numbering the introductory text blocks with Roman numerals and the rest with Arabic numerals. The text blocks can be fairly large. I have adopted a different numbering system that uses the page number and a two-digit line number, divided by a full stop, thus 69.04 refers to page 69, line 4. If the text spans more than one line, first and last lines are shown, divided thus: 69.04/06.

## Johann Heinrich Felix Sonnenkalb

Also German, Felix Sonnenkalb was born c.1853 and in his day was considered an authority on the history of Freemasonry in England and the fraternal precursors of Freemasonry.<sup>8</sup> He wrote *Browne’s Master Key*<sup>9</sup> in 1922 where he deciphered the whole of the 1802 edition of Browne’s *Master-Key*, the first known publication of the whole work.

## Ernest Henry Cartwright

Bro. E. H. Cartwright was an Englishman who lived from 1865 to 1953.<sup>10</sup> He was a lawyer and was initiated into Freemasonry in 1888 in Apollo University Lodge, Oxford. Cartwright produced handwritten scripts as well as typed scripts of both the 1798<sup>11</sup> and

<sup>6</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, URL <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Christian-Friedrich-Krause>, 30 May 2018; QSA Members Forum for Masonic Research, URL <http://www.freemasonryresearchforumqsa.com/krause/about-karl-christian-friedrich-krause.php>, 30 May 2018.

<sup>7</sup> K. Krause, *Die drei ältesten Kunsterkunden der Freimaurerbrüderschaft* (Dresden, prepared in 1809 and printed in 1817).

<sup>8</sup> Masonic Encyclopedia, URL [http://freimaurer-wiki.de/index.php/Johann\\_Heinrich\\_Felix\\_Sonnenkalb](http://freimaurer-wiki.de/index.php/Johann_Heinrich_Felix_Sonnenkalb), 30 May 2018.

<sup>9</sup> F. Sonnenkalb (ed.), *Browne’s Master Key / J. Browne’s Meisterschlüssel, Zum ersten Male dechiffriert und mit deutscher Übersetzung und Anmerkungen herausgegeben* (Berlin, 1922).

<sup>10</sup> King’s College London, URL <http://www.kingscollections.org/victorianlives/a-c/cartwright-ernest-henry>, 30 May 2018.

<sup>11</sup> E. H. Cartwright, *Decipherer, Browne’s 1798 Master-Key*, November 1931.



1802<sup>12</sup> editions of Browne’s *Master-Key*. The ones referred to in this paper are those that belong to the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London. Cartwright had an article on Browne’s *Master-Keys* printed in *AQC* in 1932.<sup>13</sup>

Jan A. M. Snoek

Bro. Jan Snoek is a Dutchman, born in 1946. He has a doctorate from Leiden University in Religious Studies. Since 2000 he has been a research assistant at the Institute for Religious Studies in Heidelberg. Snoek’s key activities are definition and ritual theories, transition and initiation rituals, and the evolutionary history of Western esotericism in general and Freemasonry in particular. He edited the second of the five-volumed *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813*, entitled ‘Ritual I – English, Irish and Scottish Craft Rituals’. He also authored the chapter in this volume on John Browne’s 1802 *Master-Key* in which he published a deciphered version of this work, based on Sonnenkalb’s work but also compared with Browne’s original work.<sup>14</sup>

Errors in deciphering

It is impossible in this paper to list all the deciphering errors but I will endeavour to explain some of the more interesting ones. We will look at some examples of each decipherer.

Krause

My line numbers	Browne’s text	Krause’s numbering	Krause’s deciphered text	My deciphered text
6.23 {kcolnu}	strcn Ugthlfñ Xrlblog ktoIn	5	strength of <u>one Alligation</u>	strength of <u>our obligation</u>
12.11 {kcolnu}	c kmclpcn nntlmc	63	<u>became</u> open <u>to</u> me	<u>came</u> open <u>unto</u> me
34.02 {browne}	C <u>on</u> wh ochdrgr Orrwf mb fwnrub rr <u>w</u> rn Lw <u>won</u>	180	Which Degree of Masonry are <u>you</u> now <u>within</u> ?	<u>In</u> which degree of Masonry are <u>w</u> e now <u>in</u> ?

I cannot give any explanation why Krause has made these errors. Although when using the keyword ‘Browne’ both ‘one’ and ‘our’ are ciphered as ‘wnr’, when using the keyword ‘Unlock’ ‘our’ is ciphered as ‘lnr’ and ‘one’ is deciphered as ‘lnc’, so this is not the reason that Krasue has ‘one’ rather than ‘our’ in line 6.23.

<sup>12</sup> E. H. Cartwright, Decipherer, *Browne’s 1802 Master-Key*, April 1931.  
<sup>13</sup> Cartwright, E. H., ‘A Note on Browne’s Master Key’, *AQC* 45 (1932), pp. 90-96.  
<sup>14</sup> J. A. M. Snoek, ‘John Browne, Browne’s Masonic Master-Key, 2nd edition (1802) in J. A. M. Snoek (ed.) *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813*, Volume 2: *Ritual I – English, Scottish and Irish Rituals* (Abingdon Oxon and New York NY, Routledge, 2016).

## Cartwright

Line(s)	Browne	Cartwright's deciphering	My deciphering
7.09 {browne}	Jwn rbrwthr Ir	<u>One</u> Brother (although 'our' is stated as a possibility)	<u>Our</u> Brother
15.01/02 {kcolnu}	mufc fh	<u>Myself</u>	<u>my flesh</u>
15.02 {browne}	bct l	<u>act on</u>	<u>be to</u>
39.27 {browne}	Ghwwo Cshrw rwngh Fgtwbrc Flwbthrd.	How is he <u>wrought</u> to be cloathed (sic)?	How is he, <u>or ought</u> to be, cloathed?
43.21 {browne}	whrnc Brch mrewn.	whence <u>come</u> you?	whence <u>came</u> you?
65.20 {browne}	w hrncrc Ebmrewn.	whence <u>come</u> you?	whence <u>came</u> you?
77.12 {kcolnu}	kccn Ffongkn dcxcnf Fng	<u>keening</u> and excusing	<u>accusing</u> and excusing

**Line 7.09:** Here the text string 'wnr brwthrr' can be the deciphered to result in either 'one brother' or 'our brother'. If it is 'one', then the ciphering would involve transposing 'w'→'o', leaving the consonant 'n' as it is and transposing 'e'→'r'. If it is 'our', then again we have 'w'→'o' but also 'u'→'n'. The final consonant 'r' would not be changed. That is, both words are ciphered as 'wnr'. Cartwright has this as 'one'. However, we can compare this with William Finch's *Masonic Treatise* where we find in Finch's First Degree, Section 1, Question and Answer 16 as well as Question 17:

Any other recommendation?

A hearty good wish to all brothers and fellows.

Since our Brother brought nothing else, what might you have come here to do.<sup>15</sup>

The full deciphering by Cartwright of line 7.09 of Browne's 1802 *Master-Key* is

One Brother brings a hearty good wish.

So, although not definitive, it is more likely that the word is 'our'.

**Line 15.01/02:** The whole phrase is 'As the Compasses were then an emblem of torture to my flesh'. Cartwright has mistranslated Browne's 'mufc fh' as 'myself'. He is correct in his transposition of the vowels but has confused the letters 'f' and the long medial s 'f', reading 'f' as 'f' and 'f' as 'f', giving 'myself'. The 'c' is a result of transposing {e}→{c} using the 'Unlock' keyword. Cartwright assumed that the 'l' and the 'c' were swapped, which can happen in Browne's text as shown above. He also assumed that the final 'h' is an extraneous letter. This gives him 'myself'. Whereas reading the 'f' and 'f' as they are

<sup>15</sup> W. Finch, *A Masonic Treatise with an Elucidation of the Religious and Moral Beauties of Freemasonry* (Canterbury, 1802).

written and not assuming there has been a swapping of letters or an extraneous letter 'h', the translation is 'my flesh'.

**Line 15.02:** Following on from 'As the Compasses were then an emblem of torture to my flesh', is 'so they might ever after be to my conscience'. The words 'be to my' are ciphered as 'bct lmu'. Cartwright has read them as 'act on' with the 'a'→'b', the 'o'→'l', the 'y'→'u' and the 'm' being an extraneous letter. As this answer uses the 'Unlock' keyword, 'a' should be transposed as 'k' rather than 'b'. Using the Keyword 'Unlock' throughout and not assuming that 'm' is extraneous, that 'b' is the consonant 'b' and that the transposition 'y'→'u' has occurred, gives 'be to my'.

**Line 39.27:** There are two consecutive letters 'w' in Browne's ciphered text. Cartwright has read one as the last letter of the word 'how' and the other as the first letter of the word 'wrought'. He assumed that where there should be three letters 'w' there were only two. Reducing the double or triple letters to be single or double is something that does happen in Browne's text. But in this case, having two letters 'w' is correct. The first one is a result of the {o}→{w} and the second is the last letter of the word 'how'. Rather than 'How is he wrought' the deciphered text is 'How is he, or ought'.

**Lines 43.21 and 65.20:** Cartwright has 'whence come you' where it should be 'whence came you'. This may be a misreading of Cartwright's hand writing. I have examined Cartwright's written notes at the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, and I feel that Cartwright's hand written 'a' could easily be misread as an 'o'. Or it may be that owing to his familiarity with some modern ritual which has 'whence come you', Cartwright assumes this is what Browne wrote.

**Line 77.12:** Cartwright has read 'kccn' as 'keen' with two consonants surrounding two ciphered vowels 'ee'→'cc'. He also assumes that the long medial 'f' is extraneous. In fact, 'keen' is formed from the transpositions 'a'→'k' and 'u'→'n' surrounding the double consonant 'cc' and the 'f' is not extraneous. Therefore where Cartwright has 'keening' it should be 'accusing'.

## Sonnenkalb and Snoek

Snoek has based his work on Sonnenkalb's. As he puts it, 'Our transcription of Sonnenkalb's version, however, has been carefully compared with and where necessary corrected

on the basis of the original ciphered version.<sup>16</sup> Indeed Snoek has corrected some of Sonnenkalb's errors, as seen below.

My line numbers	Browne's text	Sonnenkalb's numbering	Sonnenkalb's deciphered text	My and Snoek's deciphered text
17.15 {browne}	onvifr Fdbndon <u>trn</u> <u>flrd</u>	104 (1 <sup>b</sup> )	invested and <u>instructed</u>	inv[e]sted and <u>intrusted</u>
32.03/04 {kcolnu}	fonolhc Hdbuhos zcklwhk thclthcrb Rrgknubh <u>osckrnon</u> Bg	170 (1 <sup>o</sup> )	finished by his <u>learning</u> what the other began by his <u>zeal</u>	finished by his <u>zeal</u> what [r]he other began by his <u>learning</u>
56.14 {kcolnu}	hc Dkrthcw <u>S</u> <u>lrd</u>	111 (2 <sup>o</sup> )	hear the <u>work</u>	hear the <u>word</u>

**Line 17.15:** Perhaps Browne's use of a now archaic spelling of 'entrusted' confused Sonnenkalb.

**Line 32.03/04:** Perhaps Sonnenkalb had a preconception of the order in which the two Saints John's attributes were stated..

**Line 56.14:** I cannot explain this error. However, there are also errors in Sonnenkalb's work that Snoek has failed to correct, some of which are listed below.

My line numbers	Browne's text	Snoek's numbering	Sonnenkalb's and Snoek's deciphered text	My deciphered text
10.07 {kcolnu}	k djlono Yngt <del>kl</del> Kldgc	44 (1 <sup>o</sup> )	adjoining the lodge	adjoining to a Lodge
10.24/25 {kcolnu}	flrcftlf <u>lcbknln</u>	49 (1 <sup>o</sup> )	forest of <u>Libanon</u>	forest of <u>Lebanon</u>
13.22 {kcolnu}	<u>lckdmcnp</u> thenlrth	75 (1 <sup>o</sup> )	<u>led</u> me up the North	<u>lead</u> me up the North
28.21 {browne}	t hrenfrd Jtwmrtr	147 (1 <sup>o</sup> )	they <u>use</u> to meet	they <u>used</u> to meet
89.31 {browne}	bnthr Grrothbs bnth Nrr	Page 89	but it has but three	but <u>here</u> it has but three
90.05 {browne}	frrpbgr twrnt <u>efovr</u>	Page 90	see page twenty <u>four</u>	see page twenty <u>five</u>
92.07 {browne}	rrgnl brwrlf Dwrmr d	Page 92	regularly formed	regular <u>well</u> formed
94.06 {browne}	<u>fovr</u> cnbot Nlhogh	Page 94	<u>four</u> cubits high	<u>five</u> cubits high
98.08 {browne}	w <u>thrrfhw</u> nldbr	Page 98	others <u>would</u> be	others [s] <u>hould</u> be

<sup>16</sup> Snoek in Snoek (ed.) *British Freemasonry, 1717–1813*, Volume 2, 180.

**Line 10.07:** Here 'tlk' has been read as 'the' when it should be 'to a.' Perhaps this is because some more modern ritual does not include the word 'to' when answering where a Candidate was next made a Mason.

**Line 10.24/25:** This is the German and Dutch spelling but a correct deciphering gives the English spelling.

**Line 28.21:** The letter 'd' is thought to be extraneous when it is not.

**Line 89.31:** It has been assumed that the letter 't' covers both the last letter of 'but' and the first letter of 'three' so that the result is 'but three it has but three'. Sonnenkalb places parentheses around the word 'three'<sup>17</sup> and Snoek omits this word but explains in a note that the word 'three' is superfluous.<sup>18</sup>

**Line 90.15 and 94.06:** The similarity in appearance of Browne's 'fovr' to the word 'four' has meant that the 'fovr' has not been deciphered.

**Line 92.07:** The 'wrl' has inexplicably been read as 'ly'.

**Line 98.08:** The letter 's' in 'should' is missing from Browne's text. Snoek has assumed that the 'h' is an extraneous letter and that the 'w' represents both the initial letter 'w' and the transposed vowel 'o', giving 'would'. A better deciphering would be to assume that the letter 's' has been omitted and that 'hw' represent the letters 'ho' in 'should'.

## Summary

So, although most of the errors in the deciphered text can be corrected, this is not always the case, be it a misreading of the ciphered text, having to sort out ambiguities or not being influenced by preconceived ideas. On the whole we can decipher most, if not all, of Browne's *Master-Keys*, and thereby gain an insight into the Premier Grand Lodge's ritual that we would not otherwise have had. But there is more.

## Text accompanying Browne's Tracing Boards

John Browne is probably better known among Freemasons for his Tracing Boards than for his *Master-Keys*. But what is not so well known is that there are four quarto pages, in cipher, that accompany his Tracing Boards. These are referred to in article by Thomas

<sup>17</sup> F. Sonnenkalb (ed.), *Browne's Master Key*, 89.

<sup>18</sup> and Snoek in Snoek, *British Freemasonry*, 249 & 432, n. 64.

Woodhead in 1904.<sup>19</sup> I have been informed in an email from Martin Cherry, Librarian of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, that they have been deciphered by H. G. Rosedale, but they have not been published. As an appendix to this paper I have published the results of my deciphering of these quarto pages. The cipher used is completely different from those used for Browne's *Master-Keys*.

After reading Woodhead's article, Bro. Neil Morse and I searched for these quarto pages for many years before finding a copy. Woodhead's article contains fourteen lines from these quarto pages. From these I was able to posit Browne's transpositions correctly, even though there was no letter 'q' in his samples it was reasonable to posit that, as there were {b}→{q} transpositions there were likely to be {q}→{b} transpositions which proved to be the case. The full list of transpositions are:

$$\{b, d, h, n\} \leftrightarrow \{q, p, y, u\}$$

It would seem that the relationship between the pairs that transpose onto each other is their being, in three cases exact and in the other case approximate, images of themselves rotated 180°. These transpositions do not have the ambiguity that can occur in Browne's vowel transpositions used in his *Master-Keys* because each of the eight letters involved is transposed into another letter and none should remain the same. In addition, upper case letters should be ignored and the letters of each text string reversed. Ciphered text strings usually contain just one word but can contain a discrete number of words. Words are not distributed over a couple of text strings as they can be in Browne's *Master-Key* ciphers. However errors do occur. Of the 4,159 ciphered words included on these four ciphered pages, there are 50 errors involving 74 words. The table below shows examples of errors that have occurred.

Error	Frequency of error	Line no.	Text string as printed	Corrected text string	Deciphered text string
Transposition did not occur	15	1.27 1.32	n <del>u</del> msaew hloy <del>u</del> odn	<u>u</u> emsaw hloy <u>u</u> odn	we as men upon holy
Missing letter	10	1.30 1.32	ytpaequi petnttsuoc	ytpaerqui petntjtsuoc	in breadth constituted
Wrong letter	9	1.25 1.29	uocm snfc	uoom snfo	moon of us
Transposed letters	4	2.19 3.16	ts <del>r</del> got Lu <del>s</del> oam	tse <del>r</del> got Lu <del>s</del> oam	to rest Mason
Word not processed	3	3.14 4.45	<u>a</u> t <u>u</u> pon	<u>t</u> a <u>u</u> odn	at upon

<sup>19</sup> T. Woodhead, 'Browne's Old Tracing Boards', *Installed Masters Association*, Vol. 1 (Leeds, 1904), 130–36.



## REVISITING JOHN BROWNE'S CIPHERED MASONIC WORKS

Text strings merges	2	1.47 1.47	htiraycyciyw Luaildxe <del>t</del> ihyw	htirayc <del>y</del> ciyw Luaildxe <del>r</del> ihyw	charity which explain why it
Text strings split	1	3.23	petdn <del>_</del> etta	petdmetta	attempted
Single letter should be doubled	1	1.46	Serey <del>t</del> nq	Serey <del>t</del> nq	but there
Letter added	1	2.60	pua <del>d</del> irg	puadirg	grip and
Word not reversed	1	4.02	<del>r</del> ye	<del>y</del> e	the
Lower case should be upper case and therefore ignored	1	2.66	<del>s</del> ecueics	<del>S</del> ecueics	science
Missing word	1	2.44	pua Legpol	pua <del>ra</del> l <del>n</del> ger Legpol	and regular Lodge

The breakdown of these classes is as follows:

Degree	No. of Latin words	No. of plain text words	No. of ciphered text words	Total number of words	Errors in ciphered words	% of errors for ciphered words
First	5	292	1,687	1,984	18	0.9
Second	4	238	1,010	1,252	24	1.9
Third (2 pages)	7	31	2,292	2,330	34	1.5
Total	16	561	4,189	5,566	76	1.4

The percentage of words correctly ciphered is 98.5%.

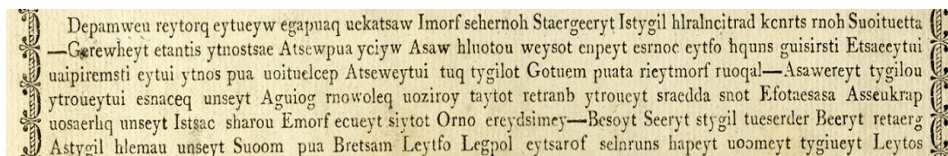


Fig. 4. The first six lines of ciphered text in the quarto page accompanying Browne's 1st degree Tracing Board. Copyright and permission, The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London

### More information

If you would like more information about Browne's ciphers and/or more examples than I could include in this paper, please contact me through my website *Browne and Finch: Masonic Cryptographer c.1800* (URL <http://browneandfinch.slaters.id.au/>). You can also contact me to obtain a password to allow you to download various works such as my deciphering of Browne's *Master-Keys*.

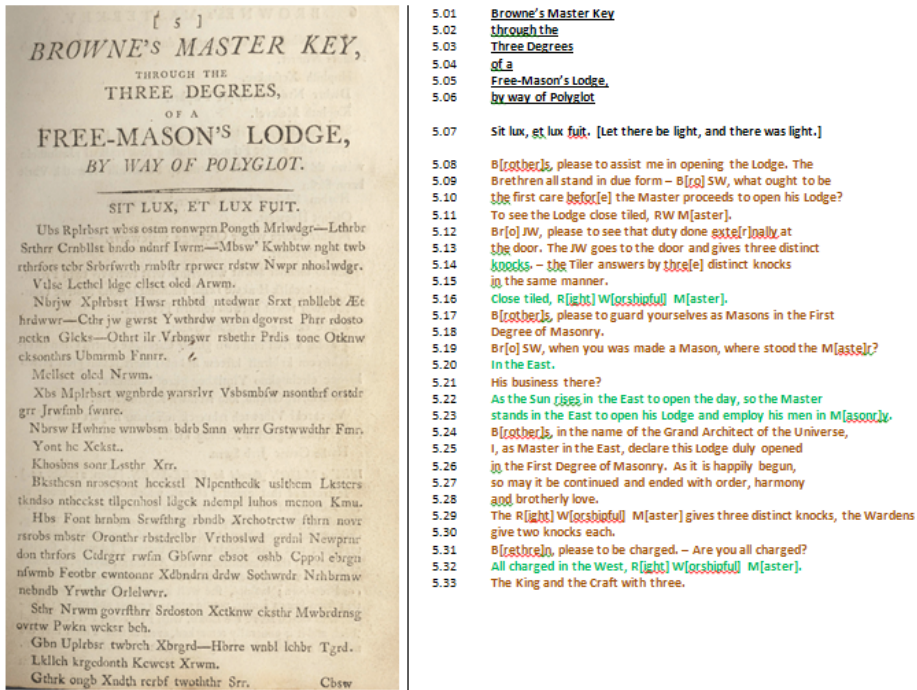


Fig. 5. A copy of the first page of the First Degree of Browne's 1802 Master-Key with the results of my deciphering on the right hand side. This is a typical page of the documents on my website.

## Acknowledgements

Many have assisted me in my research. Bro. Neil Morse deserves special thanks; he has supplied documents, information and encouragement over the many years of my Browne and Finch research. I especially thank him for obtaining Sonnenkalb's *Browne's Master Key* through inter-library loan from the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig/Frankfurt am Main, Germany. I thank the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, in particular Bro Peter Aitkenhead, Assistant Librarian, who sent me a copy of William Finch's 1801 *Masonic Key* in 2012 which I will use in a subsequent paper and who helped me find Cartwright's handwritten notes and other items when I visited the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London, in 2013. I also thank Mr Martin Cherry, the Librarian, for providing me with copies of Browne's Tracing Boards and the four quarto pages that accompany them. I thank Bro. Keith Knox, a personal friend and Librarian of Freemasons New Zealand library in Wellington, for sending me a copy of Finch's 1802 *Masonic Treatise*, which I cited in this paper. I thank Bro. Daniel Gardiner of Montana USA for

email discussions which assisted my deciphering. I also thank Bro. Tony Pope and Bro. Neil Morse who proofread an early draft of my paper as well as a near final draft only days before the deadline. I thank Mrs Margaret Wright who also proofread my paper and Bro. Alex Slater who proofread my corrected paper.

## APPENDIX

Below are the results of my deciphering the four quarto pages that accompanied Browne's Tracing Boards. It is interesting to compare the text below with Browne's 'Origin of Hieroglyphics' and 'Explanation of the Hieroglyphics' for the three degrees in his 1802 *Master-Key*. There are differences.

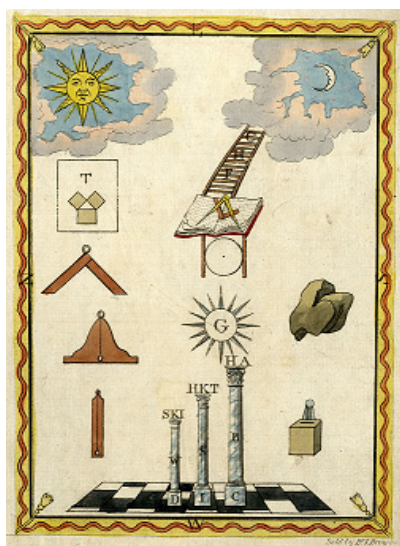


Fig. 6. John Browne's First Degree Tracing Board.  
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Museum of Freemasonry, London

### John Browne's First Degree Tracing Board

Sit Lux, Et Lux Fuit ('Let there be light, and there was light')

The origin of hieroglyphics, with their explanation, in the First Degree.

The Usages amongst *Masons* have ever corresponded with those of the ancient *Egyptians*. Their *Philosophers* unwilling to expose their *Mysteries* to vulgar Curiosity, couched the Principles of their Learning and *Philosophy* under *Hieroglyphical Figures* and *Allegorical Emblems*, and expressed their notions of Government, by *Signs* and *Symbols*, which they communicated to the *Magi*, or wise *Men* only, who were solemnly obligated never to reveal

them. Hence arose the System of *Pythagoras*, and many Orders of a more modern date, but *Masonry* you will find, is not only the most Ancient, but most Moral *Society* that ever subsisted, as there is not the least *Mark, Character, Figure, or Impression* depicted, but has a moral Tendency, and serves to inculcate the true principles of *Virtue*, in all its Professors.

To make a daily progress in the *Science*, is a Duty incumbent upon every *Mason*, as it is expressly required by our general grand Laws, for what end can be more noble than our pursuit of *Virtue*? What motives more alluring than our practice of *Justice*? And what Instructions more beneficial than an accurate Elucidation of those *Symbolical Mysteries*, which serve to embellish and adorn the *Mind*?

As these *Emblems* strike the Eye, they more immediately engage the Attention, and imprint on the *Memory* those Circumstances, which are ever accompanied with serious and solemn Truths; hence *Masons* have universally adopted this Method of inculcating the Tenets of their Order, by *Typical Figures* and *Allegorical Emblems*, in order to prevent their *Mysteries* descending into the familiar Reach of any inexperienced or unprepared Novice, from whom they would not receive due *Veneration*.

(Deciphered text for 1° Tracing Board starts here.)

New made Brother, when the bandage was taken from your eyes three great lights particularly struck your attention. They were situate East, South and West, which was not only to shew the due course of the Sun by its rising in the East, its meridian in the South and declention [*sic*] in the West, but to light men to, at and from their labour. There was no light in the North because the Sun, going below our horizon to that quarter, the North appears to us as a seat of darkness by reason the Sun casts no rays from thence to this our hemisphere. Those three lights represent three greater lights, namely the Sun, Moon and Master of the Lodge, for as the Sun rules the day, the Moon the night, so the Master ought to rule and govern his Lodge. Why the Master has the honour of being put in comparison with those two great luminaries in Freemasonry is as it is by the blessed divine influence of the two former, we as men are enabled to perform the duties of a social life, so it is by the kind care and instructions of the Master we as Masons are enabled to perform those duties which he and the Craft require of us. By the help of those three great lights I am now enabled to discover to you the form of the Lodge which is a parallelogram in length from East to West, in breadth between North and South and in depth from the surface of the Earth to the centre, even as high as the Heavens.

Our Lodge is supposed to stand upon holy ground because the first regular constituted Lodge was held on that holy consecrated ground whereon those three grand offerings were first made which rendered the groundwork of Masonry holy. Relate those three first offerings.

Our Lodge is situate due East and West because all places of divine worship are or ought to be so situate, for which we give three reasons. First the Sun, the glory of the Lord, first rose in the East and set in the West. Secondly evangelical and moral knowledge was first taught in the East and propagated in the West. There is a third, last and grand reason.

Our Lodge is supported by three great pillars, namely Wisdom, Strength and Beauty for, if we cast our eyes to the firmament, we shall find Wisdom to contrive in all our actions, Strength to support us in all our difficulties and Beauty to adorn the mind of man and fashion him to the will of his Divine Creator. Their orders in architecture are the three most celebrated at the building of the Temple, namely the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, and they are said to represent Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abiff. Solomon King of Israel for his great wisdom in building and dedicating the Temple to God's service. Hiram King of Tyre for his great strength in supporting King Solomon with men and materials and Hiram Abiff for his being a curious and cunning workman in brass and other metals in beautifying and adorning the same.

The covering of the Lodge is a celestial canopy of divers colours and the way we hope to arrive to it is by way of a ladder, in Scripture called Jacob's Ladder. Explain why so called. This ladder has many rounds or staves which point out as many moral virtues but there it has three principal ones namely Faith, Hope and Charity, which explain. This ladder is said to reach to heavens, rests and upon the Holy Bible. Explain why it rests on that book.

The interior part of the Lodge is composed of Ornaments, Furniture and Jewels. The Ornaments are the Mosaic Pavement which is the beautiful groundwork of a Mason's Lodge, the Blazon Star, the glory in the centre, and the Tesselated Border which is the skirtwork round the same. Explain what they remind us of, what they allude to and what they point out. Explain the four tassels. Explain why mosaic work is introduced into a Mason's Lodge.

The Furniture of the Lodge is the Bible, Compass and Square. The Bible is to rule and govern our faith and on it we obligate our new made brethren, so is the Compass and Square, when united, that of our lives and actions. The Bible is derived from God and belongs to men in general. The Compass to the Grand Master in particular and the Square to the whole Craft. Why so, explain. We have six Jewels, thee moveable and three immoveable. The moveable Jewels are the Square, Level and Plumb Rule. Explain their uses. Explain why they are called moveable. The immoveable Jewels are the Tracing Board, Rough and Perfect Ashlars. Explain them. Explain the beautiful degree of comparison. Explain why they are called immoveable.

Explain the dedication. Explain the point within the circle and why the Master and Brethren in going round cannot materially err.

The son of a Mason we call a Lewis because it denotes strength. Explain his duty to his aged parents and his priviledge [*sic*] for so doing.



John Browne's Second Degree Tracing Board. *Hic Labor, Hoc Opus.*  
(‘This is the hard work, this is the toil’)

The Almighty God, the grand Architect of the Universe, having blessed *Solomon* King of *Israel* with Wisdom, Peace and Plenty, he determined to build a magnificent *Temple* to the Lord, on Mount *Moriah* at *Jerusalem*, for which Purpose, he sent to *Hiram* King of *Tyre* for *Cedar-wood* and other *Materials* requisite to accomplish the pious Designs of his father *David*. He ordered the *Stones* and *Timbers* to be first prepared, by having them properly carved, marked, and numbered, in order that there might not be heard the Sound of *Axe*, *Hammer*, or any *Metallic Tool*, throughout the whole, that the *Temple* should not be *polluted*. He likewise sent for *Hiram Abiff*, the *Widow's Son of Tyre*, of the Tribe of *Naphthali*, as being a curious and cunning Workman in *Gold*, *Silver*, *Brass*, and other *Metals*, to embellish it within and without with a vast variety of *Carved Works*, and to overlay them with *Gold*, in the most profuse Manner. At the Completion of the *Temple*, he summoned a numerous Assembly [*sic*] of *Israelites*, and then with the utmost Pomp and Splendour, with many pious Prayers, Ejaculations, innumerable Thanksgivings, and costly Sacrifices, dedicated the glorious *Building* to the only *True* God, the God of *Israel*, the grand *Architect* of the *Universe*, to whom we ought all to pay the greatest Adoration by divine Worship.



Fig. 7. John Browne's Second Degree Tracing Board. Copyright and permission, The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London.

(Deciphered text for 2° Tracing Board starts here.)

(The above is by Brother Browne)

At the building of King Solomon's Temple our antient Brethren worked six days. They did not work on the seventh day because the Almighty was six days in periodically

creating the heavens and the earth and all things contained and therein, thereon from chaos to perfection and on the seventh day God's works being ended he hallowed, blessed



and sanctified the same intending thereby that man should work with industry six days for the support of himself and family and set apart the seventh to rest from labour and to praise and glorify God for his being his protection, his sustenance and every other blessing he enjoys.

As they worked they received their wages in the Middle Chamber. They got there by way of a porch. At the entrance of which two great pillars struck their attention. That on the right was called J..... (*full word given in quarto sheet*) which signifies to establish. That on the left B... (*full word given in quarto sheet*) which denote strength and when united stability for God said in his strength he would make firm that his house to stand. Those two pillars were thirty five cubits high each, twelve in circumference and four in diameter. They were said to be hollow the better to contain the archives of Masonry for therein was deposited the constitution roll. As they were hollow their rim or shell was four inches or a hand's breadth. They were cast in the Plain of Jordan in the clay ground between Succoth and Zaredathah when Hiram Abiff superintended the casting of them.

Those two pillars were adorned with a chapter on each which were five cubits high and were enriched with lillywork, network and pomegranates. Lillywork for its whiteness denote peace, network for its connection of meshes denote unity and pomegranates for their exuberance of seed denote plenty. There were two rows on each chapter and one hundred in each row which make four hundred in the whole. Those two pillars were further adorned with two spherical balls, on one was a representation of the celestial bodies and on the other maps of the terraqueous globe and they were said to be finished when the network was thrown over them.

They were placed at the entrance of the Temple as a perpetual remembrance to the Israelites of that miraculous pillar which had two such wonderful effects, one was of light to the Israelites by night to conduct them through the Red Sea; and the other as a pillar of cloud and darkness to the Egyptians by day which prevented their pursuit and overwhelmed Pharaoh and all his host when they attempted to follow them. King Solomon therefore thought he could not place them more conspicuous than at the entrance of the Temple that the Jews might ever after have that miraculous event in remembrance at going in and coming out of worship. After our antient Brethren had passed those two great pillars they arrived at the foot of a winding staircase where they were stopped by the antient Junior Warden who demanded of them the Sign, Token and Word of a Fellow Craft. After their giving such proofs of their abilities he said 'Pass B...' (*full word given in quarto sheet*).

They passed up the winding staircase consisting of three, five, seven or more steps. Because three rule a Lodge, five hold a Lodge and seven or more when assisted by the Holy Bible make a just, perfect and (*perhaps 'regular' should be added here*) Lodge. The three that rule a Lodge is the Master and his two Wardens. The five that hold a Lodge are the

Master, two Wardens and two Fellow Crafts. And the seven or more that make a perfect Lodge may be two Entered Apprentices added to the former. Why three rule a Lodge is because there were but three Grand Masters who bore sway at the Temple, namely Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abiff. Why five hold a Lodge is in allusion to the five Noble Orders in Architecture, namely the Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite. Why seven or more make a perfect Lodge is because King Solomon was seven years and upwards in building and dedicating the Temple to God's service and they further allude to the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy. The Bible makes a Lodge just because it is the primary supreme grand archive of Masonry and is that sacred history called the Holy Scriptures handed down by Moses, that inspired writer of God's commands, and who was the Grand Master of the Lodge of Israel; it also contains the most eminent virtues both moral and divine and, as it is through our faith therein that spring our love and fear of God, which is the origin of all Wisdom, it thence inspires us with such spiritual discernment that enables us to direct our lives not only to obtain the blessings of a peaceful mind here but the full assurance of celestial bliss in the world to come.

After our antient Brethren had got to the top of the stairs they arrived at the door of the Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple, which they found open but close tiled by the antient Senior Warden, by reason of the antient Junior Warden having the care of the staircase below. He demanded of them the pass grip and password of a Fellow Craft. Date its original. (*Maybe this sentence is out of place.*) After our antient Brethren had given those further proofs of their abilities he said 'Pass Shh' (*full word not given in quarto sheet*). They passed into the Middle Chamber where they went to receive their rewards which they received without diffidence or scruple, without diffidence knowing they had earned them and without scruple they put such confidence in their Masters in those happy days they received their wages without counting. While they were in the Middle Chamber the letter G particularly struck their attention, which denotes Geometry or the fifth science on which Masonry is founded, but more particularly God the Grand Architect of the Universe to whom we must all submit.

## John Browne's Third Degree Tracing Board, the *Ne Plus Ultra* of the Craft

*By Br. J. Browne, P.M. of Six Lodges, M.A. and Editor of Browne's Masonic Master-Key through the Three Degrees, by way of Poliglot, under the Sanction of the Craft in general.*

*(Deciphered text for 3° Tracing Board starts here.)*



Fig. 8. John Browne's Third Degree Tracing Board  
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Museum of Freemasonry, London

At the building of King Solomon's Temple there were but three Grand Masters namely Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abiff. And for certain cogent reasons best known to themselves they obligated each other in the most solemn compact not to divulge their secrets as Masters to Craft Masons until the completion of the Temple. When that most magnificent and superb structure was nearly finished the following melancholy, diabolical catastrophe came to pass, the particulars of which I shall briefly relate.

At the building of King Solomon's Temple Hiram Abiff, having the superintendence of the building, it was his usual custom after high twelve at noon, while the workmen were gone from labour to refreshment, for him to go into the Temple to pay his adoration to the Almighty God, the Grand Architect of the Universe, to survey the works, to draw fresh designs upon the Tracing Board and to carry his reports to King Solomon.

At that time there were three degenerated Fellow Crafts who, having more ambition than prudence and knowing there was a higher degree in Masonry which they had not attained, they formed a conspiracy to waylay our Grand Master Hiram and to extort those secrets from him either by threats or blows and, if they proved abortive, even to put him to death. They therefore planted themselves (*perhaps 'at' should be added here*) the East, South and West Gates of the Temple to wait his return.

Our Master Hiram, having finished his prayers and designs, as he was going out at the East Gate to carry his reports to King Solomon he was accosted by a ruffian who boldly demanded of him the secrets of a Master Mason. He told him he did not receive them in that kind of manner, neither could he deliver them, but recommended unto him time, patience and his own industry, and he made no doubt but at the completion of the Temple King Solomon would reward him with them. Which answer, not satisfying the villain he, with the setting maul, gave him a blow on the right temple which caused him to reel towards his left.

When recovering from his surprise, and gaining his strength, he attempted to go out at the South Gate when he was stopped by a second more daring villain than the former, who in like manner demanded of him the secrets of a Master Mason. He gave him for answer the same as to the former. Which, not satisfying the ruffian, he with the setting rule gave him a more violent blow on the left temple which caused him to reel towards his right.

When recovering from his second surprise and gaining his strength he attempted to go out at the West Gate as being his last and only resource when he was stopped by a third more daring villain than the two former who, in the most tremendous manner, with many horrid imprecations and menacing threats too shocking to repeat, boldly demanded of him the secrets of a Master Mason. He gave him for answer the same as to the two former with this addition, that there were only two in the world who know them besides himself, namely Solomon King of Israel and Hiram King of Tyre, and as they were bound in the most solemn compact not to divulge them he, as a staunch Mason, would sooner undergo the penalties contained in his obligation than reveal them. Which answer so exasperated the villain that, with the heavy beetle, he gave him a fatal blow on his forehead which proved his immediate quietus or death.

After those three degenerated Fellow Crafts had so unhumanly murdered our Grand Master Hiram, they hid him in the Temple till twelve at night, they then took him out at the West Gate to a brow of a hill and there very indecently buried him. He was first missed after high twelve the same day by reason of his not carrying his reports to King Solomon as usual. He was generally missed after high twelve the next day by reason of the workmen coming from refreshment to labour, finding no fresh designs upon the tracing board, which flung them into confusion and they went and acquainted King Solomon therewith. King Solomon, suspecting what had happened, immediately ordered an embargo

to be laid upon all floats and shipping and guards at the frontiers of the towns, that none might depart his dominions until our Grand Master Hiram was found living or dead.

King Solomon then ordered fifteen loving Brethren to go in search of him. Those fifteen loving Brethren went into the Temple and, after making diligent search without effect, they formed themselves into three Fellow Crafts Lodges, five each, and went out at the three entrances, namely the East, South and West Gates of the Temple, agreeing to keep within hail of each other.

After many days fruitless search one of the Brethren, being more weary than the rest, sat himself down on the brow of a hill and, in order to facilitate his uprising, he caught hold of a sprig or shrub which, coming easily up by the root, gave him suspicion the ground had been newly broken, he therefore hailed his Brethren, they pursued their search and found their Grand Master Hiram very indecently buried. They filled up his grave again and covered it over with fresh moss and turf saying, in Latin, *muscnc domus Dei gratia* ('Thanks be to God, our Grand Master Hiram has got a mossy house'). They then stuck a sprig of cassia at the head of the grave, that they might know where to find it again and went and acquainted King Solomon therewith.

King Solomon, with great emotion smote upon his breast and said 'Oh, G....., G....., (*full words given in quarto sheet*) what I so much feared is come to pass, our excellent builder is slain'. King Solomon then ordered the same fifteen loving Brethren to go and raise him to a more decent interment knowing him to be worthy of it, at the same time informed them that by his untimely death the secrets of a Master Mason was lost but, as a reward for their fidelity, the first casual Sign, Token and Word that should occur at the opening the grave and our Grand Master uprising should be adopted in their room until further ages should discover the right. Those fifteen loving Brethren assembled round the grave and formed themselves into a Fellow Crafts Lodge.

On the ground being opened, whether by stench or surprise, they all found themselves in this position, they looked round at each other and, remembering the words of King Solomon, they adapted it as the first casual Sign. Two of the Brethren, being more zealous than the rest lipped [*sic*] (*probably 'leaped' as this is what is written in Browne's 1802 Master-Key, line 74.16*) into the grave and endeavoured to raise him by the Entered Apprentice's grip which proved a slip. They then endeavoured to raise him by the Fellow Craft's grip which proved a slip also. They then took a more firm hold by the sinews and bones of his hands and raised him by the Five Points of Fellowship, which proved the first casual Token. One of the Brethren, in the grave in order to facilitate his uprising, clapt his hand upon his back but, as his body had laid so long in the ground, his flesh became so putrified that his fingers penetrated to the bone, he drew them back smelt to them and said 'MB' which proved the first casual Word.

After his body was raised, King Solomon ordered the same fifteen loving Brethren to cloath themselves in white gloves and adorns [*sic*] as emblems of their innocence and to bury him with all the obsequious funeral ceremonial, pomp and splendour due to a person of his high and distinguished merit and character, in a grave six feet East and West, three feet between North and South, and six feet perpendicular, as near the Sanctum Sanctorum as the Jewish laws would permit. For by the Mosaic laws all men's flesh was deemed unclean so that no person whatever was permitted to enter the Sanctum Sanctorum but the High Priest alone, and not even him until after many purifications and washings on the grand day of the expiation of sins.

At the building of King Solomon's Temple, it was the usual custom for Entered Apprentices to mess in sevens and Fellow Crafts to mess in fives. When the body of our Master Hiram was found, it was generally remarked that three Fellow Crafts were missing from their messes at noon and lodgings at night, which gave strong suspicion that they were the murderers of our Grand Master Hiram. King Solomon therefore ordered the same fifteen loving Brethren to go in search of those suspected murderers. They, knowing them to be men of Tyre, went down to Joppa where the stones and timbers were landed for the building and enquired if any such men had been there. They received for answer there had but, owing to an embargo being laid upon all floats and shipping, and guards at the frontiers of the towns, they had returned into the interior parts of the country. Those fifteen loving Brethren returned Into the country in pursuit of them and, as they passed by the mouth of a cave, they heard three men excusing and accusing each other, they knew them by their dialect to be men of Tyre, they rushed into the cave, bound them and took them before King Solomon.

Their Names were Jubele, Jubelo and Jubelum. Jubele, the first, appeared in a right humble, halting, moving posture in doing due homage to the King, fell down on his left knee bare. The King asked him what ought to be done to that vile wretch who had been concerned in the murder of our Grand Master Hiram. He, not thinking there was sufficient evidence to convict him, boldly answered that he ought to have the penalty contained in our First Obligation inflicted upon him. The King in his great wisdom further interrogated him when guilt flew in his face and he confessed the fact when the King ordered him out to his Ministers of Justice, during his further pleasure.

Jubelo, the second, appeared in nearly the same right humble, halting, moving posture as the former had done in doing due homage to the King, he fell down upon his right knee bare. The King asked him what ought to be done to that vile wretch who had been concerned in the murder of our Grand Master Hiram. He, like the former, not thinking there was sufficient evidence to convict him, boldly answered that he ought to have the penalty contained in our Second Obligation inflicted upon him. The King in his great wisdom further interrogated him when guilt flew in his face and he also confessed the



fact (*new sentence indicated but it makes more sense to continue with the same sentence*), when the King ordered him out to his Ministers of Justice, during his further pleasure.

Jubelum, the third, appeared in a more right humble, halting, moving posture than the two former had done for, in doing due homage to the King he fell down upon both knees bare. The King asked him what ought to be done to that vile wretch who had been the actual murderer of our Grand Master Hiram. He, like the two former, not thinking there was sufficient evidence to convict him, boldly answered that he ought to have the penalty contained in our Third Obligation inflicted upon him. The King, in his great wisdom, further interrogated him when guilt flew in his face and he also confessed the fact when the King ordered him out to his Ministers of Justice during his further pleasure.

Solomon King of Israel, being in alliance with Hiram King of Tyre, he sent an ambassador to acquaint him that three of his subjects had murdered our Grand Master Hiram, full schedule of their confession of guilt when Hiram King of Tyre sent for answer that he might use his pleasure but he thought that the same punishments they had prescribed for others should be inflicted upon themselves. Which was accordingly done down at Joppa, at low water mark as near the confines of both countries as possible, being outcasts of both and worthy of neither.

New Raised Brother, this is the representation of our Grand Master Hiram's coffin. These represent the tools our Grand Master was murdered with, namely the Setting Maul, Setting Rule and Heavy Beate. This skull and cross bones, it is almost needless to inform you, are emblems of mortality. These are the initials of our Grand Master's name. These figures is the date of Masonry from the Creation. This is the date of the Year of our Lord Christ. This MB is the initials of the Word which was substituted for that which was lost. This TC are the initials of a Master's Password. This letter G represents the initial of an excellent Master Mason's name, for King Solomon conferred that name upon all excellent Master Masons.

The ornaments of a Master's Lodge are the Porch, three Dormers and Square Pavement. The Porch is the entrance of the Sanctum Sanctorum. The three Dormers are the East, South and West windows, which gave light to the same. And the Square Pavement for the High Priest to walk upon. The High Priest's duty was to burn incense and to pray fervently to the honour and glory of God, that the Almighty might in His unbounded wisdom and goodness preserve peace and tranquillity throughout all nations during the ensuing year. I shall now, new made Brother, conclude with an ardent, fervent prayer that the fragrantcy of virtue, like the cassia, be ever found in every Master Mason's breast.





David Slater, a third generation Freemason, was initiated in 1983, and passed and raised in 1984 in Lodge The King's School No. 760 (UGL of NSW & ACT) by his father V. W. Bro. Bob Slater, then WM. The tradition continues with David occupying the chair at his son Alex's three degrees. Alex will be in the audience at his father's Norman B. Spencer Prize presentation. Lodge The King's School consolidated with other school lodges in 2010 forming The Schools Lodge No. 639. David is its Education Officer as well as an Education Officer in Lodge Common-

wealth of Australia (No. 633), a lodge in which he was WM for three terms. He is Organist of Yass Lodge of Concord No. 27, SW of The Discovery Lodge of Research No. 971, Treasurer of the Linford Lodge of Research, a member of QCCC, an associate member of the Lodge of Living Stones No. 4957 (UGLE), a correspondent member of the Victorian Lodge of Research No. 218 (UGL Victoria), and a member of Kring Nieuw Holland. David is a vice president of the ANZMRC and a Kellerman Lecturer – presenting his paper 'Mysticism, Masculinity and Masonry' at its 2004 conference. He holds the conferred Grand Rank of PDGDC.