

**Women Freemasons and Feminist causes 1908 – 1935:
The Case of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient
Masonry**

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Abstract

An important but hitherto unstudied aspect of the women's movement in Britain between 1900 and 1935 was the appearance of organisations of Freemasons which admitted women. This thesis is a case study of one such body, the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry (HFAM). The roots of women's Freemasonry reach back to the eighteenth-century French Lodges of Adoption. In 1902, the social reformer and Theosophist Annie Besant established a lodge of the French-based International Order of Co-Freemasonry, *Le Droit Humain*, in London. In 1908, the clergyman William Cobb led a secession from Besant's Order and created the HFAM, which under the charismatic leadership of Cobb and his successor Marion Halsey, became the largest British Masonic Order admitting women.

An analysis of HFAM's social composition shows the dominance of aristocratic women during the period before 1914 and illustrates the functioning of social networks in support of the women's movement. HFAM mobilised these networks to support the campaign for women's suffrage. An innovative social experiment by the HFAM was the establishment in 1916 of the Halsey Training College to train secondary school teachers. With the expansion of the social basis of HFAM's membership after the First World War, HFAM's organisation of its philanthropic activities changed with the establishment of its Bureau of Service. This smaller-scale but more diverse social programme undertook effective work at a local level but ultimately proved unsustainable. The HFAM illustrates many structural issues of the women's movement: the importance of quasi-religions such as Theosophy; the leadership of aristocratic women; the importance of male support; and the effect of a shift to more local activities and a wider middle class membership after the First World War. In particular, the HFAM provides new perspectives on interpretations of the idea of the complementarity of the sexes within the women's movement to 1935.

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Abbreviations

AASR	Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite
AFAMMW	Order of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masonry for Men and Women
AFMM&W	Order of Ancient Free Masonry for Men and Women
AQC	<i>Ars Quatuor Coronatorum</i>
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
EC	English Constitution
GLSE	La Grande Loge Symbolique Ecosaise de France
HFAM	Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry
HMI	His Majesty's Inspector [for Education]
HTC	Halsey Training College
JP	Justice of the Peace
LEA	Local Education Authority
MW	Most Worshipful [Grand Master]
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
NUSEC	National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
OBE	Order of the British Empire
OWF	Order of Women Freemasons [from 1958]
QMAAC	Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps
RW Bro.	Right Worshipful Brother
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TET	Theosophical Educational Trust
TS	Theosophical Society

TUC	Trades Union Congress
UGLE	United Grand Lodge of England
US	United Suffragists
WAAC	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WFL	Women's Freedom League
WM	Worshipful Master
WRAF	Women's Royal Air Force
WRNS	Women's Royal Naval Service
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WVR	Women's Volunteer Reserve
WW1	World War One

Introduction

In understanding the character and significance of the women's movement for political, legal and social emancipation in the early twentieth century, it is essential to analyse the forms of interaction between women and the associations and networks by which they gave support to each other. One of the institutions which underpinned the women's movement at this time was Freemasonry, since the first two of the three great Masonic principles, namely Brotherly Love and Relief, were readily applicable to feminist causes. This thesis begins with a historical overview of the significance of Freemasonry within the women's movement. This is followed by a statistical analysis of the membership of one particular Masonic order in order to see what their social and economic background can tell us about the nature of the women's movement and its encounter with Freemasonry. Finally, three case studies are presented which both illustrate the supportive interaction which underpinned the women's movement and aim to examine how women (and men) Masons contributed to feminism and feminist activities through this period.

The case studies all relate to the Masonic order called the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry, generally known since 1958 as The Order of Women Freemasons. The concept of service was important within the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry and provided a major element of the rationale for its engagement with the women's movement. Chronologically, the following phases can be discerned in the involvement of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry with the women's movement: firstly before and during World War I in the support of

women's suffrage and the formation of relief organisations; secondly, between 1916 and 1922 by the establishment of a pioneering educational initiative – the Halsey Training College for teachers of secondary education and social workers; and thirdly in the late 1920s and early 1930s by the foundation of a charitable organisation called the Bureau of Service, through which women Masons interacted with various state and voluntary philanthropic agencies.

The Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry at its foundation in 1908 was a mixed Order but within ten years was predominantly a female organisation. It was a hierarchical and autocratic society but in the period under consideration not a reactionary one. It will be shown that these women were able to make genuine advances in improving both their own lives and space and in the lives of other women.

The period covered by the thesis - 1908 to 1935 – was chosen because the former marks the year in which the HFAM was founded as a break-away movement from the Co-Masons; the latter date is a watershed when the Order *formally* announced that it was to be a single-sex organisation, although in reality (with the exception of two high-ranking male officers) this had been the case since 1920. By 1935 the Order was also beginning to expand outside London to distant parts of the country, which rapidly increased its membership. To extend this study chronologically would have been logistically very difficult because of the quantity and location of the records.

Women have traditionally been closely associated with philanthropy and a line of descent can be traced from the Evangelical practice of visiting in the nineteenth century which continued well into the twentieth century, even after the state began to assume responsibility for welfare relief. One of the major themes to emerge from a study of the role of Freemasonry in the women's movement is the significance of this practice of maternalistic charity. A second, and closely related theme, of this study is the nature and impact of the service ethic of the aristocracy and it is concluded that the disproportionate number of aristocratic ladies shown to be members of the HFAM looked upon that organisation as a vehicle for the extension of their philanthropy and that they used their friendship networks for its development. A third, and final, overarching theme is that of complementarity. Complementarity is taken usually as a term to describe the 'new feminism' of the interwar period, and defined as an equivalence which acknowledges and accepts male and female differences. However, in the broader sense of men and women working together and complementing each other, it was also present in mixed Freemasonry, in the social and political role of aristocratic women, in the approach of the constitutional suffragists, and in women's war relief work, as well as in the lives of the majority of middle class women between the wars.¹

¹ Compact OED: 'a situation in which two or more different things enhance each other or form a balanced whole'. http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/complementarity?view=uk (accessed 27/9/09). For 'new', 'difference' or 'welfare' feminism, see for example Cheryl Law, *Suffrage and Power: The Women's Movement, 1918-1928* (London, 2000), pp. 165-6; Harold L. Smith, 'British Feminism in the 1920s', in *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. H.L. Smith (Amhurst, Mass., 1990), p. 48; S.K. Kent, 'Gender reconstruction after the First World War', in *ibid.*, p. 71; Tammy M. Proctor, 'On My Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain', *Trans. American Philosophical Soc.*, N.S. Vol. 92, No. 2 (2002), p. 66; J. Alberti, *Beyond Suffrage: Feminists in War and Peace, 1914-28* (Basingstoke and London, 1989), pp. 189-190; for the Victorian aristocracy, see particularly Pat Jalland, *Women, Marriage and Politics 1860-1914* (Oxford, 1988), Ch. 7, 'Roles and Attitudes', pp. 190-220.

Historians in general have not yet studied the importance of Freemasonry in the women's movement.² Up to now there has been no research into the composition of the membership of women's or mixed Masonic organisations or of their activities outside the Lodge and how these impacted on the outside world (indeed, there has been little research on the social composition of Masonic orders in Britain generally, including the male ones). This thesis is therefore innovative in this respect but at the same time it adds to the literature on the religious and spiritual elements in suffrage and introduces the support given by Freemasons to the suffrage cause and to wartime relief work. It places the work of Freemasons in the context of educational developments following the War and in the public and political sphere at this time; and it expands the literature on the survival, strength and nature of feminism during the post-war period, particularly in respect of the 'new feminism' of the 1930s.

² For women in Co-Masonry, see G. and Y. Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie vint aux Femmes: deux siècles de Franc-Maçonnerie d'adoption féminine et mixte en France 1740-1940*, (Paris, 1997); Andrée Buisine, *La Franc-Maçonnerie anglo-saxonne et les femmes* (Paris, 1995); for a misogynist view up to 1900, see R.A. Gilbert, 'The Monstrous Regiment: Women and Freemasonry in the Nineteenth Century', *AQC*, vol. 115 (2002), pp. 153-182 and for a more balanced view of the later period, see James Smith Allen, 'Sisters of another sort: Freemason Women in Modern France, 1725-1940', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 75 (Dec. 2003), pp. 783-835.

Sources

My role as Librarian and Archivist of The Order of Women Freemasons (the name by which the Honourable Fraternity is now known) both gave me an irresistible interest in the history of women's Freemasonry and the opportunity to examine their records. The evidence put forward in this thesis is therefore mainly drawn from these primary sources.

The most important of these are the minute books of Grand Lodge, of the Board of General Purposes and of the first three Lodges consecrated in 1908. The minute books of Grand Lodge are extant from June 1908 until today. From 1912 until his death in 1935, they have the benefit of being *verbatim* records from the shorthand taken by the Grand Secretary, Peter Slingsby. Subsequent Grand Lodge records lack this immediacy and completeness, tending to be brief accounts of decisions taken. The same applies to the minutes of the Board of General Purposes, as Slingsby was also Clerk to the Board.

For the period up to 1925, the minute books of the first three Lodges consecrated – Golden Rule No. 1, Emulation No. 2 and Lodge of Unity No. 3 – are all available, the earlier volumes held in the Order's Archive. They have interesting differences according to the predilections and abilities of the various Secretaries.

The minutes of Lodge Golden Rule, whose Worshipful Master was Dr William Cobb, the key figure in the establishment of the Order, contain handwritten versions of all the lectures he gave at meetings, together with amendments doubtless requested

by him, such as 'elected' changed to 'appointed' in the case of Lodge officers. The Secretary of Golden Rule also describes all members as 'Brother' from the very first meeting in June 1908, whereas Emulation uses the word 'Sister' for women until November of that year and gives abbreviated accounts of lectures. Peter Slingsby was initiated into Lodge Emulation on 28 November 1908 and pressed into service as Secretary as soon as the Installation in the following June. From then on the minutes of this Lodge were again *verbatim* accounts, with the Secretary's annual report being typewritten.

An archive survey compiled by the author in 2002 tried to establish the whereabouts of the principal registers of all Craft Lodges of the order. As has happened so often, the minute books of the next Lodge to be established, Harmony No. 4, have been lost. When an elderly or sick Secretary dies in office, frequently the family have no knowledge of or interest in Freemasonry and dispose of books and regalia as rubbish.

Lodge Stability No. 5 was erased from the Roll of Grand Lodge in 1913 when its leading members left to form another Order. In spite of repeated appeals by registered letter, they failed to return all the books of the Lodge and it is not known what happened to them. Of the remaining Headquarters Lodges in existence up to 1930, No. 6 is an Installed Masters Lodge and the minute books are in the archive.

Lodge Mercury No. 11 was consecrated in 1928 and is important when examining the changes which occurred between 1928 and 1935. It was a 'travelling' Lodge

which toured the country initiating members in various provincial centres until there were sufficient core members in each place to form their own Lodge. Their minute books are held in the archive and illustrate the hard work of this Lodge, staffed by senior officers from London, in spreading Freemasonry for women throughout the country and thereby bringing about a massive change in the composition of the Order. Where the minute books of other active Lodges outside London are still extant, they are held by the Lodge concerned. The archive survey revealed some strange locations for early Lodge books – ranging from ‘under the bed in the spare room’ to ‘in the garden shed’. Lodges which surrender their warrants are requested to return all existing books to Headquarters for the archive.

Apart from minute books and Treasurers’ books, the archive at Headquarters holds surrendered warrants and a miscellaneous collection of agendas and other Lodge papers, such as Gentlemen’s Night programmes. Since 2000, the agendas of the Lodges meeting at Headquarters are put on CD. Photographs of the two Golden and Diamond Jubilee celebrations at the Royal Albert Hall are held in the archive, together with the slides of the Diamond Jubilee Pageant. To these are now added the DVD and associated material from the centenary meeting at the Royal Albert Hall in June 2008.

Research into the origins and development of this Order has unfortunately been seriously hampered by a lack of documentary evidence – in most cases, from a wilful destruction of evidence which once existed. Time and time again there are references in the minutes of Grand Lodge to the fact that papers on a particular

issue have 'been lodged in the archives' - but before the writer started collecting together material in the last few years, there *was* no archive and it is assumed that all such material has been discarded. Even the card index of members prior to the 1950s has been thrown out. An incidental benefit which has arisen from the current research is a new awareness within the Order of the importance of retaining documents. It is to be hoped that this attitude continues.

For the earlier chapters this material is supplemented by the archive of the British Federation of International Co-Freemasonry, *Le Droit Humain*. Considerable use throughout has also been made of contemporary periodical literature, in particular the periodical of the HFAM *The Gavel*, which was published from 1909 to 1912 and 1929 to date. Chapter Three also draws on *The Co-Mason*, the journal of *Le Droit Humain* and the three main suffrage periodicals – *The Vote*, *Votes for Women* and *The Common Cause*.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One gives an overview of the evolution of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry/ the Order of Women Freemasons of which I have given a more detailed account for a non-academic readership in my centenary history of *The Order of Women Freemasons 1908 – 2008*.

Chapter Two analyses statistically the membership of the HFAM between 1908 and 1935 and shows that the organisation was at first mainly an upper class movement which was set up and expanded by means of family and class networks. During the

1920s membership began to include some professional women but from 1930 onwards the nature of the organisation and of its recruitment changed, accelerated considerably both in numbers and locations, through the activities of the travelling Lodge Mercury No. 11, rather than through interpersonal contacts.

Following on from this analysis, the existing records showed three areas where specific examples of Masonic support for feminist causes could be identified.

Chapter Three explores the extent to which those Freemasons who at this particular time engaged in social and political issues supported the cause of female suffrage as a way in which they could change society for the better. It examines – mostly from contemporary accounts – the way in which Masons felt that the principles of Freemasonry fitted with the ideology of the suffrage cause, particularly in respect of spirituality and equality, and goes on to give examples of the contribution of both male and female Freemasons to the fight for the vote. The second part of the chapter pursues this theme of service as exemplified by women Masons during the Great War and immediately afterwards.

Chapter Four, in describing the genesis and activities of the Halsey Training College, investigates how, between 1916 and 1922, the HFAM became a recognised force in society and particularly in the professional education of teachers and social workers. The nature of the scheme they set up – *The Guild of Education as National Service* - is explored, together with their reasons for doing so and the methods used. The factors leading to the failure of the scheme are described, in order to

illustrate that these were not inherent within the organisation but originated with outside factors.

Finally, in Chapter Five an analysis of the Bureau of Service scheme which operated between 1928 and 1935 will examine how the HFAM, in seeking to express its own charitable mission, began to openly interact with outside agencies; how in selecting the causes to help they tended to choose those which were already the focus of aristocratic and upper-class philanthropy; and how the concept of helping others changed in this period of the Order's history. The contribution of the Bureau of Service to the 'new philanthropy' where the state and the voluntary sector complemented each other, and also to the 'new feminism' of the interwar years, is discussed.

Chapter One

The Origins and Development of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry

This chapter will give an overview of the involvement of women in Freemasonry, examining particularly the development of a form of Freemasonry admitting both men and women which appeared in the late nineteenth century and is known as Co-Masonry. The subsequent foundation and history of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry will be described, and the lives and significance of two major figures in the early history of the Honourable Fraternity, the Rev. Dr William Cobb and Marion Lindsay Halsey, will be discussed.

In introducing this discussion, it is important to explain some of the distinctive terminology, which is best done by briefly describing the structure of Freemasonry in general. The basic unit of Masonic organization is the Lodge. A person is asked to join a Masonic Lodge by invitation. They are proposed and seconded by two individuals who know them well enough to vouch for their good character and sincerity. As a Candidate, they go through three different ceremonies before they become full members of the Lodge and the Order. The first is Initiation, after which they are known as an Entered Apprentice; the second is the ceremony of Passing, when they become a Fellow Craft; the third is the ceremony of Raising, which

makes them a Master Mason.³ Male Freemasonry in England and Wales, of which the ruling body is the United Grand Lodge of England, works the basic system of these first three degrees (often known as craft Freemasonry) in conjunction with the Holy Royal Arch degree, which is considered the culmination of the first three. Although other degrees and Orders are available for members of craft lodges to join, in Britain they are governed by their independent administrations and are considered separate. Within a Craft Lodge one member rises through the progressive offices of a Lodge to take the chair as Worshipful Master, usually for one year. The Worshipful Master chooses six officers who work the degree ceremonies.

Among the other Masonic degrees and orders, one of the most elaborate and commonplace is the Ancient and Accepted (Scottish) Rite (AASR). Co-Masonry works the thirty three degrees of the AASR, which they brought from France, as one complete system and where the esoteric side of Masonry is developed by progression through the higher degrees. Co-Masonry is controlled by a Supreme Council in Paris. However, the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry followed UGLE in its structure to a large extent. Grand Lodge, the governing authority, is headed by the Grand Master. The Grand Master has a Deputy and Grand Lodge has its own officers who administered the Order, such as the Grand Secretary and

³ The relevant Regulations concerning the structure of Grand Lodge and Private Lodges, the proposal of candidates and Initiation procedures have not changed since the period under discussion, although other regulations have. The complete *Constitutions* for both organisations are in the public domain and currently available in: The Order of Women Freemasons, *Book of Constitutions*, (London, rev.1999): Rules 1,5,6,77,128,172; United Grand Lodge of England, *Book of Constitutions* (rev. 1989): Rules 5,6,104,159,227 (and online 2007 revision at <http://www.ugle.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/boc-2009-online-craft-rules.pdf> (accessed 10/10/2010)).

Grand Treasurer. Decisions concerning the organisation and running of the Order are taken by a Board of General Purposes, which then refers resolutions to Grand Lodge for ratification. Between 1908 and 1935 HFAM was small enough for the Grand Lodge to fulfil its original purpose and consist of representatives of each Lodge in the Order.

Women and Freemasonry before 1908

Speculative Masonry for men developed in Britain during the seventeenth century and expanded on an organised basis following the establishment of the first Grand Lodge in London in 1717. It is generally accepted that male Freemasonry quickly spread from England to France after 1717, probably through merchants and travellers, and became a fashionable pursuit there. A Lodge was founded in Paris in 1725 by Charles, fifth Earl of Derwentwater, who subsequently became Grand Master of France between 1736 and 1738. A *Grande Loge de France* was formed in 1732 as a co-ordinating council but was rent with dissension. Another body, the *Grand Orient*, was created in 1773 in an attempt to replace it.⁴

The proscription of women members contained in the 1723 Constitutions of English Freemasonry effectively excluded them from the movement as it swept through Europe and the colonial world. France however was the outstanding exception, in that mixed lodges were soon established from the 1730s onwards and quickly

⁴ Frederick Smyth, *A Reference Book for Freemasons*, (London, 1998), p. 71, 96; James Smith Allen, 'Sisters', p. 798.

became popular.⁵ Characterised by their use of ritual, some were social, some educational, some of high moral tone and many *sociétés de plaisir*. Established to win the loyalty and sympathy of women, they stopped short of divulging anything of Masonic importance and their charming and light-weight rituals omitted key Masonic elements such as the Working Tools of the Degrees. Their romantic names included *Les Felicitaires*, the *Dames of Mount Tabor*, the *Amazons*, the *Knights and Ladies of the Dove or of the Rose*, and the *Maids and Dames of Truth*. Proceedings usually culminated with a banquet and ball.⁶

Some of these societies became associated with specific Masonic Lodges and, because each Lodge was under the 'protection' of a male Craft Lodge and male officials from a regular Lodge had to be present at their ceremonies, they became known as Lodges of Adoption. These increased in number until the Grand Orient of France – the regulatory body for French Freemasonry - took control of the whole of *Maçonnerie d'Adoption* in 1774 and consolidated it as a specific Rite of four degrees. Each female officer had a male counterpart, and ceremonies could not take place unless a male Mason was present. According to the rules established by the Grand Orient, membership in Masonic Adoption was reserved for women only, even though men Freemasons were obliged to attend their initiations. The ritual

⁵ On the development of Co-Masonry in France, see Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 221-328; Buisine, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Anglo-Saxonne*, pp. 69-82; Gilbert, 'The Monstrous Regiment', pp. 156-8 and 170-173; J.S. Allen, 'Freemason Feminists: Masonic Reform and the Women's Movement in France, 1840-1914', in *Women's Agency and Rituals in Mixed and Female Masonic Orders*, ed. A. Heidle and J. Snoek (Leiden and Boston, 2008), pp. 219-234; A. Prescott, "'Builders of the Temple of the New Civilisation": Annie Besant and Freemasonry', in *ibid.*, pp. 359-391.

⁶ Allen, 'Sisters', p. 798, n. 44; V.I.M. Chapman, 'Women in Freemasonry – Then and Now', *The Gavel*, Vol. 48, No. 166, (Nov. 1981), p. 27-29.

and symbolism was based on male Freemasonry and included elements from the Scriptures, in particular Genesis, such as Jacob's Ladder and the Tower of Babel.⁷

Hivert-Messeca contends that there were forty-five Lodges of Adoption in France prior to the Revolution with about 600 female members, although Allen, because of the emphasis even in quasi-Masonry on secrecy and oral tradition, would put the figure much higher – at approximately 100 adoptive lodges with about 5,000 members. Most French cities and large towns had a Lodge of Adoption by 1780.⁸

Pre-Revolution, the Lodges had an almost exclusively upper-class membership. In Paris, these Lodges were often of the aristocracy, such as the *Loge Saint-Jean de la Candeur*, many of whose members belonged to Marie-Antoinette's Court. In the last two decades scholars such as Janet M. Burke and Margaret Jacob have examined pre- and post-Revolution Lodges of Adoption in France, particularly with regard to the light they shed on women's access to the public sphere during the Enlightenment. The facilitation of intense friendships between both men and women was a distinctive Enlightenment trait and such fraternity was a notable feature of Freemasonry. Burke and Jacob have put forward a more positive view of women's motivation in Adoptive Masonry from that of previous scholars - rather than the Lodges of Adoption being a subordinate grouping in which women were offered an inferior role to make up for their exclusion from official Masonry, they believe that women, following the tradition of their participation in the salon as a

⁷ Gilbert, 'The Monstrous Regiment', p. 156.

⁸ Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 63-5; Allen, 'Sisters', p. 798, n. 46, 803, n. 59; Janet Burke, 'Leaving the Enlightenment: Women Freemasons after the Revolution', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2, Colonial Encounters (Winter, 2000), p. 256.

part of the public sphere, were able through the dogma and ritual of Freemasonry to express this ideal of fraternity based on virtue and to carry forward their principles into public life by their behaviour to each other and their practice of charity.⁹

There were a few similar adoptive orders in Germany, Holland and Belgium, particularly that of the *Mopses*, formed in Germany by Catholics to circumvent the Papal ban on Freemasonry in 1738. The *mops* (pug-dog) symbolized fidelity and love, but the Rite reputedly degenerated into one which worshipped the dog. Meissen figurines of the period show both men and women with these dogs, the men often wearing Masonic-type aprons and holding Masonic working tools.¹⁰

In the French Adoptive orders there were at first only the three degrees of *Apprentie*, *Compagnonne* and *Maîtresse*, although later more were added under the influence of the thirty-three degrees of the Scottish Rite. Few women were taken beyond the three, which formed the core of Masonic ritual. It was necessary for officials from a regular (male) Lodge to be present for ceremonies to be held. As Allen points out, it was significant and controversial that Adoptive Masonry included women at all, however subordinate they were to be regarded, in a movement clearly established by and for men only a few decades earlier. France

⁹ Allen, 'Sisters', p. 801, n. 56; Janet M. Burke and Margaret Jacob, 'French Freemasonry, Women, and Feminist Scholarship', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Sep. 1996), pp. 513-549; Janet M. Burke, 'Freemasonry, Friendship and Noblewomen: The Role of the Secret Society in Bringing Enlightenment Thought to Pre-Revolutionary Women Elites', *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1989), pp. 283-4.

¹⁰ Edward Lovell Hawkins, 'Adoptive Masonry and the Order of the Mopses', *AQC*, Vol. 24 (1911), pp. 6-20.

was unique in that 'no other Western culture integrated women so rapidly into masonic mysteries'.¹¹ Masonic Adoption was elsewhere considered an aberration.

Following the demise of almost all Masonic Lodges during the period of the Revolution, there was a short-lived resurgence during the First Empire, usually attributed to the personal interest of Napoleon and possibly to the actual membership of a Masonic Lodge by Josephine, who took a particular interest in the *Loge des Francs Chevaliers* of Strasbourg. This fashionable example resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of Adoptive Lodges, and regular Masonic Lodges proliferated also.¹²

The two significant characteristics that distinguished post-revolution Lodges of Adoption from those pre-revolution were the move of women into more dominant roles in the Lodge, and the emphasis on charitable works by women both in the Lodge and in the public sphere more generally. Janet Burke, through a detailed analysis of the records of post-Revolutionary Lodges of Adoption such as the *Dames of Mount Tabor*, sees an incipient feminism developing in the private space of the Lodge in both the way the women began to take charge of Lodge proceedings, and by the way they concentrated their efforts on charity rather than pursuing the steps to gnosis of the ritual. In the public arena, charity became the face of Masonry and its disbursement reflected the power of organised women.¹³

¹¹ Allen, 'Sisters', pp. 807, 812, 834; Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 84-86, 109.

¹² Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 161-2; Gilbert, 'Monstrous Regiment', p. 156; Allen, 'Sisters', pp. 814-5; Janet M. Burke, 'Leaving the Enlightenment', p. 257.

¹³ Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 161-2; Burke, 'Leaving the Enlightenment', pp. 258-9, 261.

After the end of the First Empire Adoptive Masonry both declined and changed in nature. The Masonic element became subordinate to the social side. *Tenues blanches* were secular occasions with elaborate banquets and balls. (The phrase is retained today: a 'White Table' function is one where non-Masons and ladies are also invited, to hear a talk and enjoy a meal). A form of simplified initiation for the children and wives of Masons was developed, and in general the status of women within the Masonic context became less important. As Allen comments: 'Given the social and cultural context, however, inclusion in regular masonic activities may have been more important to them than occasional adoption into a separate lodge for women alone'.¹⁴

By the middle of the century the emphasis had turned even more towards the family – the idea was to strengthen society by bringing entire families into the lodge. In the *Temple des Familles* Lodges, lectures, concerts and study groups were organised as part of a more secular programme. Ritual was modified and Masonic baptism, marriage and funeral ceremonies were devised to cater for all stages of family life. There was a complete absence of the esoteric and mystical content of Freemasonry and no explanation of the all-important Masonic symbolism.¹⁵

By the nineteenth century there were two distinct directions in French Freemasonry – the *Grand Orient* had broken away from the parent body *La Grande Loge de France*. The former concerned itself more with the first three degrees, whilst the

¹⁴ Allen, 'Sisters', p. 822.

¹⁵ Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 192, 204, 216; Allen, 'Freemason Feminists', pp. 220, 226; Allen, 'Sisters', pp. 821-4.

latter concentrated on the higher degrees of the Scottish Rite and from it evolved a Supreme Council. In 1877 the Grand Orient removed from their Constitution the necessity for belief in a Supreme Being and subsequently most regular Grand Lodges including UGLE withdrew their recognition of this body and have never restored it.¹⁶

The move towards the secularization of Masonry in the Lodges of Adoption prompted renewed calls for women to be admitted to the purer form of Freemasonry as practised by men and on the same terms as men. In 1879 nine lodges broke away from the Supreme Council of France to form *La Grande Loge Symbolique Ecossaise*, with the motto: 'A free mason in a free lodge'.¹⁷ Lodge No. 13 under this grouping, *Les Libres Penseurs* which met at Pecq near Paris, applied for permission to initiate women in 1881. This was refused by the GLSE and so *Les Libres Penseurs* decided to leave their jurisdiction and become independent. The following year they initiated Maria Deraismes at a showpiece ceremony with hundreds of visitors from other Masonic bodies. One of those present was Georges Martin, a member of the executive of GLSE.

Deraismes was a distinguished author and lecturer, noted for her devotion to the cause of feminism, suffrage and to humanitarian and democratic political ideals. In 1878 she had organised the first International Congress on the Rights of Women. At

¹⁶ Anne van Marion-Weijer, 'Diversity in Unity? Background and History of the Different Masonic Traditions within the Craft Lodges of the Dutch Federation of the International Order of Mixed Freemasonry "Le Droit Humain" in *Women's Agency and Rituals in Mixed and Female Masonic Orders*, ed. A. Heidle and J. Snoek (Leiden and Boston, 2008), p. 395.

¹⁷ Gilbert, 'Monstrous Regiment', pp. 170-3.

her initiation, the Master of the Lodge, M. Houbron said:

We are about to consecrate one of the greatest humanitarian principles, that of Equality. By admitting a woman into our Mysteries, we proclaim the Equality of the two human beings who together incur in the propagation of the human race...[since woman is the child's first leader] to do away with her prejudices by the moral teachings and the light of Masonry would be to bring about by peaceful means true social emancipation.¹⁸

The record of the meeting relates that no physical tests were made on the candidate. There is no evidence that the Second and Third Degrees were ever conferred on Deraismes, which in its turn casts doubts on the validity of the Initiations later carried out by her.¹⁹

A huge banquet followed the ceremony, attended by over 400 guests, including non-masons, women and children. Part of her address to the Lodge at the banquet was a rallying call indeed to all future lady Masons:

If the feeble support that I may be able to render you cannot be effective, that fact in itself is small and of little import, but it well has another importance. The door that you have opened to me will not be closed upon me and all the legion that follows me.²⁰

¹⁸ C.G. Trew, 'The History of our Order'; paper given at the 70th anniversary of its Founding at the Occasional Lodge on 21 May 1972, *The International Freemason* (Autumn 1972), p. 8.

¹⁹ Gilbert, 'Monstrous Regiment', p. 172.

²⁰ Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 233-234; the full text of Deraismes' lengthy speech is given in French in *ibid.*, 237-243.

As Gilbert notes, 'All things considered, it was a remarkable and successful affair, and Freemasonry at large carried on as if nothing had happened'. There was no formal support for either the Lodge *Les Libres Penseurs* or its ground-breaking action and so in 1883 they returned to the fold of the GLSE, on the condition that no more women were initiated. Gilbert continues: 'Maria Deraismes had ceased to be counted among its members by the summer of 1882 and for eleven years she remained in the masonic wilderness'.²¹

In 1890 Georges Martin, who had been present at the Initiation of Maria Deraismes, invited her to take part in a conference under Masonic auspices to consider the question of mixed Lodges. The favourable report of a subsequent commission was rejected by GLSE and so Martin himself, helped by Deraismes, set up a mixed Lodge to be called *Le Droit Humain*. They subsequently decided in 1893 to form a new Masonic Obedience and Deraismes initiated a further thirteen ladies at the home of one of them, presumably under the direction of Georges Martin.²²

Deraismes was elected Master of the new *Grande Loge Symbolique Ecossaises de France 'Le Droit Humain'*. Following her death a year later, Mme. Georges Martin became Grand Master of *Le Droit Humain*. In 1896 the name was changed to *La Grande Loge Symbolique Mixte Le Droit Humain* and its purpose was stated to be:

To gather together under its banner human beings of all races, religions and nationalities in order to make continuous research in common as to the best means of assuring to each individual the greatest sum of

²¹ Gilbert, 'Monstrous Regiment', p. 172.

²² Hivert-Messeca, *Comment la Franc-Maçonnerie*, pp. 251, 282.

material well-being and moral happiness during life and finally to unite human beings divided by religions.²³

The first Craft Lodge of this Obedience was Lodge Maria Deraismes No. 1. To start, only the three Craft degrees were worked, but in May 1899 the decision was taken to work the full thirty-three degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. A Supreme Council of the 33° was set up to govern the Lodges.²⁴

Co-Masonry in England

Co-Masonry was brought to England by the women's rights activist and leading Theosophist Annie Besant, who saw in it the potential to expedite the cause of universal brotherhood and to restore women to their rightful position in Freemasonry.²⁵ She later claimed both that she had been invited to join by Desraismes herself in 1893, but had refused, and then that in 1902 she had been instructed by one of the theosophical Masters designated 'the Head of All True Freemasons' to become a Freemason and to discuss it with her close friend and fellow Theosophist Francesca Arundale. Arundale had joined a French mixed Lodge in 1895 and risen to the 33°. Prescott has considered Besant's motivation in detail and feels that she attempted by these possibly spurious claims to show herself as the driving force in the introduction of Co-Masonry to England.²⁶

²³ Marjorie C. Debenham, 'How did Women first enter Freemasonry?', *The Speculative Mason*, Vol. 45 (1954-5), p. 98, cited in Gilbert, 'Monstrous Regiment', p. 173.

²⁴ Trew, 'The history of our Order', p. 9.

²⁵ F. Arundale, 'Address to the Joint Meeting of the four London Lodges, 21/5/1915'.

²⁶ Prescott, 'Builders of the Temple', pp. 376-7.

Through Arundale's introduction Besant and a chosen group of Theosophical friends were initiated in Paris in 1902. These included Ursula Bright, widow of radical Liberal Jacob and herself a feminist and suffrage supporter, and her daughter Esther. Esther later described her recruitment:

Doctor Annie Besant became deeply interested in the possibility of starting a Co-Masonic movement in England in the summer of 1902 ... she asked us if we would be willing to co-operate with her in the formation of such a movement. We were of course only too willing to stand by her and do all we could to help. I well remember those early days when she chose those whom she thought suitable to be the founders of the new movement, workers whom she trusted ...²⁷

The next part of the plan was to set up a provisional Lodge at the Brights' home in London, to prepare for the founding of the first British Lodge. It is reported that a Provisional Lodge Meeting was held on 29th July 1902 when the seven founding members (those who had travelled to Paris) drew up and signed a petition for the Lodge to the Supreme Council. The name of the Lodge was to be The Scotch Symbolical Worshipful Lodge of England: *Droit Humain*, No. 6 Human Duty. The issue of the title to be given to lady Masons arose, but after discussion 'It is decided to use the terms Bro. and Sis. in speaking of members thereby maintaining the

²⁷ Typed statement headed: *From Miss Esther Bright, Camp Farm, Wimbledon Common, London SW10. July 1947. Archives of the British Federation of International Co-Freemasonry, Le Droit Humain, Surbiton* (henceforth Surbiton Archives); Lodge of Human Duty No. 6 Minute Book, 5/8/1902 (Surbiton Archives).

distinction of sex'.²⁸

On 22 September a special Delegation from Paris visited the Lodge. This included Bro. Georges Martin, the Founder Orator of Lodge Maria Deraismes No. 1, and Sister Maria Martin, the Grand Secretary of the Supreme Council. It was to arrange preparation for the great day of the Inauguration and Installation, fixed for 26 September 1902.

The formal Consecration of Lodge Human Duty No. 6 took place in the Lecture Hall of the Theosophical Society in London. Annie Besant was installed as the first Right Worshipful Master. In her speech of welcome to the French delegation she said that if the impulse of Speculative Masonry was carried from England to France in the eighteenth century, it was the French who had that day brought it back, completed and strengthened by the admission of women on equal terms with men.²⁹

Subsequently other Lodges were founded, mainly in London and the Home Counties but also in Bradford (H.P.Blavatsky Lodge No. 14); Edinburgh (Christian Rosenkranz Lodge No. 18); and Benares Lodge in India, where Besant's residence influenced the spread of the movement.³⁰

²⁸ Minutes of Lodge Human Duty No. 6, 29/7/1902; see also A. Pilcher-Dayton, 'Freemasonry and Suffrage', in *Women's Agency and Rituals in Mixed and Female Masonic Orders*, ed. A. Heidle and J. Snoek (Leiden and Boston, 2008), pp. 344-346.

²⁹ Official account of the Installation of the Lodge in the Magazine of the Supreme Council for 1902, quoted in *The International Freemason*, vol. XVII, Part 2 (July 1962), p. 14 (Surbiton Archives).

³⁰ *The International Freemason*, Autumn 1972, p. 13 (Surbiton Archives).

The Supreme Being

Before setting up a Co-Masonic Lodge in London, Besant was careful to establish an important principle. The English were in general very much against the radicalism and atheism associated with French Freemasonry, which indeed – according to her letters – shocked Besant herself.³¹ To counteract this antipathy, it would be necessary for British Co-Masonic Lodges and candidates to acknowledge that they believed in the existence of The Great Architect of the Universe, that is to say that they accepted the existence of a deity which was the Supreme Being. It was therefore arranged with the Supreme Council in Paris that Co-Masonry in Britain and its dependencies should have a large degree of autonomy in constitutional affairs, thereby allowing them to include this requirement. This agreement became known as the ‘Besant Concord’.³²

Theosophy

Most Co-Masons were Theosophists. The Theosophical movement was one of a number of esoteric and occult movements which flourished at the end of the nineteenth century in Britain. It is a philosophical system dating back to neo-Platonism but which, in its more modern form, was based on the material in the book *The Secret Doctrine: the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*, formulated by Helena Blavatsky in 1888. It held that all religions are attempts by humanity to approach the absolute, and that each religion therefore has a portion of the truth. It promulgated a body of religious, philosophical and scientific teaching

³¹ ‘Letter [to A. Bothwell-Gosse?], 7 June 1923’, British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Deposit 10305; Prescott, ‘Builders of the Temple’, pp. 381-2.

³² Prescott, *ibid.*, p. 388.

which had lasted from time immemorial and it was popular at a time when advances in science, especially the theory of evolution, had shaken the traditional faith of many and, as Mulvihill suggests in her biography of Despard, 'the Theosophical fusion of elements of Buddhist and Hindu thought with an ecumenical Christian morality filled [the vacuum] for many'.³³ It also had all the exotic glamour of the Orient for a western audience. Its most widely known, if not most important, features are re-incarnation, by which the 'soul' gradually becomes closer to perfection by living successively better lives; karma, that is to say the mechanic of action and reaction or the maintenance of the state of equilibrium; and the development of the spiritual faculties on an astral plane.³⁴

The Theosophical Society (TS) was founded in America in 1875 by the self-proclaimed psychic Helena Blavatsky and Col. Henry Steel Olcott. The first object of the TS – and the only mandatory one – was 'a commitment to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour', and the necessity for social reform to achieve this. The second was to encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science, whilst the third - to investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man - provided a setting for the exploration of ideas and phenomena usually dismissed or prohibited by the established churches and sects. It imposed no restrictions on the

³³ M. Mulvihill, *Charlotte Despard* (London, 1989), p. 35.

³⁴ Geoffrey A. Farthing, *Deity, Cosmos and Man: an outline of Esoteric Science* (San Diego, 1993), p. 1; Geoffrey A. Farthing, *Theosophy – What's it all about?* (London, 1967), p. 7.

free search after truth, and, most importantly, it offered women an equal part in these activities.³⁵

The Appeal of Theosophy to Women

Theosophical ideals particularly appealed to women and the objects of the TS were in harmony with feminine ideals. Women took an equal share in lecturing, travelling and writing on behalf of the Society, and many donated funds.³⁶

Significantly, as Charlotte Despard – herself a fine example - wrote, women were some of the best exponents and interpreters of Theosophy.³⁷ Mary Farrell Bednarowski and Catherine Wessinger have written extensively on the leadership of women in such marginal religions as Theosophy. Such movements gave an alternative to patriarchal orthodox religions; offered a gender-free perception of the divine; and by tempering the doctrine of the Fall removed the stereotype of women as morally weak. The concept of karma could help to explain the negative aspects of one's life in a 'scientific' way and the idea that the base, lower nature should come under the control of the higher, spiritual one attracted women caught in unpleasant or violent circumstances.³⁸

³⁵ Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore and London, 2001), p. 3; http://www.theosophical-society.org.uk/html/objectives_fundamentals.htm (accessed 5/2/09).

³⁶ Diana Burfield, 'Theosophy and Feminism: some explorations in 19th century biography', in *Women's Religious Experience*, ed. P. Holden (London, 1983), Chapter 3, pp. 33, 35. Emily Lutyens relates how she took lessons in public speaking in order to tour the country lecturing on Theosophy: E. Lutyens, *Candles in the Sun*, (London, 1957), p.17. The American heiress Miss Dodge funded many theosophical initiatives including the new TS headquarters: J. Ridley, *The Architect and his Wife: A Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens* (London, 2002) pp. 206-7.

³⁷ C. Despard, *Theosophy and the Women's Movement* (London, 1913) p. 25.

³⁸ Mary Farrell Bednarowski, 'Outside the Mainstream: Women's Religion and Women Religious Leaders in Nineteenth-Century America', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 48, no. 2 (June 1980), pp. 207-231; Catherine Wessinger, ed., *Women's Leadership in Marginal Religions: Explorations outside the Mainstream* (Urbana, Ill., 1993), pp. 3-4; 75-76.

The specific appeal of the TS to women, however, was the rejection of sexual discrimination. Theosophical teaching gave equal weight to both sexes – ‘the body, a temporary vehicle for an eternal spirit, evolved through all material forms up to the spiritual, reincarnating numerous times as male and female. This evolutionary process required the interaction of two opposite principles, male and female, which were two halves of one whole, the absolute’.³⁹ It was the dynamic of two principles coming from the Absolute – the *ying* and *yang*, male and female – which provided a theoretical legitimization for equality between the sexes.⁴⁰

John S. Conway, in a review of Joy Dixon’s survey of Theosophy and feminism in England, puts forward a more cynical but nevertheless valid view that ‘After the outbreak of war in 1914 theosophy capitalized on its female adherents’ need for spiritual consolation in the face of death and bereavement. Theosophy offered unambiguous spiritual answers and supplied comfort to some of the war’s despairing survivors’.⁴¹ Dixon’s analysis of the male/female membership of the TS shows that as early as 1895 almost half of new members were female, but this rose to two-thirds between 1900 and 1910 and even higher in the period from 1910 to 1925 (Besant was President from 1907 until her death in 1933).⁴²

³⁹ Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality* (London, 2002), p. 167.

⁴⁰ Burfield, *Theosophy and Feminism*, p. 35.

⁴¹ <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/akz/akz2111.htm> (accessed 11/2/2009): Review of Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, by John S. Conway, in the *Association of Contemporary Church Historians Newsletter*, ed. John S. Conway (November 2001), Vol. VII, no. 11.

⁴² Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 68.

Theosophy and Co-Masonry

As Besant wrote to her daughter in 1922, 'It was the TS which brought Co-Masonry into Britain and has fostered it'. The 'original seven' who went to Paris to be initiated into Co-Masonry in 1902 were all TS members, recruited by Besant.⁴³

Francesca Arundale reported to the Supreme Council of *Le Droit Humain* in 1923 '...most of us are Theosophists but we should be careful that theosophical ideas and language should not be made prominent in open L[odge]...so that non-theosophists may not have to listen or take part in that which they do not understand or believe in'.⁴⁴ Snell, in his history of St Christopher School, the flagship of the Theosophical Educational Trust, listed Co-Masonry as one of the three theosophical instruments with which the World Teacher would carry out his mission on earth.⁴⁵

The umbilical link between the TS and Co-Masonry was further strengthened by the holders of senior office in both organisations. Besant, President of the TS from 1907, became Vice-President Grand Master of the Supreme Council of *Le Droit Humain* and Deputy for Great Britain and its Dependencies. Ursula Bright, whose home hosted the first meetings of Human Duty Lodge No. 6 in London, achieved the 33° in Co-Masonry and became Vice-President for Great Britain and Deputy to

⁴³ Letter of Annie Besant to Mabel Besant-Scott 29/11/22 : British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Deposit MSS 10305, quoted in Prescott, 'Builders of the Temple', p. 362; Esther Bright Statement 1947; Letter of Annie Besant to Ursula Bright, 16/11/05: British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Deposit MSS 10305.

⁴⁴ Francesca Arundale to the Supreme Council, 8/10/1923: British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Deposit 10305, quoted in Prescott, 'Builders of the Temple', note 13, p. 362.

⁴⁵ R. Snell, *St Christopher School 1915-1975* (Letchworth, 1975), p. 102. In spite of the generational gap, Snell was well-placed to write the history of the School. He spent forty-three years as a teacher there, and 'retired' (his quotes) shortly before the time of writing (p. 173). He must therefore have joined the staff as a young man in the early 1930's, when he states 'In many ways life at Arundale [an alternative name] during the early and middle thirties was much as it had been ten – or even twenty – years previously' (p. 125). Continuity was also provided by the Headship – Nicholas Harris (1954-1975+) had been a pupil at the School when his father Lyn Harris was appointed Housemaster in 1923 (before Ensor left) and became Head from 1925 to 1953 (pp. 156, 163).

Annie Besant. Alfred Faulding, later to be a founder of a new Masonic movement, was a Theosophist, and, being affiliated into Lodge Human Duty No. 6 in 1903, rose to become the London General Secretary of the movement. George Arundale, Francesca's nephew, became the District General Secretary of Co-Masonry in India in 1905 and was President of the TS from 1934 to 1945.⁴⁶

Theodora St John, in an article on 'Women and the Craft' in *The Co-Mason*, while explaining that Theosophy and Freemasonry were two distinct entities, wrote of their connection:

We have been dubbed by some "Theosophical Masons" ... when Theosophy saw that [the fundamental teachings of all religions] were also to be found in modern Freemasonry, that Masonry is in fact a real link with religion, carrying on the traditions of the past and linking them with the work of the future, they were naturally drawn to a movement to which they could belong irrespective of their creed, their race or their sex.⁴⁷

It was also, however, the idea of brotherhood which linked the two – 'It is in a Masonic Lodge that we may learn, if we will, the true meaning of brotherhood and all that that implies ...'⁴⁸ Besant (and therefore Theosophy) chose to support a Masonic organisation because, as she said, there were only two societies in the

⁴⁶ Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 81; letter of Ursula Bright to the Secretary of St Michael's Lodge 25/6/1906 on appointing Edith Ward to succeed Faulding as General Secretary (*Surbiton Archives*); Lady Emily Lutyens, *Candles in the Sun* (London, 1957), p. 189.

⁴⁷ T. St John, 'Women and the Craft', *The Co-Mason*, vol. 12 (April 1920), p. 79.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

world which recognised universal brotherhood, the Freemasons and the TS.⁴⁹ Freemasonry was 'the one movement outside the Theosophical belief which professed a belief in universal brotherhood'.⁵⁰ She and others argued that a movement which professed to be the Brotherhood of Humanity could not accomplish its object if it refused entry to one half of the human family - women.

Besant felt that, in contrast to male Freemasonry in England, Co-Masonry restored to women the position they had held in the Ancient Mysteries, the ancient practice from which true Masonic orders derived:

Co-Masonry has arisen from the bosom of masculine Masonry in order to bring women into that ancient fraternity on exactly the same terms as men, and thus to restore the whole brotherhood to the position from which it fell, when it broke its link with the Ancient Mysteries by excluding women from its ranks ...⁵¹

Finally, the ritual and ceremony of Freemasonry filled a lacuna in Theosophical ideology. The principles of Theosophy were expressed in very broad terms and it needed a certain confidence, both in society as a whole and in the individual, to practice them unaided. The less confident needed a more closely defined structure to follow, and particularly in a time of social and political turbulence such as the first decades of the twentieth century. As Kipling wrote with reference to the First World War, 'All ritual is fortifying. Ritual is a natural necessity for mankind. The

⁴⁹ It is striking that Besant does not mention socialism here, in spite of her past interest in, and close links with, Fabian socialism at one stage of her life.

⁵⁰ Francesca Arundale, 'Address on Universal Co-Masonry, delivered at the Joint Meeting of the Four London Lodges, on Friday, May 21st, 1915' (*Surbiton Archives*); *The Co-Mason*, vol. 5 (1913), p. 58.

⁵¹ A. Besant, 'The Object of Co-Masonry', *The Co-Mason*, vol. 1 (1909), pp. 6-7.

more things are upset the more they fly to it'.⁵² Freemasonry provided such a structure, both in the hierarchical context of a Lodge and of the ceremonies performed by it.

A New Order Breaks Away from Co-Masonry

Besant became Grand Inspector General for Great Britain and its dependencies for the Co-Masonic movement. She was frequently away from Britain and this caused difficulties in communicating with the members of the Order. Whether she was in this country or abroad, Besant tried to keep a tight control on the government and administration of the Order. Her autocratic rule was not always accepted and in time suggestions were put forward to make the organization of the Order more democratic. Foremost among these dissidents was the Rev. Dr. William Frederick Cobb. He wanted a representative and democratic body, free from the control in France, a Grand Lodge to govern the three Craft degrees and to include all Worshipful Masters and Wardens of Lodges, together with Past Masters and Acting Masters.

William Frederick Cobb (1857-1941) came from a lowly background – his father was a land steward on an estate in Essex.⁵³ After a grammar school education he went

⁵² Rudyard Kipling, 'In the Interests of the Brethren' in *Debts and Credits* (London, 1926). 'It is 1917, and World War I is raging. The narrator meets a fellow Freemason, a London tobacconist, who takes him to a Lodge run by a group of wealthy merchants. Contrary to official policy, they have thrown their meetings open to any soldiers on leave, or convalescent from wounds, who can pass a test that demonstrates their Masonic credentials. The story describes the leniency of the examiners, with the visitors' pleasure at the familiar ritual, good food and repose they can find in the secure setting the Lodge provides.' http://www.kipling.org.uk/kiplingsociety/rg_brethren1.htm (accessed 12/2/2009).

⁵³ For the life and background of the Rev. Dr. William Frederick Cobb, see A. Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door: The History of the Order of Women Freemasons 1908-2008* (London, 2008), pp. 17-29 ; Information on Cobb's early life has been obtained from: Birth certificate, County of Essex,

to Trinity College Dublin, where he paid for his part-time tuition by spells of school teaching. He was ordained in 1882 and appointed to a curacy in Surrey, where he also taught at Woking College, a private secondary school. During this formative period he became acquainted with many of the upper class friends who featured in his later activities, in particular the Antrobus family at Cheam.

An Anglo-Catholic and Assistant Secretary of the English Church Union for most of the 1890s, Cobb worked in Winchester and London parishes before being appointed Curate-in-Charge of St Ethelburga Within Bishopsgate in the City of London in 1900. The following year he became Rector, a position he held until his death in 1941.

During his lifetime he was most widely known not for his Freemasonry (which occupied a relatively brief period of his life) but for his work in the cause of equality for women - marriage and divorce law reform and the acquisition of political equality through the vote. He was Chair of the Divorce Law Reform Union and subsequently the Marriage Law Reform League in 1925 and 1927.⁵⁴

In 1907 the first mention of discontent amongst the Co-Masons is heard in a letter from Edith Ward, Grand Secretary, to F.D. Harrison, the Secretary of H.P. Blavatsky Lodge No. 14 at Bradford: 'Cobb wants a meeting to discuss points on the

Registration District of Chelmsford, Sub-district of Great Baddow: registered 14/3/1857 by father; Admissions Register, MS Dept., Library Trinity College Dublin (e-mail of 2/7/2001); 1881 Census records, Guildhall Library, London; *Who Was Who 1941-50*, p. 427.

⁵⁴ *City Press*, 29/11/1929; Obituary in the *City Press*, 19/12/1941; Divorce Law Reform Union, *Annual Report 1923*, p. 12; *Journal of Divorce Law Reform Union*, Vol. 7. No. 82 (April 1927), p. 2.

administration and government of the Order'.⁵⁵

In May the minutes of Lodge Human Duty No. 6 record that Cobb proposed and J.W.Sidley seconded that a Grand Lodge be formed to govern the three Craft degrees; the proposal was carried, and Annie Besant actually signed these minutes during her subsequent visit to London. At a meeting of the Worshipful Masters of all the Lodges Besant suggested the formation of a Craft Council, composed of Past Masters, senior Brethren and Lodge Wardens, to draw up bylaws for the guidance of Craft Lodges, subject to her approval.⁵⁶

Besant soon retracted her *fiat* concerning the Craft Council and a formal proposal to set one up was defeated at a meeting of representatives of all the Lodges by eleven votes to ten. However, Dr Cobb and others continued to meet as a council on their own authority and on the grounds that the attempt to govern the Craft on non-representative principles had already proved unsatisfactory and that the 'abrogation of the Craft Council would amount to the denial of the ancient Landmark which affirms the right of everyone to be represented in the General Assemblies of the Craft, and to instruct his representatives'.⁵⁷ The situation was exacerbated by Annie Besant's further absence in India.

Ursula Bright wrote to Harrison on 17 November that Cobb and the Craft Council were to hold no more meetings at the Headquarters in 13 Blomfield Road, Maida

⁵⁵ Letter from Edith Ward to F.D. Harrison, 8/5/07 (Surbiton Archives).

⁵⁶ Minute Book of Lodge Human Duty No.6, 27/5/1907 and 8/7/1907 (Surbiton Archives).

⁵⁷ Minute Book of Lodge Human Duty No.6, 19/10/1907, expressed in a resolution of the Craft Council; Letter from Annie Besant to Ursula Bright 11/10/1907; (both Surbiton Archives).

Vale.

I told Mrs. Betts [housekeeper] she must not give up her place to Dr Cobb unless it was distinctly understood that he intended to remain loyal to the Supreme Council and that during his year of office there is to be no question of another opposition Co-Masonic Lodge...This he has promised and signed the RWM's obligation ... Faulding has been canvassing in his Lodge Emulation to find members willing to join an outside Co-Masonic Lodge. I fancy he has not been very successful.⁵⁸

Further letters in December indicate Cobb was posing other awkward questions, both about finance and also in suggesting significant changes to the ritual.⁵⁹ He and Faulding tried again to set up a Craft Council as a rival ruling body to the Supreme Council in Paris. In a letter of 18 December to Harrison, Ursula Bright expressed the establishment view:

The danger of making any executive body apart from the real ruling power is that constant efforts would be made to increase its powers, also the risk of contention amongst the Lodges...Wherever there is Representative Government there is strife, for we cannot all think alike - the majority must rule.⁶⁰

Besant wrote to Ursula Bright from Benares 'Cobb's whole policy is to make trouble in order to show that a Craft Council is necessary ... But we shall have no peace until

⁵⁸ Letter of Ursula Bright to F.D. Harrison, 17/11/1907 (Surbiton Archives).

⁵⁹ Letter of Ursula Bright to F.D. Harrison, 17/12/1907; Letter of Edith Ward to F.D. Harrison, 17/12/1907 (both Surbiton Archives).

⁶⁰ Letter of Ursula Bright to F.D. Harrison, 18/12/1907 (Surbiton Archives).

Cobb, Faulding & co. leave us. With love – I am sorry these people are so disagreeable, dear ...'⁶¹

Eventually it became obvious that compromise between the dissidents and their governing body was impossible. Dr. Cobb and his wife, Alfred and Florence Faulding, J.W. Sidley and several others resigned from Lodge Human Duty No. 6 and the Co-Masonic Order in November 1907.

Cobb's decision to leave the Co-Masons was partly because he was baulked by Besant and her senior colleagues from introducing a more democratic form of government and one which would be independent of the Supreme Council in Paris. He was a man who, if he could not get his own way, left to move on.⁶² But also he wanted to revert to a 'purer' form of Freemasonry – the three degrees as practised by the United Grand Lodge of England, as opposed to the thirty-three degrees of the Ancient and Accepted (Scottish) Rite as practised in France and brought across the Channel by the first Co-Masonic Lodge. He wanted to distance himself from the theosophical elements in Co-Masonic ritual – the 'certain sinister tendencies [of] the Order of Universal Co-Masonry out of which our Order took its rise, and against which it was founded to protest'.⁶³ It has always been assumed that this also held good for the colleagues who left Co-Masonry with him to start the new Order, but

⁶¹ Letter of Annie Besant to Ursula Bright from Benares, 26/3/1908: British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Deposit MSS 10305.

⁶² For example, he left the Indian Church Aid Association, of which he was Secretary from 1900 to 1906: Archives of I.C.A.A., Orchard Learning Resources Centre, University of Birmingham, Minutes of Council of I.C.A.A., 7/12/1906 and letter of resignation from Cobb to Council 1/9/1906; he left the Divorce Law Reform Union in 1926, having been Chairman for only a year, because he wanted to change the aims and name of the organisation and others did not (*Journal of Divorce Law Reform Union*, vol. 7, no. 82 (April 1927), p. 2).

⁶³ Cobb's letter of resignation from Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, Minute Book of the Lodge, 17/3/1912.

as Chapter Four will show, Theosophists proved to be active in the HFAM for many years afterwards.

In *The Gavel* of December 1936, Peter Birchall, Past Deputy Grand Master of HFAM and at that time Editor of the journal, wrote:

To Dr. Cobb, more than to any other individual, the praise and gratitude of our Order is due for his courage, wisdom and prevision in breaking with Co-Masonry and leading a small but determined company into the spacious world of 'Free' Masonry proper, i.e., Masonry unattached to any eclectic system of philosophy, Freemasonry based upon age long principles and landmarks as enunciated through the rites and ceremonies of such a body as the United Grand Lodge of England.⁶⁴

The creation of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry

Rev. Dr Cobb and the colleagues who had resigned with him from Co-Masonry immediately took steps to set up a new Order in Freemasonry for both 'men and women, following the ancient Masonic teaching and taking as a model the United Grand Lodge of England'.⁶⁵ By mid 1908 plans had matured sufficiently for a 'Meeting of Masons' to be held on 5 June 1908, when a Resolution was agreed: 'The following Masons being desirous of forwarding the purpose of Freemasonry by the free association of men and women do hereby form themselves into a Masonic Order to be termed the Order of Ancient Masonry ...'.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *The Gavel*, vol. 8, no. 37 (December 1936), p. 1024.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Resolution attached to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 5/6/1908.

The first meeting of the Grand Lodge of England of the Honourable Order of Antient Masonry was held at 1 The Mall, Notting Hill Gate on 20 June 1908. The founding members were Cobb, John W. Sidley, Alfred and Florence Faulding, Horace P. Geddes, John A. Johns, T. Anderson Marks, F.W.Schon, F.W.Lacey, Edward Greenfield and Peter Birchall. Grand Officers were appointed. At the same lengthy session, the three founding Lodges were consecrated – Golden Rule No. 1, Emulation No. 2 and Lodge of Unity No. 3 (these names were taken from Co-Masonic Lodges). The only Lodge to have a lady as its Worshipful Master was the Lodge of Unity – Sister Florence Faulding. The term ‘Sister’ was dropped within a few meetings as it was felt that differentiation of gender contradicted the fundamental idea of a universal brotherhood.

The draft *Declaration of Principles* which was approved was explicit in describing the aims of the new organisation:

The Order of Antient Masonry exists for the purpose of emphasising the spiritual end of Masonry and of demonstrating the spiritual meaning of its traditional rites and ceremonies. It does not seek to oppose but to supplement Masonry as practised under the United Grand Lodge of England.

The aims of the new Fraternity then are briefly: (1) To spiritualise Masonry; (2) To give women their proper place in the Brotherhood of Masonry.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *Draft Declaration of Principles*, attached to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 20/6/1908.

It was not long before the United Grand Lodge of England was alerted to the fact that some of its members were attending meetings of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry. This fraternisation with an irregular Masonic body was contrary to the fundamental precepts and the Constitutions of the United Grand Lodge. In March 1910 the United Grand Lodge issued a directive to all Lodges forbidding such visiting and giving the sanctions that would be invoked for non-compliance, culminating in suspension or expulsion.⁶⁸ Those men who not only attended meetings but belonged to both organisations were therefore placed in an invidious position.⁶⁹

In that year two more Lodges of the HFAM were consecrated – Lodge Harmony No. 4 in February and Lodge Stability No. 5 in April, after the edict from UGLE. The latter was consecrated at a public venue, the Gordon Rooms at the Holborn Restaurant in London, where several of the UGLE Lodges had their meetings. As a result of having been seen to attend the Consecration of Lodge Stability, John Sidley and Frederick Lacey, two of the founder members of the HFAM, were suspended from UGLE. Dr Cobb wrote a fierce and lengthy defence in the Order's journal *The Gavel*, six

⁶⁸ Rule 176 (current – then 204) of the Book of Constitutions of UGLE: 'A person who has in any way been connected with any organisation which is quasi-Masonic, imitative of Masonry, or regarded by the Grand Lodge as irregular or as incompatible with the Craft, may not be initiated into the Craft except by leave of the Grand Master or the Provincial or District Grand Master, as the case may be.

A Brother who subsequent to his initiation has in any way been or is connected with any such organisation as above-mentioned shall be bound to disclaim and finally to sever such connection, or on failure so to do when called upon to do so by any proper Masonic authority shall be liable to suspension or expulsion and shall not thereafter be entitled to a resumption of his Masonic privileges until he shall have petitioned the Grand Master, made due submission, and obtained grace.' A circular was issued in March 1910 by E.Letchworth, Grand Secretary, to all Lodges forcibly reminding Brethren of these facts (reproduced in *The Gavel* (July 1910), p. 7).

⁶⁹ A copy of the edict was attached to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 15/4/1910; copy of a further letter from the Grand Secretary of UGLE to all Worshipful Masters, dated 26/10/1910, attached to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 4/11/1910.

hundred copies of which were circulated to members of the older Obedience.⁷⁰

The Resignation of Dr. Cobb

The first suggestion of opposition to Dr. Cobb within the new Order comes in criticism of *The Gavel*. At the beginning of 1911 it was proposed by Cobb as Grand Master, in Grand Lodge, that an extra amount should be added to members' subscriptions to pay for an obligatory copy of *The Gavel*. The motion was opposed, both in Grand Lodge and in the private Lodges, on the grounds that the content was solely Dr Cobb's and so it was not the official organ of the Order. In April he resigned as Editor 'in view of the irregular and irresponsible criticism passed on my conduct of their organ'.⁷¹

Matters obviously went from bad to worse, for nearly a year later on 17 March 1912, Dr. Cobb resigned his membership of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, and, as it was his Mother Lodge, therefore his membership of the Order. The Worshipful Master of Lodge Golden Rule was Marion Lindsay Halsey. In his letter of resignation he said:

Your W.M. is aware that for some time past the conviction has been maturing in my mind that I could not consent much longer to hold the office of Grand Master, with which I have been honoured for the past four years. From the foundation of the Order I have had to withstand certain sinister tendencies within the Order to revert to the Order of

⁷⁰ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 7/7/1910; 'A Word for Peace', *The Gavel*, vol. 1, no. 6 (July 1910), p. 1 and 'War?', *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷¹ Letter from Cobb to Peter Birchall, Grand Secretary, 10/4/1911, attached to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 27/4/1911.

Universal Co-Masonry out of which our Order took its rise, and against which it was founded to protest. So long as my efforts to resist those tendencies were supported by the general approbation of the Order, I was content to go on discharging the duty of keeping the Order true to its principles.

Recent events, however, have convinced me that I cannot rely on the support of the Order, and as I can neither stoop to nor condone the methods by which my authority has been in some quarters undermined, I have come to the conclusion that I could neither continue to be in any degree responsible for the Order as Grand Master, nor even continue in an Order which, in my humble judgement, has ceased to follow the object for which it was founded.⁷²

Marion Lindsay Halsey had been appointed Deputy Grand Master in November 1911. A meeting of Grand Lodge was called in March 1912 at her house in Portman Square for the express purpose of receiving Dr. Cobb's resignation as Grand Master of the Order. The record of the meeting reveals considerable antipathy towards Dr. Cobb, who was accused of a personal attack on Alfred Faulding, in his absence, which was not considered Masonic behaviour. Halsey maintained she knew that Dr. Cobb really wanted his resignation accepted, and put forward a resolution to do so, which was carried by ten votes to four, with four abstaining. Amidst charge and counter-charge, with several resignations being made and withdrawn, the Grand Senior Warden then proposed that Marion Halsey be voted 'as acting Grand Master

⁷² Letter from Cobb to Walter Secker, Secretary of Lodge Golden Rule No.1, copy attached to minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 21/3/1912.

of this Grand Lodge. Unanimously carried with acclamation.' Lodge Golden Rule *en masse* threatened to hand in their charter in protest at his resignation, but in the end did not do so, although eighteen members of the Lodge resigned.⁷³

So just why did Dr. Cobb resign from the Order he had founded, after four short years? Firstly, one of the reasons for creating a new Masonic organisation in 1908 had been to move away from the Theosophical teachings and influence which were so dominant in the ritual and ceremonies of Co-Masonry. It appeared that this had not happened - as all the founders of the Honourable Fraternity had been Co-Masons, it was not surprising that there were still those who were loyal to the Theosophical cause, in opposition to their Grand Master.

Secondly, Dr. Cobb was a forceful and dominant character. He had left Co-Masonry partly because he was stopped by Annie Besant and the ruling council from introducing a more democratic structure to the organisation. Similarly, in other areas of his life he left groups such as the Indian Church Aid Association and the Divorce Law Reform Union when he was baulked in introducing changes. If he could not get his way, he left and went on to pastures new and there is no reason to suppose that his departure from the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry was any different.⁷⁴

⁷³ Halsey was appointed Deputy Grand Master by Cobb at Grand Lodge 23/11/1911; the Grand Lodge meeting at MLH's home was on 27/3/1912; Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No.1, 18/4/1912.

⁷⁴ See Note 60 above.

It is difficult to escape the feeling that Marion Halsey, at the very least, did little to defend and protect Dr Cobb's position as head to the HFAM. Her forcefulness was already evident and she pushed for his resignation to be accepted. She was elected acting Grand Master, an appointment which was subsequently ratified by Grand Lodge.

Marion Lindsay Halsey⁷⁵

Born Marion Lindsay Antrobus in 1861, she was the eldest daughter of Hugh, a banker who became the senior partner and then Chairman of the prestigious Coutts Bank. She was also the grand-daughter of Sir Edmund Antrobus, 2nd Bt. and great-great-grand-daughter of James Lindsay, 5th Earl of Balcarres and Crawford. She had three sisters (two of whom joined the HFAM) and a brother who died in infancy. She married firstly Capt. Henry Gerard Leigh, by whom she had a son and three daughters. Her eldest daughter Diana joined the Order and married Herbrand Sackville, later 9th Earl de la Warr, son of another member of HFAM, Muriel, Countess de la Warr. Capt. Leigh was killed in 1900 and in 1910 Marion married Reginald Halsey, fifth son of Sir Thomas Halsey, Bt. and Deputy Grand Master of UGLE from 1903 to 1927. The marriage was conducted by Rev. Dr Cobb at St Ethelburga's. Reginald was a Freemason in UGLE and was affiliated into HFAM at the same meeting when Marion Lindsay Leigh was initiated in 1909. She was

⁷⁵ The following is taken from: Edna Healey, *Coutts & Co 1692-1992: the Portrait of a Private Bank*, (London 1992), p. 375 and pp. 384-5; Initiation and affiliation of Leigh and Halsey: minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 29/4/1909; Resignation of Reginald Halsey, *ibid.*, 14/7/1910; Halsey-Leigh marriage: *The Times*, 18/4/1910, 13a, Court Circular; Charles Mosley, ed., *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage* (107th ed.), (Wilmington, De., 2003), Vol. 1, p. 117; Grand Lodge of HFAM, minutes of a special meeting held on 4/1/1928.

proposed by Dr Cobb. Reginald resigned from HFAM the following year because of the sanctions imposed by UGLE.

Within two years of her joining the Order Marion Halsey had been appointed Deputy Grand Master, and then acting Grand Master after Dr Cobb's resignation. She became Grand Master of HFAM in 1912, a position she held until her death in 1927.

Marion was very wealthy. At some time after her first husband's death she rented Lees Court, a palatial mansion belonging to Earl Sondes and possibly designed by Inigo Jones, near Faversham in Kent. She spent a great deal of money on improvements and modern additions such as electricity and garages, and had the eighteenth-century gardens redesigned by Thomas Mawson in 1908. (Mawson was proposed by Marion Leigh for affiliation into Lodge Golden Rule No.1 of HFAM in March 1910, and seconded by Reginald Halsey).⁷⁶

Highly educated, she was very much inclined towards mystical and esoteric traditions. As well as being a Freemason she belonged to the *Stella Matutina*, an offshoot of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. This was one of several secret magical societies in existence at the end of the nineteenth century and was concerned with the preservation of that body of knowledge called Hermeticism or the Western Esoteric Tradition, dedicated to the philosophical, spiritual and psychic evolution of humanity. Members learnt the principles of occult science and

⁷⁶ Her address is given in the record of her initiation: minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 29/4/1909; Mawson's initiation: *ibid.*, 17/3/1910.

elements of western philosophy and magic. Like mixed Masonry and the Theosophical movement which were current at the same time, the Golden Dawn and similar societies gave women complete equality in their activities.⁷⁷

Adelide Litten later said of Halsey;

She devoted her life henceforth to furthering the interests of Freemasonry for women, and, notwithstanding her many activities and responsibilities, she was always working strenuously for the advancement of the Cause she had so dearly at heart. There has rarely been combined in one individual, in the same degree, all the qualities of 'a great lady'. Nobility of character, simplicity, independence, quiet insight, understanding, high ideals, wide culture and great qualities of leadership, which won for her the affection, admiration and respect of all those who had the privilege of knowing her. She remains a beautiful, gracious and inspiring memory in the hearts of the members of the Order, which she served for so long with such conspicuous fidelity, zeal and ability.⁷⁸

Halsey was Grand Master for seventeen years and during that period she totally dominated the Order. In the last few years she had bouts of illness and in May 1927

⁷⁷ For an overview of the Golden Dawn, see *The Golden Dawn Companion : a Guide to the History, Structure, and Workings of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*, compiled and introduced by R.A. Gilbert (Wellingborough, 1986); MLH in the *Stella Matutina*, 'Inquire Within', *The Trail of the Serpent* (London, 1936), pp. 197-8: 'This group was for long penetrated by the influence and illuminism of the Stella Matutina and the R.R. et A.C., and as late as 1923-24 not only its Grand Master, Mrs. H ----, but several of its members were advanced adepts of that Order and that of Steiner' [the author was a member of the Stella Matutina, p.179]; Israel Regardie, *What you should know about the Golden Dawn* (Phoenix, Az., 6th edition, 1993), p. 11.

⁷⁸ *Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry 1908-1938*, p. 8.

her husband Reginald died. Halsey passed away soon afterwards on 27 December 1927 at her London home and was buried at St Michael and All Angels, Withyham, East Sussex. The church there houses the Sackville Vault - Halsey's daughter Diana married the 9th Earl de la Warr, whose family name was Sackville, and whose mother was Muriel, Lady de la Warr, a member of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1.

Marion Halsey was not buried in the vault, but in the churchyard, in the same grave as her husband Reginald. Their tombstone bears on the top the square and compasses.⁷⁹

Going back to the beginning of her reign as Grand Master, her first test came in 1913, when some of the members of Lodge Stability No. 5, headed by Janet Boswell-Reid and her daughter Seton Challen, tried to set up a Royal Arch Chapter without going through the proper channels.

The position of the Holy Royal Arch differed in UGLE and HFAM. In the former, the *General Laws and Regulations for the Government of the Craft* drawn up in 1813 when the two existing Grand Lodges for men in England amalgamated (the 'Union') stated in their first clause: 'Pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch'. The Constitutions of UGLE therefore consider the Holy Royal Arch to be closely associated with Craft Masonry and the two are administered by the same authority. Many male Masons

⁷⁹ Death notice and memorial tribute attached to the minutes of Special Grand Lodge of HFAM, 4/1/1928; Author's visit to Halsey grave.

belonging to UGLE wear their Royal Arch jewel with their Craft regalia, showing the close connection between the two.⁸⁰

HFAM started off by following this arrangement. The first Declaration of Principles drawn up on 20 June 1908 also included the Royal Arch: 'Its jurisdiction extends to the three Craft Degrees, the Degree of the Mark Mason, of the Royal Arch, and none other'. In mid 1912 (immediately after Cobb's resignation) the Constitutions were amended, one of the changes being to remove reference to the Royal Arch, with Clause 1 then reading: 'Ancient Masonry consists of the three Degrees and no more ...', as it was thought at the time that there was no chance of obtaining the special secrets of the Holy Royal Arch in a legitimate way, namely from those men who were already members of the Holy Royal Arch.⁸¹

As the Constitutions of the HFAM had been amended to restrict its activities to the three Craft degrees only, the introduction of a further degree could only be effected by the Grand Master and none other which necessitated receiving the 'secrets' of this degree from a legal authority, that is, a body which already held

⁸⁰ United Grand Lodge of England, *Constitutions of the Antient Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons under the Grand Lodge of England: General Laws and Regulations for the Government of the Craft* (London, 1989), p. 13.

⁸¹ *Draft Declaration of Principles*, attached to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 20/6/1908. A special meeting of the Order was held on 11/7/12 to 'receive and consider a revised Constitution.' (Minutes of Lodge Emulation No. 2, 11/7/12); In 1929 this particular clause in the Constitutions of HFAM was changed back again to include the Holy Royal Arch, prior to the introduction of that degree into the Order by Grand Master Adelaide Litten: Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 26/6/1929. However, there has never been any special link between the Holy Royal Arch and the Craft, as there is with male Masonry. The one authority of HFAM and now the OWF includes all 'Further and Higher' Degrees.

them.⁸² The members of Lodge Stability No. 5 had attempted to circumvent this process by omitting the Grand Master and therefore their action was deemed unconstitutional.

After a great deal of wrangling and bad feeling, Boswell-Reid, Seton Challen and her husband and most of the officers of Lodge Stability who supported them resigned from the Order. Failing attempts to recover the Lodge charter and books, the motion was carried in Grand Lodge in July 1913 that 'the said Lodge be formally erased from the Roll of Grand Lodge'.⁸³ Elizabeth Boswell-Reid and the Challens founded another Masonic Order - the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons (HFAM) - in September 1913. Their first three Lodges were consecrated together - Stability Lodge No. 1, Fidelity No. 2 and Strength No. 3. This organisation still exists as the second and smaller women's Order.⁸⁴

At the end of the First World War, the HFAM was still a mixed Order with both male and female membership in terms of existing members and visitors, although war service had reduced the number of men coming forward as candidates. Having survived for a decade as a Masonic organisation and having set up an important contribution to national rehabilitation in the form of the Guild of Education as National Service,⁸⁵ it was felt that the time had come to approach UGLE for formal recognition – 'A question arose as to approaching the Grand Lodge of England

⁸² For an account of the following, see A. Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door*, pp. 45-51. For source material, see minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 25/6/1913, 29/10/1913, 12/11/1913, 28/1/1914, 9/7/1914.

⁸³ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 9/7/1914.

⁸⁴ <http://www.hfaf.org/> (accessed 13/2/2009).

⁸⁵ See Chapter Four.

relative to a possible understanding between their Obedience and our Order.’⁸⁶ A Special Committee of the Grand Master, Deputy, Grand Secretary and Treasurer was set up and eventually finalised the wording of a petition. It pointed out that the position of women in society had changed greatly because of the war, when women took part in much of the work and responsibilities of men. It requested a full examination of the working of the Order and to have its existence regularised in the Masonic world by the recognition of United Grand Lodge. Integration was neither sought nor desired, but just a removal of the bans of 1910 and 1919, so that men were free to support their ladies in Masonry ‘without compromising their honour or allegiance.’⁸⁷

When the petition was sent to UGLE, it was accompanied by a personal letter from Halsey to Philip Colville Smith, Grand Secretary, stressing that they understood the magnitude of the step they were taking in asking for recognition and how the support of UGLE would help the expansion of the Order:

May we plead in excuse the sincere love we have for our Masonic work, and our deep sense of what Masonic discipline and Masonic teaching can do for women. Amongst the large armies of women - doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers - there is no one organisation which can establish a close link between them all, while embracing every shade of religious opinion. Masonry alone can supply this want, which

⁸⁶ Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, 17/1/1919.

⁸⁷ For the text of the Petition, Halsey’s letter and the reply from UGLE, see A.Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door*, Appendix I, pp. 226-231.

is every day making itself more felt in our midst.⁸⁸

Three months later, Colville Smith replied that his Board could not recommend the prayer of the petition for acceptance by Grand Lodge – ‘No woman can be a Freemason according to the original Plan of Freemasonry to which English Freemasons have from time immemorial adhered’. Sanctions would continue to be enforced against male Masons who associated with the women.⁸⁹

The decision of UGLE was accepted with dignity and regret, but it became necessary for the Order to reconsider its attitude towards men belonging to the older Obedience. It was decided not to admit any more men as new Initiates or Joining Members and that an Order consisting of women only would be the best way forward. The Board of General Purposes recommended to Grand Lodge that whilst no summons or invitation would deliberately be sent to a male Mason, they should not be discriminated against but welcomed without comment if they wished to visit Lodges of the Order. The Lodges were informed accordingly. This remained the situation until the next decade.⁹⁰

The HFAM had, since 1911, used rooms at the Baptist Union Chapel on Southampton Row, Holborn as a headquarters. In 1921 the landlords increased the rent by 60%, which meant that the Order’s expenditure would exceed its income

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 230. Colville Smith obviously had no personal antipathy to working with women – he was the first to appoint two lady clerks into his office at Grand Lodge in 1918: R.B.F. Khambatta, *Grand Secretaries of the United Grand Lodge of England (1813-1980)*, Prestonian Lecture for 2008 (London, 2006), p. 56.

⁹⁰ Minutes of the Board of General Purposes of HFAM 18/3/1921, 6/10/1921.

from subscriptions. Luckily, two years later a member of the Lodge of Unity No. 3, Florence Emma Turner, was able to present the Order with the freehold of a house in Notting Hill Gate from money left to her by her father. This house would be a permanent headquarters and owned by HFAM. The garden was large enough to have a Temple built in it, the cost of which was underwritten by Marion Halsey. The Foundation Stone of the Temple was laid with due ceremony, alterations were made to the house so that it would provide ancillary rooms and offices, and the completed Temple was then dedicated in January 1925. Florence Turner rapidly rose through the ranks to the position of Grand Registrar.⁹¹

The first ceremony, other than Lodge meetings, to be held in the new Headquarters was the consecration of another Lodge, Verity No. 7 in February 1925 - Verity was the first Lodge to be formed since 1912. This was followed by Lodge Fidelity No. 8 in 1926 and Lodge Loyalty No. 9 in May 1927.

Grand Master Marion Halsey had been ill on and off for much of 1926 and 1927, missing several Grand Lodge meetings. Her husband Reginald died in May 1927. She seemed to be in better health in the latter part of the year but died on 27th December at her home in London.⁹²

⁹¹ A fuller account is in A. Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door*, pp. 65-72; Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 2/7/1924, 20/1/1925.

⁹² Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 27/1/1926, 27/10/1926; Minutes of a Special Meeting of Grand Lodge to announce her death, 4/1/1929.

Adelaide Litten

After the death of Marion Halsey much thought was given to the choice of a successor, as she had not designated one. Eventually the Grand Treasurer of fifteen years standing, Adelaide Litten, was pressured into accepting. She had been initiated into Lodge Emulation No. 2 by Peter Birchall in 1909. Aged 55, middle class and a secretary by profession, she could not have been more different from the wealthy and aristocratic personality who preceded her.⁹³

During her term of office (1928-1938) the membership of the Order increased from 460 to double that number and the number of Craft Lodges grew from nine to twenty, for the first time extending outside London.

The credit for much of this expansion was due to the creation of a 'travelling' Lodge.⁹⁴ This idea was taken from the men's military travelling Lodges. Such a Lodge travelled with a regiment and served not only the members of the garrison but recruited from and trained the local population wherever they were stationed, so that in time new permanent Lodges could be formed. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such military travelling Lodges had been a major vehicle for increasing the geographical spread of Freemasonry. Likewise, the travelling Lodge became a chief means for the expansion of the HFAM throughout the country. It was founded by 112 members drawn from the ten Lodges which then comprised the Order. It came to possess a full set of furniture and equipment,

⁹³ A. Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door*, pp. 77-83; Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 25/1/1928.

⁹⁴ For Lodge Mercury No. 11 see [A. Pilcher-Dayton], 'Go Forth!: The History of Lodge Mercury No.11', *The Gavel*, Vol. 71, No. 209, (January 2004), pp. 43-8.

most of which was donated by Brethren, and which was transported round the country by train or car. It was called Lodge Mercury No. 11 and was consecrated in June 1928.

The usual pattern adopted in a chosen location was for the Worshipful Master or a senior Officer to address an open meeting, freely advertised to attract women who might be interested, on *Freemasonry and Women*. Lodge Mercury would then in due course initiate, pass and raise those women who committed themselves.

These would become members of Mercury and when a sufficient number were present in any one place, they could petition for the formation of their own local Lodge.

Lecture meetings were held all over the country. In 1930 Lodge Fraternity No. 12, the first Lodge outside London, was consecrated to work at Southend and by 1935 there were also Lodges in Sunderland, Newcastle, Manchester, Liverpool and Worthing. In addition, two more Lodges were consecrated in London – Lodge Marion Halsey No. 10 in 1928 (long planned by the late Grand Master) and Lodge Equity No. 16 in 1931, especially founded for a group of ladies who, via Lodge Mercury, returned to the fold from the break-away organisation of 1913.⁹⁵

One of the most significant events in the time of Adelaide Litten as Grand Master was the move in 1935 to restrict the membership of the Order to women alone. In 1920, after the rejection of the Petition for recognition, men were no longer

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

admitted as Initiates or Joining Members but were still allowed to visit. In 1930 Grand Lodge resolved 'that visitors shall not be received from Jurisdictions with which we are not in fraternal relations'⁹⁶ - this therefore included all male visitors. It was considered that to develop a strong and well-run female Order which did not impinge in any way on the activities of the men would give HFAM the best chance of recognition in the future. At the time this did not affect the position of men then in Grand Lodge office, such as Deputy Grand Master Peter Birchall and Grand Secretary Peter Slingsby. These two men had, since the beginning, contributed much to the development and organisation of the Order.

Peter Birchall was one of the Co-Masonic founders of HFAM in 1908 and was appointed Grand Secretary by Dr Cobb from 1908 to 1912. When Marion Halsey succeeded as Grand Master in 1912, she chose Peter Birchall as Deputy Grand Master - an office he held until 1935, and in which he loyally and effectively supported the Grand Master. There was at that time a Central Lodge of Instruction and for twenty years he was Preceptor of this, establishing and preserving the correct working of Masonic ceremonies.

Peter Slingsby was initiated into Lodge Emulation No. 2 in 1909 and his business abilities (he was a land surveyor) led him to the office of Secretary of that Lodge. It was characteristic that from the very start of his Masonic career he proceeded deliberately to master by-laws, constitutions, usages and customs and recorded every detail of procedure for the sake of future generations. The value of such a

⁹⁶ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 25/6/1930, Item 7(c).

personality was soon recognised in the small Order and Dr Cobb accelerated his rise through the ranks by giving him the secrets of an Installed Master so that he could be appointed Assistant Grand Secretary. When Marion Halsey became Grand Master in 1912, she made him her Grand Secretary, and he continued in that office until his death in 1935.⁹⁷

When Slingsby died, it left Peter Birchall, as Deputy Grand Master, the only man remaining in high office. At Grand Lodge in October of that year, before appointing the Deputy Grand Master, Adelaide Litten said that in view of the Resolution passed some time before (1930), it was felt to be inconsistent that a man should hold an important office when men were no longer admitted into the Order. 'It was deemed by a great many that the appropriate moment had arrived when the executive offices of this Order should be occupied by women only' and she felt it her duty not to reappoint him as Deputy Grand Master, whilst expressing to him the profound gratitude which would always be felt for the splendid services he had rendered to the Order.⁹⁸

Bad feeling had recently developed between Adelaide Litten and Peter Birchall over fraternal relations with another mixed Masonic group, headed by Aimee Bothwell-Gosse, which had broken away from the Co-Masons in 1925. Discussions on closer relations between the two Orders had taken place but had been vetoed by the

⁹⁷ 'Peter Walter Slingsby', *The Gavel*, Vol. 7, No. 31 (October, 1935), pp. 843-6.

⁹⁸ *The Gavel*, Vol. 7, No. 32 (December, 1935), p. 872.

Board of General Purposes, including Peter Birchall.⁹⁹ When some members reintroduced the subject ten years later, Birchall made a complete *volte face* and, during a speech at a social occasion, endorsed it whole-heartedly – this time in a public forum, which was out-of-order.¹⁰⁰ By then the HFAM was *de facto* an Order for women and the issue was whether to merge with another group, which still admitted men, just in order to obtain the secrets necessary to introduce the degrees beyond the Craft. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that because of this personal antagonism, the decision to dispense with Birchall's services was not completely altruistic and that his departure was in effect a sacking rather than a resignation. He received somewhat cavalier treatment – although the London Lodges sent him a cheque, collar and Past Deputy Grand Master's jewel, his apron 'altered to meet the exigencies of the case' (*i.e.* the emblem converted to that of a Past rank) was also sent to him by post. He continued as the editor of *The Gavel* until 1944 and died in 1946 from prostate cancer, aged 81.¹⁰¹

1935 therefore marked the point at which it was formally established that the HFAM was a single-sex Order. This of course meant that one of the founding principles had been abandoned and that it was no longer a Masonic Order in which men and women could practice Freemasonry on equal terms. Following the rejection of the Petition in 1920, the gradual withdrawal from a position of equality was not then seen as a retrograde or indeed a permanent step. Adelaide Litten felt

⁹⁹ Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, 11/6/1925; Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 24/6/1925.

¹⁰⁰ Typed statement of Grand Master, Attachment A, p. 5, to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 27/3/1935.

¹⁰¹ *The Gavel*, Vol. 7, No. 33 (February 1936), p. 903-4; *ibid.*, Vol. 15, No. 69 (February 1944), p. 33; *ibid.*, Obituary, Vol. 18, No. 78 (January 1947), pp. 1-2.

strongly that the decision to bar men, both as members and as visitors, was very important for the sake of the future relationship of HFAM with UGLE. It would be wrong to destroy the fragile links that had been built up and to prejudice the position of the Order by going back on that decision and to enter into relations with a body which accepted male members. She endorsed a united Women's Order in due course, but not in a rush and not until everyone wanted it.¹⁰²

It was not until 1956 that the question arose of changing the name of the Order to incorporate the word 'women'. Both *Antient Masonry*, which suggested a harkening back for spiritual inspiration to the Ancient Mysteries in which women had participated, and *Fraternity*, which was perhaps not the best description of an all-women order, were felt to be unsuitable. Many Brethren however were reluctant to change the name held for nearly fifty years. In 1958 the words *Order of Women Freemasons* were added as a subtitle to *Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry*, although it is the name by which the Order is generally known today.¹⁰³

Other Masonic Organisations for Women in Britain

The Order of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masonry for Men and Women

This group headed by Aimee Bothwell-Gosse was the third Masonic Order in England to admit both men and women, and the second to secede from Universal Co-Masonry. Bothwell-Gosse was initiated into the Co-Masonic order in 1904 in

¹⁰² Typed statement of Grand Master, Attachment A, p. 2, to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 27/3/1935.

¹⁰³ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 4/10/1958.

London, where she became acquainted with Peter Birchall, with whom she worked for some years in that Order. She became a 33° member of the Supreme Council of the Co-Masons in France. Before it was realised that she was a woman, she was invited by Clemence Stretton to join the male Worshipful Society of Freemasons (the Operatives) in 1909. Her admission went ahead however and she rose to the VII°, thus becoming a Grand Master in that Order. She was also the editor of the quarterly journal *The Co-Mason*.¹⁰⁴

In 1925 Bothwell-Gosse led another group of men and women who had become dissatisfied with Co-Masonry. They disagreed with Masonic practice by the French Supreme Council and they wanted to set up their own Sovereign Supreme Council in England. Because of Bothwell-Gosse's status as a Grand Master of the Operatives, she could be claimed to possess the authority and knowledge to found a Masonic Grand Lodge, and she therefore left Co-Masonry to found her own Order. A number of other Masons, including four complete Lodges plus one complete 18th Degree Chapter (Rose Croix) of the Ancient and Accepted Rite, left Co-Masonry with her. The new Order was formed by three members of the 33° of Co-Masonry, headed by Bothwell-Gosse as the first Most Puissant Grand Commander. It was called *The Order of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masonry for Men and Women* (AFAMMW) and both sexes were admitted on an equal basis. It

¹⁰⁴ J. Rasoletti and E. Lancée, *We Three or Such as We*, ([Leesmijnboek.nl Internet Publishing], Koog aan de Zaan, NL, 2008), pp. 48-64.

worked solely in the 33 Degrees of the AASR. There was a strong Operative influence in their ceremonies.¹⁰⁵

Marion Lindsay Halsey in 1925 had corresponded with and met Bothwell-Gosse with a view to closer relations between the two Orders. Discussion centred on the effect the admission of this body of men and women would have on the standing of HFAM and whether it would militate against eventual recognition of HFAM by UGLE. The issue as to whether closer relations should be pursued went to the Board of General Purposes of the HFAM, which decided by a majority vote to recommend to Grand Lodge that the application should be refused.¹⁰⁶

The matter was revived in 1934, with several very senior members of HFAM expressing an interest in establishing fraternal relations with Bothwell-Gosse's Order. They felt that nothing but good could come of unity - not union - with another order, enabling the two jointly to spread Freemasonry for women and extend its influence. 'We could not find a more suitable body of women with whom to take a first step towards mutual understanding than these people, ... who left Co-Masonry for exactly the same reasons as our own Order did, to practise pure Masonry according to the true ideals of the Institution'.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55; personal communication to the author from Major F.H. Smyth, detailing his unpublished research on the different women's Orders and correspondence with Miss Debenham; M.G.M. Hope, 'Growth of the Masonic Rites for Women', *The Gavel*, Vol. 26, No. 103 (April 1955), p. 154; V.I.M. Chapman, 'Women in Freemasonry: Then and Now', *The Gavel*, Vol. 48, No. 166 (Nov. 1981), pp. 32-33.

¹⁰⁶ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 13/3/1925, 24/6/1925; a summary given by Adelaide Litten as Attachment A in minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 27/3/1935.

¹⁰⁷ Speech by R.W.Bro. A. Collet, Attachment C to minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 27/3/1935.

The concern of the Grand Lodge of HFAM centred on the position of men in AFAMMW. Grand Master Adelaide Litten felt strongly that the decision of HFAM to bar men, both as members and as visitors, was very important for the sake of the future relationship with UGLE. As far as she could see, the only reason for wanting links with Bothwell-Gosse's Order was in order to obtain the secrets of the 18th to the 33rd Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite - but it was possible to obtain information about these degrees in other ways, without plunging the HFAM into the discord and dissension which would be generated by amalgamation with another Order admitting men. However, it was noted that the AFAMMW had granted autonomy to their individual Lodges in deciding whether to admit men as well as women and several had decided not to do so.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, a resumption of discussions on fraternal relations would have involved rescinding Grand Lodge's previous decision of 1928. There the matter rested until 1951. By then there was a different Grand Master, Mary Gordon Muirhead Hope, who was very interested both in the AASR and also in the expansion of women's Freemasonry, and she went the furthest in approaching other female Masonic organisations.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Summary given by Adelaide Litten as Attachment A in minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 27/3/1935.

¹⁰⁹ Proposals for consultation between the two Orders were put forward; Miss Debenham with some of her senior officers visited Grand Lodge in 1952 (Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 28/10/1952); and an overseas alliance was suggested whereby five all-female Lodges of the AFAMMW in Australia would be open to HFAF members (Draft letter attached to the minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 31/10/1951; Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 26/3/1952). However, nothing came of the discussions on a closer relationship.

It is not known if the Order is still in existence, but a further mixed Masonic organisation, *The Order of Ancient Free Masonry for Men and Women (AFMM&W)*, split from the AFAMMW in 1979. Currently this Order appears to have five Lodges, one in London, two in Scotland, one in Utrecht and one in Miami, Florida. They also have close links with other European mixed Obediences under an

The Eastern Star

In the nineteenth century, the adoptive rite of the Order of the Eastern Star was founded in the U.S.A. in 1868 by the American Mason and writer Rob Morris, in an attempt to find a form of Masonry which could involve women or even the whole family. It became the largest and most successful of the androgynous orders.¹¹⁰ It still exists and is open to the wives, daughters, mothers, sisters and widows of Masons. The structure and moral content were derived from the French Rite of Adoption, with the stories of four Biblical women – Jephtha’s Daughter, Ruth, Esther, Martha – together with Electa, the Elect Lady (the title of the fifth Grade of the Adoptive Rite). These five illustrated the virtues of respect, devotion, fidelity, faith and patience or submission associated with the five states of a woman’s life. There are two junior organisations for girls associated with the Eastern Star – the Order of Job’s Daughters and the Order of the Rainbow. These are for girls from a Masonic background and they stress character building through moral and spiritual development, together with a reverence for God, loyalty to the country and respect for parents.¹¹¹

The Eastern Star emphasises spiritual values and the fraternal bond between members. It is open to all who profess a faith and its stated purposes are

‘Charitable, Educational, Fraternal and Scientific’. ‘Eastern Star strives to take good

umbrella organisation called CATENA (the International Masonic Union) which started in Holland in 1961 (J. Rasoletti and E. Lancée, *We Three*, p. 133, 181; on CATENA, see *ibid.*, pp. 144-161).

¹¹⁰ Harold Van Buren Voorhis, *The Eastern Star: The Evolution from a Rite to an Order* (Richmond, Va., 1976), available online at:

http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/eastern_star_the_evolution_from_a_rite_to_an_order.htm (accessed 29/8/2010); A. Buisine, *La Franc-Maçonnerie anglo-saxonne et les femmes* (Paris, 1995), pp. 182-214; http://www.easternstar.org/about_oes.html (accessed 28/8/2010).

¹¹¹ V.I.M. Chapman, ‘Women in Freemasonry: Then and Now’, *The Gavel*, Vol. 48, No. 166 (Nov. 1981), p. 27; R.A. Gilbert, ‘Monstrous Regiment’, p. 163.

people and through uplifting and elevating associations of love and service, and through precept and example build an Order which is truly dedicated to charity, truth and loving kindness.'¹¹²

In the United Kingdom it became, and still is, popular in Scotland, with a few Chapters in the north of England. The Grand Lodge of Scotland condones male Masons joining their ladies in membership of the Eastern Star. The United Grand Lodge of England has forbidden any association with it although a few Lodges work in England under the auspices of Scotland.¹¹³

While the story of women and Freemasonry in Britain is relatively short compared with male Freemasonry, it is nevertheless extremely complex. Masonic groupings split, reformed, changed their names. In some cases, as with the emergence of the HFAM itself, this was due to disagreements within Masonic organisations as to their character and future direction. In the case of the Order of the Eastern Star, it was an organisation which represented a separate tradition, imported from abroad. Within this complex landscape, the HFAM was to become not only the largest of these organisations in Britain, but one that was close in character, ethos and structure to the male Freemasonry of United Grand Lodge and, importantly, one for which documentary evidence on its history and development was available. For

¹¹² http://www.easternstar.org/about_oes.html (accessed 29/8/2010).

¹¹³ <http://www.supremegrandchapterofscotland.org> (accessed 28/8/2010).

these reasons, it is the best choice for a series of case studies to investigate the significance and character of women's Freemasonry in the context of feminism.

Chapter Two

Analysis of Membership of the HFAM

While a general outline of the historical development of the HFAM gives a strong sense of its ideology and its general alignment with women's movements, before exploring in more detail its connections with feminist activities, it is essential to get a better sense of who joined the HFAM and of the social and other networks embodied within the Order. Such an investigation has a further value, in that statistical and social analyses of feminist organisations are generally lacking, and similar studies of Masonic organisations, male or female, are non-existent. While there is an increasing amount of research on the history and ideology of participating organisations in the suffrage movement, there has been no attempt at a comprehensive statistical analysis of membership.¹¹⁴ A notable exception in the wider feminist field however is that of Olive Banks in *Becoming a Feminist*,¹¹⁵ and this provides a good starting point for approaching investigation of the social complexion of the HFAM.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, for the three main women's suffrage groups WSPU, NUWSS & WFL, Les Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty* (London, 1984); on MLWS, A.V. John and C. Eustance, eds., *The Men's Share? Masculinities, Male Support and Women's Suffrage in Britain 1890-1920* (London, 1997), ch. 1, pp. 2-56; S.S. Holten, 'Now You See It, Now You Don't: the Woman's Franchise League and its Place in Contending Narratives of the Woman's Suffrage Movement'; Frances, H. "'Pay the Piper, Call the Tune!": the Women's Tax Resistance League' and K. Cowman, 'A Party between Revolution and Peaceful Persuasion': a Fresh Look at the United Suffragists', all in M. Joannou and J. Purvis, eds., *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester, 1998).

¹¹⁵ O. Banks, *Becoming a Feminist: The Social Origins of 'First Wave' Feminism* (Athens, Georgia, 1986).

The analysis of Olive Banks

Banks' work, although pioneering, has certain fundamental flaws, particularly in the size and selection of the sample. The data on which her statistical study, now over twenty years old, is based is mainly biographical, both with respect to autobiographies and single biographies of individuals such as Constance Lytton and the Pankhursts, but also of collective biographies and biographical dictionaries - particularly Banks' own *Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists*.¹¹⁶ The problem with this is that the interpretation of biographical information is sometimes in itself subjective, both from the point of view of the biographer and of the reader.

The selection criteria for the individuals used in Banks' study is also inevitably subjective, given the diversity of interpretations of the term feminism. The 'main guiding principle' used in the selection of her sample is the 'presence of a critique of the traditional subordination of women, enshrined as it was in law, custom and religion, and a claim for a new relationship between men and women which would give women greater control over their lives'.¹¹⁷ The selection was further influenced by limiting inclusion to those who were feminist activists rather than the much larger number of feminist sympathisers. In addition, as Banks admits, there was a lack of biographical information available on women in general, and that the amount of information available influenced selection.

¹¹⁶ For example, individual accounts: C. Lytton, *Prisons and Prisoners* (London, 1914, reprinted Virago Press, London, 1988); E.S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (London, 1931, reprinted Virago Press, 1977); E. Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World* (London, 1938); A. Linklater, *An Unhusbanded Life: Charlotte Despard, Suffragette, Socialist and Sinn Feiner* (London, 1980); Collected works: O. Banks, *Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, vol. 1 1800-1930* (New York, 1985).

¹¹⁷ O. Banks, *Becoming a Feminist*, p. 2.

Banks divides the names into four groups over time, organised by date of birth, and representing a generation. The first cohort consists of those born before 1828, and therefore belonging to the first generation of feminists, The second cohort were born between 1828 and 1848 and therefore includes 'most of the leaders of nineteenth-century feminism once it had emerged as an organised social movement' such as Josephine Butler, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Millicent Fawcett and Charlotte Despard.¹¹⁸

Next comes the group born between 1849 and 1871, who became active towards the end of the nineteenth century at the time when suffrage was becoming the dominant issue. This cohort therefore includes many of the leaders of the militant movement, including Emmeline Pankhurst, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence and Constance Lytton, but also constitutionalists such as Frances Balfour. It is notable that the militant Annie Cobden Sanderson (born 1853) is not included in this sample.

Cohort IV, born between 1872 and 1891, 'represent the last generation of "first wave" feminism', including the Pankhurst daughters Christabel and Sylvia.¹¹⁹ This group experienced the problematical success of the partial 1918 franchise and the achievement of votes for women in 1928.

The sample consists of ninety eight women and eighteen men. The small number of men makes the sample inadequate for statistical analysis, but the information

¹¹⁸ Banks, *Becoming a Feminist*, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5

obtained is used to compare with that of the women's sample. As far as the latter is concerned, even the number of ninety eight when further reduced by excluding those about whom there is insufficient information means that conclusions are sometimes drawn from groups of less than ten individuals, thus laying the conclusions open to the charge of generalisation.¹²⁰

Debate on the position, ideology and motivation of male activists in the feminist cause has largely come about since the publication of Banks' study, notably in the work of Angela John and Claire Eustance.¹²¹ The inclusion of eighteen men in a male sample was therefore innovative at the time – 'since to uncover the process by which a man becomes a feminist would seem to pose even more complex and interesting problems than to ask a similar question of a women'¹²² - but can be in no way representative either in terms of coverage or statistics. The selection of men is heavily weighted towards the earliest years of the time range, those born before 1828, and only one – Henry Brailsford – belongs to the last, suffrage and post-suffrage, group.¹²³ It is difficult to see how the omission of figures such as Laurence Housman (who was very active in supporting the cause with his sister Clemence) can be justified from cohort III.¹²⁴ It is, however, only more recent

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106-107.

¹²¹ A. John and C. Eustance, *The Men's Share*; up to 1986, studies that discussed the male role, particularly in suffrage, included S. Strauss, *Traitors to the Masculine Cause* (Westport CT, 1982) and Harrison, B. *Separate Spheres* (London, 1978).

¹²² O. Banks, *Becoming a Feminist*, p. 3.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 108, 170.

¹²⁴ L. Housman, *The Unexpected Years* (London, 1937) deals with his contribution with both sincerity ('... we never doubted, even in its darkest days, that the Cause would win...' , p. 266) and irony ('I think it was Jack Hobbs who one day startled the clubs of Piccadilly by joining the men's section in one of the big processions. When the hated cause had enlisted the support of a famous cricketer, matters were becoming serious', p. 275); *The Vote* of 13/8/1910, p. 188 carried a long review of his *Articles of Faith in the Freedom of Women*.

research that has brought to light the activities of other men and organisations.

Cecil Chapman, Victor Duval and members of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage are some of the figures who could have been included in cohort IV.¹²⁵

Conclusions drawn by Banks in respect of the male sample indicate that most men were in the professional class and married, and half were active in partnership with their wives in the feminist cause.

One of the objects of Banks' study was an analysis of the social background of the women. Social origin, educational qualifications, religious and political affiliation (as far as known) were analysed in relationship to the cohorts and each other.¹²⁶ It is important to emphasise that far more information was available for most of the individuals in Banks' sample than has been possible to collect for the present study, which at best has only been able to work with basic details, the quantity of which is very variable.

She concludes from the data that first wave feminism changed over time, not only in respect of campaigns but in ideology and most of all in the social and political

¹²⁵ A.V. John, 'Between the Cause and the Courts: The Curious Case of Cecil Chapman', in C. Eustance, J. Ryan and L. Ugolini, *A Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History* (London, 2000), pp.145-161; for Hugh Chapman and W.F. Cobb see A. Pilcher-Dayton, 'Freemasonry and Suffrage' pp. 341-357; A.V. John, and C. Eustance, eds. *The Men's Share* p. 17, 25, 98-100, 104; also *The Vote* 1 (17) 19/2/1910, p. 194 and 27/8/1910, p. 208; for Hugh Franklin see H. Bentwich (Hugh Franklin's sister), *If I Forget Thee: Some Chapters of Autobiography, 1912-1920* (London, 1973); the Men's League for Women's Suffrage: S. Strauss, *Traitors to the Masculine Cause*; the Church League for Women's Suffrage: A.J.R., *Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who* (London, 1913), p. 18, 21; United Suffragists: K. Cowman, 'A party between revolution and peaceful persuasion': a fresh look at the United Suffragists', in M. Joannou and J. Purvis, eds., *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, pp. 77-86, also *Votes for Women*, which was given to the U.S. by the Pethick-Lawrences in 1914 to be their official publication.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 3 - Intimate Relationships, and Chapter 4 - The Women's Movement.

background of its leading campaigners.¹²⁷ Her main premise – that over the time-scale of the sample the predominant political orientation changed from Liberal to socialist – together with her assertion that ‘the majority of socialist feminists were middle-class in social origin’ implies that the women’s movement was at heart a middle-class organisation.¹²⁸ She also discusses the importance of social networks as a means of drawing women and men into feminist activity.¹²⁹

Analysis of the membership of the HFAM

The first part of this statistical analysis is based on details for 574 individuals who joined the Order between 1908 and 1925. The initial cut-off date of 1925 for the analysis was chosen because after the unsuccessful petition for recognition to UGLE in 1920, a deliberate decision was taken not to accept men as candidates for initiation in order not to prejudice any future claim. Male applicants had in any case declined greatly both as a result of the prohibitions of UGLE and of the First World War. Existing male Masons were, however, still welcome as visitors and a few did continue to visit, in spite of the sanctions, although even this tailed off by the end of the decade. A handful remained to work exclusively for HFAM, but to all intents and purposes by 1925 the Order was a single-sex organisation.

This statistical study differs from Banks’ analysis in several ways. The fundamental difference is that these individuals are not a selection but a *de facto* record of those who joined the Order between its inception in 1908 and 1925 as members of the

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 149-151, 160.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7-9.

first four Lodges. There is therefore no subjectivity in their selection. Of the seven Lodges in existence by 1925, the records of Stability No. 5 were destroyed when the Lodge was erased from the roll in 1913 and the membership of No. 6 – the Lodge of Installed Masters consecrated in 1912 – was made up of members of the other Lodges. Lodge Verity No. 7 has not been included because it was only consecrated in the February of 1925 and the minute books are missing.¹³⁰

A further difference with Banks's sample is that for the HFAM there is no biographical information at all on the majority of members and so no conclusions can be drawn as to education or politics. Social class is inferred from addresses and/or occupations (a process not without pitfalls). In all cases, the data relates to those *joining* the Order during the relevant period. In addition, the timescale is much shorter – seventeen years as opposed to almost a century.

Sources

Several sources were used to obtain the information. First and most important were the Minute Books of the first three Lodges, Golden Rule No. 1, Emulation No. 2 and Lodge of Unity No. 3, consecrated together in June 1908. Secondly, these have been cross-checked regarding Initiations and Affiliations with a register compiled by Peter Slingsby (not specifically stated to be by him but in his very characteristic handwriting), who joined Lodge Emulation No. 2 in 1909 and was Grand Secretary of the Order from 1912 to his death in 1935.¹³¹ The register lists

¹³⁰ Erasure of Lodge Stability No. 5: minutes of Board of General Purposes of the HFAM, 9/7/1914.

¹³¹ Known hereafter as *Slingsby Register*. For Peter Slingsby's career in HFAM, see A. Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door*, pp. 98-101; also 'Peter Walter Slingsby: an appreciation' *The Gavel*, Vol. 7, No. 31

the names of the members of Lodges 1 to 18 with date of Initiation, Passing and Raising, change of name in the case of ladies, date of resignation/ death/ demittance,¹³² and whether initiated or affiliated (in the latter case also Obedience and Mother Lodge). Presumably started after 1914 (as there is no record of Lodge Stability No. 5, consecrated in 1910 and erased in 1914), the records are retrospective back to the founder members in 1908. Unfortunately the early Minute Books of Lodge Harmony No. 4 (no longer working) are missing, but Slingsby records sixty six members and so this Lodge has been included on account of its importance as a Lodge intended for service-women.¹³³ Neither the Minute Books nor Slingsby's Register have proved to be infallible.

Thirdly, for Lodge Emulation No. 2 only, there exists a quantity of declaration forms dating from the start of the Lodge – a form completed by the intending candidate declaring that he/she is over twenty one, believes in God and 'if accepted to act and abide by the ancient landmarks and established customs of the Order'. The form also gives (or should give) address, date of birth, details of proposer and seconder, and, most importantly, occupation. The set of declaration forms is not complete for all members.

The statistical sample consists of 574 names, of which 88 are men and 486 women. These have been divided into three groups: 1908 to 1913, 1914 to 1918, and 1919

(October 1935), p. 843; Peter Birchall: *The Gavel*, Vol.7, No. 32, (December 1935), p.872 and 'Obituary', *The Gavel*, Vol. 18, No. 78, (January 1947), p. 1..

¹³² Demittance is exclusion because of non-payment of fees.

¹³³ Acknowledgement is made to the Councils of Lodges Golden Rule No. 1, Emulation No .2 and Unity No. 3 for permission to consult these minute books.

to 1925 – a fairly obvious split to look for wartime differences, if any. As far as a comparison with Banks' cohorts is concerned, by date of birth two people belong to cohort II (one male, one female); thirty seven to cohort III (eleven men, twenty six women); and twenty two to cohort IV (ten men, twelve women). Addresses were available for 370 individuals (62% of the sample); occupations for eighty four (14% of the sample); and age for sixty one (10% of the sample).

The information collected was entered, where known, on a MS Access database, under the following headings:

Names, title, address, occupation, Lodge number, proposer, seconder, date of joining, initiated or affiliated, date of resignation.

Statistics and Analysis

Membership

Fig. 1 New members by group (*all % in all tables are to the nearest 1%*)

<u>Group</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>	
1908-1913	219	74	34%	145	66%
1914-1918	100	12	12%	88	88%
1919-1925	<u>255</u>	2	1%	253	99%
	574	88	15%	486	85%

Fig. 2

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>	
1908	53	26	49%	27	51%
1909	67	21	34%	46	66%
1910	46	12	26%	34	74%
1911	21	8	38%	13	62%
1912	8	3	37%	5	63%
<u>1913</u>	<u>24</u>	4	17%	20	83%
	219	74	34%	145	66%
1914	23	8	35%	15	65%
1915	16	3	19%	13	81%
1916	13	1	8%	12	92%
1917	18	0	0	18	100%
<u>1918</u>	<u>30</u>	0	0	30	100%
	100	12	12%	88	88%
1919	32	1	3%	31	97%
1920	38	0	0	38	100%
1921	33	1	3%	32	97%
1922	37	0	0	37	100%
1923	36	0	0	36	100%
1924	24	0	0	24	100%
<u>1925</u>	<u>55</u>	0	0	55	100%
	255	2	1%	253	99%
	574	88	15%	486	85%

When the Order was founded in 1908 membership of men and women was almost equal – not unexpected, as the founders came from a mixed-sex organisation, but even though at this time entry was open to both men and women, the balance of those joining immediately starts to swing towards women. The peak year for new entrants was 1909 – time for word to have spread about the new Masonic movement, both as an interesting new venture and as an acceptable alternative to UGLE for men. It is tempting to suggest that the sharp drop in new entrants in 1912 could have been due to the loss of Dr. Cobb and his extensive contacts when he resigned from the Order, but numbers soon improved under the leadership of Marion Halsey. It is also interesting that the total membership expanded considerably after the First World War. The role of the recruitment of servicewomen is discussed below, but another reason for the increase could well have been the same demand for spiritual consolation to cope with the horrors of the War and the desire for the order found in the ceremonial which has been observed in Theosophy.¹³⁴ Even up to 1925, the new Order showed no signs of being a temporary phenomenon.

Men

Recruitment figures broken down by year show how the number of men tailed off gradually, with a slight rise in 1914 – possibly due to the interest of those in reserved occupations, although there is no proof for this statement. The decrease in the number of male candidates was caused by two factors: the prohibitions and sanctions of United Grand Lodge in 1910 towards their members who associated

¹³⁴ J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, pp. 83, 88.

with irregular Masonic bodies, and the absence of most able-bodied men on war service. The presence of a male initiate in 1921 is an anomaly - in 1921 Duncan Le Geyt Pitcher, an air commodore, joined No. 3 and resigned in 1925 – unless he had been invalided out of active service. This was immediately before the change in policy to admit no more men as members, and he is the last man to be initiated into the Order.¹³⁵

Women

Fig.3

	Total	Mar/Wid.	%	Single	%	Titled	%
1908-1913	145	80	55%	65	45%	12	8%
1914-1918	88	38	43%	50	57%	1	
1919-1925	253	117	46%	136	54%	12	5%

The division of women into single and married/widowed categories (designated by 'Mrs.')

shows that pre-war there were more married than single women. There was a strong married couple component up to that time and the movement seemed to have more of a family ethos.¹³⁶ Not surprisingly, during the war single women were in the majority – many married women had to keep the family together and had no time for semi-social activities – and after the war although the

¹³⁵ Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 14/2/1921 record the receipt of a letter of clearance from the Grand Secretary for this Candidate, and his Initiation.

¹³⁶ The inclusion of the family in Masonry may well have been a survival from the precursors of Co-Masonry in France. In mid 19th c. Adoptive Masonry *Temple des Familles* Lodges were established with the idea of strengthening society by bringing entire families into the lodge and providing them with a secular programme of cultural and educational activities: Allen, 'Sisters of Another Sort', pp. 821-4.

balance is redressed slightly, there are more single women as they gain independence and single working women become more socially acceptable. Unfortunately the data is insufficient to estimate how many women joining were widows and what effect the war had on this number.

Initiated and Affiliated Members (apart from Founders)

In 1908 when the HFAM was founded, men could belong to the UGLE, to Co-Masonry and to the new Masonic Order. Some women were already Co-Masons. Anybody who was already a Mason under another Obedience could be affiliated into HFAM by election in Lodge, rather than go through the Initiation and subsequent ceremonies.

Fig. 4 Affiliates by year and sex

1908	4 affiliated - 1M 3F
1909	12 all men
1910	3 2M 1F
1911	2 men
1912	0
1913	0
1914	2 men
1915	2 women

(no further affiliations)

The year 1908 to 1909 saw most of the affiliations. We know that Anne Cobden Sanderson – the militant suffragist campaigner -came from Human Duty Lodge No.

6 of the Co-Masons. Miss C. Hughes must also have come from the Co-Masons, as there was no other Order open to women. Mr Robert King was affiliated at the same meeting of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 in September 1909, so it is probable that he came from Co-Masonry as well, but there are no further details. All were proposed by Dr. Cobb. Miss Helen Taylor (affiliated in 1908) came from Edinburgh, where there was a Co-Masonic Lodge - Christian Rosencrantz Lodge No.18. Mr A. Alexander from Kilarney (*sic*) Lodge No. 478 (Grand Lodge of Ireland) requested affiliation into Lodge of Unity No. 3 in December 1908.¹³⁷

1909 was the peak year for Affiliates, indicating that at this stage HFAM was seen by men as an acceptable alternative Masonic organisation, which they could join in the same way as some held multiple memberships of English Constitution lodges, and that the combination of mixed Masonry with the conventional Craft ritual of UGLE was an attractive one. Reginald Halsey, a son of Sir Thomas Halsey, Deputy Grand Master of UGLE, was affiliated in April, proposed by Dr. Cobb. He resigned in July 1910, probably because of the prohibitions and sanctions of UGLE and hence pressure from his father. He was however to be the husband of the next Grand Master of the Order, and it is noticeable that there is no evidence that Marion

¹³⁷ Annie Cobden Sanderson: Declaration Book of Lodge Human Duty No. 6 of the Co-Masons, 1/12/1902; affiliations: Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 17/10/1908 and 19/9/1909; Christian Rosencrantz Lodge No. 18 at Edinburgh is listed in *The Co-Mason* (January 1909), p.41; Augustine Alexander (Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 5/12/1908) did belong to Killarney Lodge No. 478, joining in November 1895, but the Lodge which was founded in Blenheim, New Zealand closed down in 1897, so Mr Alexander was stretching the truth a little (personal communication from Rebecca Hayes, Archivist, Grand Lodge of Ireland, 6/11/2006). His wife was initiated into Lodge of Unity in the following January (Minutes, 11/1/1909).

Halsey herself appeared to experience any conflict of interest between her family and her Masonic commitments.¹³⁸

The affiliation of men decreased sharply from 1910 because of the sanctions of UGLE. In 1914, Bro. Albert Pidgen of Huguenot Lodge No. 381 in New York joined the Lodge of Unity No. 3. He was at the time living in Lewisham, S.E. London. He resigned soon afterwards in June 1915. Even more surprising is the affiliation in 1914 of an English Constitution (EC) Mason, Hugh Lewis, into Lodge Harmony No. 4. He was a member of St. Idloes Lodge No. 1582 at Llanidloes. No proposer or seconder are recorded. He did not resign until 1917.¹³⁹

The last woman to be affiliated was Miss Winifride Wrench (a publicist, with an address in Ireland) who joined the Lodge of Unity No. 3 in March 1910 and must have been a Co-Mason. Some of the members of Stability Lodge No. 5 left the Order to found their own organisation in 1913. In 1915 two members rejoined our Order and were elected as affiliated candidates of Lodge of Unity No. 3. Mrs Herschell and Mrs Dalal stayed back in the fold for three and four years respectively.¹⁴⁰

Rev. F.W.G. Gilby was affiliated into Emulation No. 2 in 1910. He belonged to University of Durham L. No. 3030 (E.C.), and also Apollo Lodge (possibly Apollo

¹³⁸ Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 1/2/1909, 8/3/1909, 12/7/1909; Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 29/4/1909, 14/7/1910.

¹³⁹ Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 18/10/1914; *Slingsby Register* for resignations and details of Hugh Lewis.

¹⁴⁰ Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 15/11/1915 and *Slingsby Register*.

University Lodge No. 357 at Oxford). He became the Grand Chaplain of the mixed Order but was called upon to stop associating with the irregular ladies by UGLE. He did not formally resign until 1918, having achieved the office of Past Provincial Grand Chaplain in the Province of Warwickshire in the male Obedience. He later gave a lecture about the HFAM which was subsequently printed as a pamphlet, in which he praised the Order for its sincerity and good working and compared it favourably to men's Masonry.¹⁴¹

Age of Initiates

The age at Initiation is given for sixty individuals between 1908 and 1918, 10% of the sample. The numbers aged under forty and over forty were almost equal (29:31). There were nine under thirty, including the two *lewis* (the son or daughter of a Mason, who technically could join from the age of eighteen instead of twenty one). Twenty (one third) were between thirty and forty at Initiation. Although this sample is too small to draw significant conclusions, at a time when thirty was considered middle aged, one half were over forty and 85% over thirty, suggesting that this was not a young person's movement, but one that appealed to the mature, mainly those aged between forty and sixty.

¹⁴¹ Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 17/1/1910; *Slingsby Register*; F.W.G. Gilby, *Women and Freemasonry in the Past and Present*, given to the Birmingham Lodge of Installed Masters in 1925, reprinted for the Doris Jones Memorial Lodge No. 300 (London, 1978).

Fig. 5

1908	Men	
Ages:	39,51,65	
1909	Men	Women
Ages:	22 (<i>lewis</i>), 43,46	28,37,37,46,47,48,50
1910	Men	Women
Ages:	25,28,46,53,56	31,42,49,52,56
1911	Men	Women
Ages:	31,47	32,44
1912	Men	Women
Ages:	26,31,49	25
1913	Men	Women
Ages:	33	33,34,35,36,50,59
1914	Men	Women
Ages:	21 (<i>lewis</i>),43	30,38,52
1915	Men	Women
Ages:	29,49,51	38
1916	Men	Women
Ages:	36	24,38,40,53,56
1917	Men	Women
Ages:	-	31,31,50,57
1918	Men	Women
Ages:	-	38,46,49

According to Diana Burfield¹⁴² the Theosophical Society also attracted 'people in the second half of life', with the idea of a spiritual search as the proper occupation of maturity. Freemasonry may therefore have been seen as another of the mystical/spiritual/occult organisations which became popular amongst the intellectual and mature elite during and after the turn of the century.

Resignations

Both the date of Initiation and that of resignation/demittance*/death are available for 394 individuals – 69% of the total in the survey. Of these, 45 or 11% are recorded as having died still a member and 33 or 8% were demitted, leaving 316 resignations.

Fig. 6 Length of membership in years for those resigning

0-2yrs	3-5	6-8	9-10	11-15	16-20	20+	Total
37	89	68	32	40	23	27	= 316
12%	28%	21%	10%	13%	7%	9%	= 100%

Fig.6 shows that 40% terminated their membership within five years, one third of these within two years. 20% of members continued for between eleven and twenty years, with almost a tenth belonging for over twenty years.

¹⁴² D. Burfield, 'Theosophy and Feminism: Some Explorations in 19th Century Biography', in P. Holden, ed., *Women's Religious Experience* (London, 1983), p. 35.

The majority of men resigned as a result of the sanctions imposed against them by UGLE from 1910 onwards or because of war service. Those that lasted to eight years or more probably represent the men with a conflict of loyalties, either through principle or circumstances. Just two were members for over twenty years. It should be noted, however, that these figures do not include the few men who continued in the Order past 1925, to the detriment of their own prospects in the male Obedience, such as Peter Birchall (who remained a member up to his death in 1946) and Peter Slingsby (to his death in 1935).¹⁴³

More unmarried women than married had a very short membership, probably reflecting the shifting nature of the work and residence patterns of single women, but the figures are roughly equal for a period of between three and five years. Groups 3 and 4 (6-8, 9-10 years) taken together are balanced and for the three groups (eleven to twenty+ years) the numbers of married and unmarried women are again almost equal.

Over 50% of the twenty-seven titled ladies resigned during the period of the survey, the majority after three to five years. This short-term membership suggests that there was an element of fashion to it. There does not appear to be any other pattern to these resignations – the only reasonably obvious reason is in the case of Lady Rodney, who resigned after five years in 1914 when her Proposer Mary Symonds resigned. On the contrary, Muriel Countess de la Warr was a member for

¹⁴³ For the careers of these two men, see A. Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door*, pp. 98-101; also 'Peter Walter Slingsby: an appreciation', *The Gavel*, Vol. 7, No. 31 (October 1935), p. 843; Peter Birchall: *The Gavel*, Vol. 7, No. 32 (December 1935), p. 872 and 'Obituary', *The Gavel*, Vol. 18, No. 78 (January 1947), p. 1.

sixteen years, Lady Corbet – proposed by Grand Master Cobb in April 1909 – for twenty four years and the Hon. G. Barthwick resigned in 1951 after twenty nine years. The Hon. Mrs Mabel Greville died still a member in 1940 after eighteen years and Lady M. Manners had been a member for twenty three years when she died in 1944.¹⁴⁴

Large-scale resignations took place in 1912, when Dr. Cobb resigned as Grand Master and from the Order, accompanied by twenty-five members of Lodge Golden Rule including his family and several of the officers. Again in 1913 the whole of Lodge Stability No. 5 was erased from the roll of the Order and some members went on to found another Masonic Order for women.¹⁴⁵

Relationships and Networks

Families

Initially, HFAM followed the mixed, Co-Masonic structure. This itself perpetuated the French tradition found in the Lodges of Adoption, where married couples and families participated together in Freemasonry, whatever their respective roles might have been. Dr Cobb is the only person here to involve his whole family in Freemasonry – his wife, son and daughter had all been Co-Masons and left with him to found the new Order. The son Ivo and daughter Monica were still Fellowcrafts when they came into HFAM and a Dispensation had to be obtained for Monica to

¹⁴⁴ Resignation dates from *Slingsby Register*.

¹⁴⁵ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 6/5/1912; Grand Lodge of HFAM Minutes 27/3/1912; Lodge Stability, Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, 28/1/1914 and 9/7/1914, and see also Note 80, above.

join Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 and take her Third Degree because she was only eighteen.

Husbands and wives

In 1884 Dr. Cobb moved to be Curate at nearby Addlestone, where he married Harriette Emily White. Apart from the Rector and Hettie Cobb, there were seven other married couples amongst the Founders and 1908 members and in 1909 another eight married couples joined.¹⁴⁶ This meant that by 1909 almost half the total membership of the Order consisted of married couples, showing that for many this was an attractive way to practice Masonry.¹⁴⁷ The emphasis on a shared participation in Freemasonry is very strong at this early stage – it naturally declined during the War and then unfortunately became a victim of the change to a single-sex organisation.

Three more married couples joined in 1910, one in 1913 and one in 1914.¹⁴⁸ One of these couples (1913) was the resident caretaker at the 4 Southampton Row headquarters, William Lancaster and his wife. Lancaster was appointed Grand Tyler – a convenient arrangement as the Tyler not only guards the outside of the Lodge room but is responsible for setting up for a meeting and arranging the furniture.

¹⁴⁶ *Crockford's Clerical Directory* 1907, p. 281; Genealogical Index v4.01, downloaded record 8/12/2000, call no.0991410; Lodge Human Duty No. 6 of the Co-Masons, Minutes 4/11/1907; GL-HFAM Minutes 20/6/1908 – Cobb, Faulding, Geddes, Quinton, Schon, Marks, Miles; Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 21/11/1908 (Hewkley); Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes 13/7/1908 and 31/10/1908 (Challen), 2/1/1909 (Currey, Glynes), 3/8/1909 (Edwards), 11/10/1909 (Bentham), 1/11/1909 (Alexander, Nankivell); Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 1/12/1909 and 20/12/1909 (Van Praagh).

¹⁴⁷ Cobb believed that for women to be in Freemasonry was only a restitution of their rights – see pp. 142-3.

¹⁴⁸ 1910: Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 21/1/1910 and 17/3/1910 (Skipworth), 17/3/1910 (Urwick) ; Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 17/1/1910 (Gilby, with his wife later undated); *Slingsby Register*: Mr & Mrs Lewis, and resignations.

From the outbreak of War he is recorded as absent from Grand Lodge meetings until 1919. He continued in this office until 1930, when his wife took over.

Lancaster distinguished himself whilst on active service – the Minutes of Lodge Emulation No. 2 record that he was mentioned in dispatches.¹⁴⁹

Marriages within the Order

Not only did married couples share membership of the Order, but marriages were brought about within it. The most notable example is that of Marion Halsey. The Hon. Mrs. Marion Lindsay Leigh was proposed for initiation into Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 in April 1909 by Dr Cobb. At the same meeting, Reginald Halsey was proposed by Cobb as an affiliate member. She married Reginald Halsey on 16 April 1910, the service being conducted by Rev. Dr. Cobb at St. Ethelburga's, assisted by two of the groom's ordained brothers.¹⁵⁰

Lady de Clifford of Lodge Golden Rule was a close friend of the Halseys. She attended their wedding and was a house guest when their mansion Lees Court at Faversham in Kent was burnt down in 1910. As Evelyn Chandler, she married Jack Russell, 25th Baron de Clifford in 1906. He was killed at the age of twenty five in a car crash in 1909. In 1913 Evelyn married Arthur Stock, and he then became a member of the same Lodge in 1914.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 20/1/1913 and 17/7/1916; *Baptist Times* 12/1/1917.

¹⁵⁰ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 17/12/1914 and 17/12/1909; L.G. Pine, *The New Extinct Peerage 1884-1971* (1972), p. 40.

¹⁵¹ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 17/3/1910 and 16/7/1914; Charles Mosley, ed. *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, (107th ed.), (Wilmington, De., 2003), Vol. 1, p. 320; Peter Slingsby included changes of name for ladies in *Slingsby Register; The Times*, 18/4/1910, 13a and 21/11/1910.

Inter-Order marriages also took place among the ranks - Miss Mina Edgerly, initiated into Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 in August 1911, became Mrs. Frederick Edgerly-Burt (he was also No.1) in 1914 and Miss Lilian Wilson of Emulation No. 2, a journalist, initiated in 1912, married Vere Pearson of No. 2 (initiated 1911), who was a soldier at Mill Hill Barracks. Finally, according to Peter Slingsby's *Register*, Miss Mary Symonds of Unity No. 3, a Co-Mason and Founder member of HFAM, married Guy Antrobus of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, a relative of Marion Halsey, and resigned after his death in 1914.¹⁵²

Children

The children of Lodge members were frequently introduced by their mothers or fathers. Amongst the Founder members, Peter Birchall's son Esmond joined Lodge Emulation No. 2 in 1914, when he reached the mature age of twenty one. He was proposed by his father and seconded by Adelaide Litten.¹⁵³ Marion Halsey's daughter Diana was proposed into Lodge Golden Rule by her mother in 1914, when she was eighteen and thus a *lewis*.¹⁵⁴

The Boswell-Reid-Challen family were another example of mother and daughter in the same Lodge. Janet Boswell-Reid and her daughter Lily both joined Unity No. 3 in July 1908. Lily's husband, Howard Challen, joined the same Lodge in October of that year. All three became members of Lodge Stability No. 5 when it was

¹⁵² *Slingsby Register*; Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 8/11/1911 (Pearson) and 11/7/1912 (Wilson); Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes 9/2/1914 and 8/6/1914 (Antrobus).

¹⁵³ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 20/6/1908 and 11/7/1908; Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 20/6/1908; Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 19/1/1914.

¹⁵⁴ See note 153.

consecrated in 1910, and were instrumental in setting up the breakaway Order, the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasonry in 1913.¹⁵⁵

There are many more instances of mothers and daughters joining the Order. One of the most important for the history of the Order was that of the Muirhead Hope family - Mrs. Alice Muirhead Hope joined Golden Rule No. 1 in 1916. In 1918 she proposed her daughter Mary Gordon Muirhead Hope and thirty years later this lady became the Grand Master. Another daughter Enid was initiated at the same meeting and a further sister Cecilia was proposed by her mother in 1920. Miss Myra Browne, initiated into Unity No. 3 in July 1908, proposed Miss Marie Chantal Browne (probably her sister), living at the Imperial Club, Lexham Gardens, Kensington) in February 1910, who subsequently proposed Mrs. Gertrude Browne (probably their mother), of Highfield School in Chertsey, Surrey) in March 1910.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Lodge of Unity Minutes 13/7/1908 and 31/10/1908; Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 15/4/1910 and 7/7/1910.

¹⁵⁶ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 16/3/1916, 21/2/1918 and 15/1/1920; Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes 13/7/1908, 14/2/1910 and 14/3/1910. Other examples include Mrs. Alice Everitt, proposed into Golden Rule No. 1 by Marion Halsey in December 1914 and who introduced her daughter Edith (Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 17/12/1914); Mrs Carrie Marks who joined Emulation No. 2 in October 1909 and proposed her son, a twenty-two year old army officer at Aldershot called Cecil (Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 14/10/1909 and 1/12/1909) - he not surprisingly resigned in April 1914; John B. Carrington, who lived next door to founder-members Alfred and Florence Faulding who proposed him, and was a member for twenty-nine years, introduced his daughter Dora in 1913 (Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes 14/2/1910 and 13/1/1913). The infant daughter of Bro. Hilda Burrows of Lodge of Unity No. 3 was considered – not perhaps seriously - a *Lewis* in 1912 – ‘the Worshipful Master announced that the Lodge was the proud possessor of a Lewis, in the person of the infant daughter of Bro Hilda Burrows. In this case the Lewis had more than the usual qualifications in that both its parents were Masons’. This attribution is technically incorrect, as the definition of a *Lewis* – the son or daughter of a Mason – states that they can be initiated at eighteen rather than twenty one, not earlier. The only other Bro. Burrows in the sample is a Samuel Burrows who joined in 1919, so the baby’s father must have belonged to UGLE. The address of Mrs Burrows was the Deputy Governor’s House, Wormwood Scrubs, surely reflecting the occupation of her husband (Lodge of Unity Minutes, 12/12/1910 and 13/5/1912).

Siblings

Marion Lindsay Halsey proposed her three sisters into the Order - Elizabeth (Lily) Antrobus in 1912, Helen Atherley in 1919 and Katherine Drummond in 1923.¹⁵⁷ Adelaide Daisy Litten (who became Grand Master in 1928) joined Lodge Emulation No.2 in June 1909 and her sister Maude – three years younger and who later became a Past Grand Warden - became a member of Harmony No. 4 in 1920. The two Misses Norton, Florence a matron and Maria Theresa a teacher, living at the same address in Ealing, joined No. 2 in June 1918 at the same meeting. Dr. Marie Verheyden of Welbeck Street joined Unity No.3 in 1919, resigning in 1925; a Miss W.J. Verheyden joined the same Lodge in 1922, staying just over one year. Given the unusual surname, it is probable that they were related.¹⁵⁸

Proposers

Of the 574 names in this survey, proposers are recorded for 327 or 57%. They provide a clear illustration of family, social and occupational networking. Networks were vital in recruiting new candidates, but the nature of a network changed over time, and, more importantly, different types of network overlapped to a considerable extent.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 17/10/1912; 17/7/1919; 19/4/1923.

¹⁵⁸ Litten: Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 25/6/1909 and *Slingsby Register*; Norton: No. 2 Minutes, 17/6/1918; Verheyden: Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 10/11/1919 and 13/3/1922. Another example is Miss Helen Worthington who proposed Miss Julia Worthington into No. 2 in December 1920 (Minutes 20/12/1920). The proposer and seconder of both ladies were the same. Helen was born in Ohio; if she was American by nationality, she was one of two included in this sample.

¹⁵⁹ In addition to this study of networking as a means of recruitment, recent research has also focussed on the benefits to society of the Masonic network itself: see particularly R. Burt, 'Freemasonry and Business Networking during the Victorian Period', *Economic History Review* Vol. 56, Issue 4 (November, 2003), pp. 657-8, 680.

Dr Cobb was responsible for introducing thirty candidates between 1908 and 1911. He seconded a further sixteen entrants. As the leader of the break-away organisation, he used his wide-ranging social and professional contacts to bring in suitable recruits. Amongst the other founders, Florence Faulding, usually seconded by her husband Alfred, introduced nine candidates into Lodge of Unity No.3 including two married couples. Peter Birchall proposed seven men and women, including his son in 1914.

Marion Halsey was responsible for introducing twenty-one candidates into Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 and seconded another thirteen. John Sidley, a merchant and manufacturing agent, brought in to the Order people from his own *milieu* – Khusroo Vacha, a merchant at the Wool Exchange and Carl Vogt, a merchant with the East India Company, into Emulation No. 2 in 1910, George Andre a civil engineer and Peter Slingsby a land agent in 1908. Among the thirteen he seconded were an author, a secretary and Leonard Lake, a brewer. Florence Jane Hawkins, the last surviving founder who died in 1946, proposed six candidates into the Lodge of Unity No. 3 between 1915 and 1918, when she was Worshipful Master of the Lodge, and seconded two more in 1915.¹⁶⁰

Miss Millicent McClatchie of Lodge Emulation No. 2 (1911) proposed a total of twelve candidates during the period 1917-1921 and the occupations which are

¹⁶⁰ Details of all these candidates are from the *Slingsby Register* and the Minute Books of Lodges 1, 2 and 3. John Sidley was a member of the Clarendon Lodge No. 1769 of the E.C., which was composed of merchants and other City of London workers (see below, fig. 7) until he was expelled from UGLE for associating with an irregular Order of Freemasons in 1910 (Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 7/7/1910 and the Quarterly Communications of the Grand Lodge of UGLE, 7/9/1910).

recorded for nine of the twelve – musician, tutor, office worker, war work, teacher, YMCA, two secretaries and a teacher of the deaf – reflect her working background. She seconded twenty three other ladies, mainly between 1918 and 1925, nine of whom have jobs shown. Of the twelve proposed, six went on to propose others, who in turn introduced multiple candidates themselves.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ For example, Miss L. Mawson (Lodge Emulation Minutes, 15/10/1917), Miss E. Bell (18/3/1918), Miss F. Blair-McPherson (21/11/1921); Mrs M. Cook (27/6/1918), Miss M. Booth (19/7/1920); Miss H. Worthington (17/1/1916) and Miss F. Norton (17/6/1918).

Geographical location**Fig. 7**

	Total	London W1/ SW1/SW3	Other L	Outside L			
1908	26	3	12%	16	62%	7	26%
1909	60	11	18%	26	43%	23	38%
1910	45	10	22%	18	39%	17	38%
1911	11	6	32%	12	63%	1	5%
1912	12	2	33%	4	67%	-	-
1913	13	2	10%	16	76%	3	14%
	167	34	19%	92	52%	51	29%
1914	16	4	25%	8	50%	4	25%
1915	12	2	17%	8	66%	2	17%
1916	10	2	20%	7	70%	1	10%
1917	12	4	33%	6	50%	2	17%
1918	23	2	9%	17	74%	4	17%
	73	14	19%	46	63%	13	18%
1919	28	7	25%	14	50%	7	25%
1920	21	2	9%	13	62%	6	29
1921	18	3	17%	14	78%	1	5%
1922	11	2	18%	9	82%	-	-
1923	3	-	-	2	66%	1	33%
1924	11	1	9%	7	64%	3	27%
1925	18	3	17%	11	61%	4	22%
	110	18	16%	70	64%	22	20%
	360	66		208		86	

Fig. 8 Summary of Fig. 7

	<u>W1/SW1/SW3</u>	<u>Other London</u>	<u>Country</u>
1908-13	19%	52%	29%
1914-18	19%	63%	18%
1919-25	16%	64%	20%

Addresses are recorded for 360 individuals or 63% of the sample. Figures 7 and 8 show Groups 1, 2, and 3 by year divided into the then generally accepted upper class area of London (W1/SW1/SW3), other London postal districts (as they were then), and outside London. In Group 1 it is surprising – especially in 1909 and 1910 – that so high a percentage should live outside London. This is made up mainly of northern Surrey, Hertfordshire and Shropshire.

The concentration in Surrey probably relates directly or indirectly to the Cobb/Anrobus/Halsey connection – Cobb spent the years from 1882 to 1887 as a curate in Send and Addlestone and taught at Woking College, whilst the Anrobus' country house was at Cheam. It may not be a co-incidence that the extensive Halsey family on the male side lived in Hertfordshire – the seat of Sir Thomas Halsey, 1st Bart., and Marion Halsey's father-in-law, was at Great Gaddesden, near Hemel Hempstead – and it could explain this local concentration.¹⁶²

The Corbet family illustrates very well the importance of geographical location as well as family connections as a means of networking and hence recruitment, and this particular group explains the concentration of Shropshire addresses on the location maps. The first of the Shropshire group to be initiated was the Hon. Mrs. Katherine Corbet of Adderley Hall, Market Drayton in January 1909 – neither the Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 nor *Slingsby's Register* unfortunately give any proposer or seconder. Katherine's nephew's wife was Evelyn Chandler, Lady de Clifford, a close friend of Marion Halsey and also a member of Lodge Golden Rule.

¹⁶² *Crockford's Clerical Directory* 1907, 281 and *ibid.*, 1940, 491; *Burke's Peerage*, 107th ed. (2003) vol. 1, p.117.

Lady (Caroline) Corbet of Acton Reynold, Shrewsbury and Mrs Muriel Donaldson-Hudson of Cheswardine, Market Drayton followed in April of that year, both proposed by Cobb. Lady Corbet was the wife of Sir Walter Corbet, 4th Bt., whom she married in 1888. In May 1909 Reginald Astley, also of Acton Reynold, was proposed by Gladys Lloyd and seconded by Cobb together with Mrs Bertha Mackeson of the Rectory, Hodnet who was proposed by Lady Corbet and seconded by Cobb.¹⁶³ Sir Walter Corbet died in 1910 and Caroline married Reginald Astley in 1913.

In view of the fact that during the pre-War years Lodge meetings were held every month and sometimes more often, the inclusion of a comparatively large number of members living some distance away from London may seem remarkable and represent a considerable commitment in terms of time and effort. However, most of this group belonged either to the aristocracy or the upper class, and probably would have had the use of either their own or a friend's London residence. The country members drop from an initial high of 29% to 18% during the War, probably reflecting travelling difficulties. Post-war they increased slightly to a fifth of the total membership.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ *Slingsby Register*; Lodge Golden Rule No.1 Minutes, 16/1/1909, 29/4/1909, 21/5/1909, 17/3/1910; *Burke's Peerage*, 107th ed., p. 320.

¹⁶⁴ For example, in 1909 meetings were held of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 on 16 January, 20 February, 20 March, 29 April (emergency), 30 April, 20 May, 21 May (emergency), 17 June, 18 June (emergency), 15 July, 21 October, 18 November, 16 December, and 17 December (emergency) – emergency meetings were held because of the number of candidates waiting for Initiation (Lodge Minutes 1908-1912).

The elite London element is constant before and during the War, suggesting that most of these people were not involved in war work away from home, and dropped slightly afterwards. Members from the less affluent London postal districts increased to nearly two thirds during and after the war. This suggests that the membership base became much broader in terms of class and occupation and therefore address.

There are many cases of (presumably) unrelated ladies recruiting others who lived at the same address. Some joined a Lodge together at the same time and some subsequently introduced the friends living with them. A good example is a group from nearby houses in Nevern Square, Kensington. In 1910 Mrs. Helen Domville of 4 Nevern Square SW5 and Mrs. Louise Wynne-Ffoulkes of the same address were proposed into Emulation No. 2. In 1913 Mrs Alice England of 12 Nevern Square was initiated, and Mrs. Alice and Miss Edith Everitt of 19 Nevern Square in 1914 and 1915.¹⁶⁵

The Hon. Katherine Villiers and Miss Horatia Seymour, both of 30 Park Lane W1, were candidates in 1919 and, at the other end of the social scale, Miss Pepper and Miss Keating, both clerks, of 44 Harlech Road, Southgate N14 also joined in 1919. At

¹⁶⁵ Domville and Wynne-Ffoulkes were initiated together: Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 20/6/1910; England: Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 10/11/1913; the Everitts: Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 17/12/1914 and 18/3/1915. Other examples are Mrs. Peebles and Miss Green of 110 Lexham Gardens W8 in 1916: Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 11/12/1916; Miss Collett of 21 Allen House, Allen Street W8 who proposed Miss Stansfeld of the same address: Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 11/5/1918 and 17/10/1918; and the two Misses Norton, who proposed Miss Florence Tapp, all of St. Faiths, Mount Park Road, Ealing W5 in 1918: Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 17/6/1918 and 18/11/1918.

28 Edwardes Square W8 we have Mrs Lethbridge, an author, initiated in 1918 and who proposed Mrs Allen in 1919 and Mrs Skinner in 1920 of the same address.¹⁶⁶

Clubs and hotels for women

Clubs with serviced rooms and dining facilities opened in London in the 1890s and 1900s to provide respectable accommodation for single women and working women. In 1910 Miss Marie Browne and Miss Eileen Blunden-McEnnery, initiated into Lodge of Unity No. 3 together, both lived at the Imperial Club, 6 Lexham Gardens W8, and Miss Caroline Amphlett at the Ladies Park Club, Wilton House, 32 Knightsbridge SW1. At the latter, smoking and card-playing for money were not allowed. Mrs Matilda Cook of Lodge Emulation No. 2 was at the Lyceum Club in 1918. The Lyceum, founded in 1904 as a breakaway from the Writers' Club, was at 138 Piccadilly and was the first of the women's clubs to brave the male bastion of Piccadilly clubland. It provided a meeting place for ladies engaged with literature, journalism, art, science and medicine who needed 'a substantial and dignified *milieu* where [they] could meet editors and other employers and discuss matters as men did in professional clubs: above all in surroundings which did not suggest poverty' – and without compromising themselves. The club was started by Constance Smedley, who wrote that she was concerned about the problems which faced middle-class girls, who had left home in order to work in London and were

¹⁶⁶ Villiers and Seymour were initiated together (Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 20/2/1919) as were Pepper and Keating (Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 10/11/1919); Lethbridge *et al*: Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 19/12/1918, 17/7/1919 and 15/1/1920. Other examples are that of Dr Dorothy Shepherd who proposed Miss Helen Strange of 60 Upper Kennington Lane SE11 in 1920: Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 9/2/1920 and 3/5/1920; and Miss Melliship and Miss Ethel Bugler, a wholesale buyer, both of 113 West End Lane NW6 in 1921: Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 17/1/1921.

now living in boarding houses and bed-sitting rooms. 'A girl alone in those days missed the tacit chaperonage and sense of shelter and recognized the need of protecting her reputation: but this led to inevitable isolation and drove her into too feminine a world'. The Lyceum had a library and an art gallery to display the work of members besides its thirty five bedrooms, hairdressers, kitchens and dining room.¹⁶⁷

In 1925 Miss Marian Reeves (occupation given as club secretary) of the Minerva Club, 56 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, London WC1 was initiated into Lodge Emulation No. 2. The Minerva was founded as a residential club by the Women's Freedom League in 1920, financed by the wealthy Treasurer of the Women's Freedom League, Dr Elizabeth Knight.: '[It] became a rallying point in the agitation for the extension of the franchise to women under 30 ... the club attracted members from all branches of the erstwhile militant suffrage movement'.¹⁶⁸ This club is especially interesting, as the presence of a lady Freemason as its secretary provides a link between Freemasonry and Suffrage after the date of the partial franchise for women granted in 1918.

Some hotels also provided suitable accommodation, but as with the clubs, it was necessary to have the means to pay. Lady Violet Rivers Wilson of Lodge Golden

¹⁶⁷ Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 14/2/1910; Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 21/1/1910; Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 27/6/1918; E. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: a Reference Guide 1866-1928* (London, 2001), p.124; M. Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London, 1985), Appendix B, p. 298; J. Kay, "'No Time for Recreations till the Vote is Won'", *Suffrage Activists and Leisure in Edwardian Britain*, *Women's History Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Sept. 2007), pp. 544-549.

¹⁶⁸ E. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 125. Crawford cites taped interviews made by Brian Harrison with Mrs Juanita Frances in 1974 and Mrs Marion Johnson in 1975, held in the Women's Library.

Rule gave her address as the Cadogan Hotel in Sloane Street SW3 in 1911, and in the same year Miss Isabel Lewis and Mrs Almon Hensley of the Lodge of Unity were at the Strand Palace Hotel WC2. After the War Mrs Anne Fletcher, a welfare worker, also of Lodge Golden Rule, lived at the Eccleston Hotel SW1 in 1919.¹⁶⁹

The settlement movement began with the foundation of Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel, East London, in 1884 by Canon Samuel Barnett and his wife. The aim of these settlement houses was to foster friendship between the working classes and the best of University students by means of art, music and education. The students lived in residential homes amongst those they were attempting to help. Leslie John Nixon who joined Lodge Golden Rule No.1 in 1910 gave his address as Balliol House, Toynbee Hall, Canning Town E16. He was presumably one of the graduates staying temporarily at the settlement house to experience the rough side of East End life, teach cultural subjects and learn about local politics. There is no record of how long he stayed.¹⁷⁰

Occupations

Occupations are recorded for 78 individuals, 14% of the total sample. 80% of the information as to occupation came from the extant declaration forms of Lodge Emulation No. 2 and therefore partly reflects the composition of that Lodge, rather than the Order in general, over the period 1908 to 1925. There was no consistency as to terminology, as the forms were completed either by the Lodge Secretary at

¹⁶⁹ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 10/5/1911; Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes, 4/10/1911; Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 20/2/1919. A further example is that of Mrs Edith Fraser who lived at the Inverness Court Hotel in Bayswater W2 in 1913 (Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 21/7/1913).

¹⁷⁰ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes, 17/3/1910; M. Vicinus, *Independent Women*, pp. 214-5.

the time or by the Candidates themselves. For that reason and because of the paucity of the information it did not seem feasible to use the Registrar-General's social classes classification as a reference framework. The classes have therefore arbitrarily and subjectively been called managerial, professional, creative and skilled. The attribution to a particular class, when not obvious, is also subjective.

Fig. 9a (summary of Fig. 9b below)

	<u>Managerial</u>	<u>Professional</u>	<u>Creative</u>	<u>Skilled</u>
1908-13	2	20	5	2
1914-18	-	5	2	5
1919-25	-	21	5	11

It is worth noting, when considering the composition of the membership, that in the early years the fees for each Lodge were one guinea per year – in terms of relative earnings this is equal today (2009) to £409 p.a. Many members belonged to more than one Lodge.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Financial figures from Lawrence H. Officer, 'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1830 to Present,' MeasuringWorth, 2008.
<http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/> (accessed 12/2/2002)

Fig. 9b

	Managerial	Professional	Creative	Skilled
1908	Co-Director(M)	Clergy(M) Civil engineer(M) Land agent(M)		
1909		Teacher(F) Army(M) Solicitor(M)	Author(M) Author(F) Actress(F)	Private Secretary(F)
1910	Principal(M)	Clergy(M) Engineer(M) Engineer(M) Merchant(M) Merchant(M)	Publicist(F)	
1911		Army(M) Chemist(M)		Brewer(M)
1912		Clergy(M) Missionary(M)	Journalist(F)	Verger(M)
1913		Army(M) Missionary(F) Doctor(F)		Clerk(F)
	7%		62%	17%
1914				
1915				Masseur(M)
1916				Secretary(F)
1917		Tutor(F)	Musician(F)	War work(F)
1918		Teacher(F) Teacher(F) Matron(F)	Author (F) Bookshop(F)	YMCA(F) Office (F)
		33%	25%	42%
1919		Doctor(F) Doctor (F) QMAAC (6)(F)		Welfare work(F) Masseuse(F) Civil servant(F) Secretary(F) Clerk(F) Clerk(F) Clerk(F)
1920		Doctor(F) Doctor (F) Teacher(F)	Musician(F) Musician(F)	
1921		Air Force(M)		Buyer(F) Secretary(F)
1922		Doctor (F) Doctor(F)		Masseuse(F)
1923				
1924		Teacher(F) Doctor (F)		Hairdresser(F) Secretary(F)
1925		Teacher(F) Teacher(F)	Artist(F) Journalist(F)	Club Secretary(F) Buyer(F) Cashier(F)
			49%	11%
	3%	51%	15%	31%

The low number in the managerial group is partly because men only played a significant role in the Order up to the war (but also see below, Clarendon Lodge). The proportion of professionals is 62% before the War and 49% after. The high number of army officers is attributable to the six QMAAC officers who joined in 1919. The skilled (but unqualified) group is the largest during the war but from its pre-war level of 14% rose to 40% after the war to approach that of the professionals (49%). Fig. 9 shows the break-down over time – the professional and creative groups are almost the same pre- and post-war, but the skilled group has increased, mainly with secretarial and office workers. It is interesting that HFAM had a significant proportion of members in the communication professions - clergy, missionaries, teachers, authors, an actress, musicians, a publicist and journalists. The ceremony, ritual and underlying principles of Freemasonry particularly appealed to this group.

A comparison has been made with a particular men's Lodge of the time, one to which both Alfred Faulding and John Sidley belonged, Clarendon Lodge No. 1769 of the E.C. Unusually, the Membership Return for 1908 for this Lodge lists the occupations of all the twenty nine members.¹⁷² It should however be pointed out that the comparison is not a direct one – the analysis of the occupations in Clarendon Lodge is for one year only, as against the whole eighteen years for HFAM.

¹⁷² Membership Roll for 1908 of Clarendon Lodge No. 1769, Library & Museum of Freemasonry, UGLE, Freemason's Hall. This was the only year during the period of this survey (1908-1925) for which occupations are given in this Lodge.

Using the same headings as above, we have:

Fig. 10

	<u>Manager</u>	<u>Prof.</u>	<u>Creative</u>	<u>Skilled</u>
HFAM	3%	54%	15%	28%
Clarendon No.1769	7%	41%	14%	38%

Both have a low figure for managerial members, although with the HFAM this is influenced by the fact that from 1917 all individuals in the sample (with one exception) are women, who at the time had little access to managerial positions.¹⁷³ Whilst HFAM has more professional and Clarendon more unqualified skilled, in this Clarendon was probably not typical, as the Lodge was set up in, and had close connections with, the City of London with its clerks, warehousemen and auctioneers. Merchants themselves have been classed as professional, but the ancillary trades as skilled. The proportion in the creative occupations is very similar.

Occupation was also used as a means of networking and recruitment. The Rev. Dr. Cobb, Rector of St. Ethelburga's in the City of London from 1900 to 1941, proposed a fellow cleric the Rev. Walter Secker of Walpole Street Chelsea in 1911. Rev. F.W. Gilby, an affiliate from the E.C. was Vicar of St. Saviour's Mayfair and In 1912 – when he was Worshipful Master of Lodge Emulation - he proposed his Verger Augustus Capperson into that Lodge. Mr Capperson was not heard of again after he enlisted in 1914 and a note in *Slingsby's Register* says 'presumably lost in action'. In

¹⁷³ The exception was Duncan Le Geyt Pitcher, an Air Commodore, who joined Unity No. 3 in 1921 (Lodge of Unity No.3 Minutes 14/2/1921), but his presence is a total anomaly at this late date.

1912 Gilby also proposed the Rev. George Chetwynd of West Ham and two missionaries, Edward James of Palmers Green and Mrs. Annie Martin in 1913.¹⁷⁴

According to Vicinus, 10.5% of unmarried working women between 20 and 45 were occupied in the professions in 1911. In our sample, between 1913 and 1924 we have eight female doctors, all except one joining post-War. There are no details of addresses or proposers to suggest any links between the doctors other than professional contacts.¹⁷⁵

Three of the eight teachers in the sample were either proposed or seconded by Millicent McClatchie of Lodge Emulation No. 2, and another two proposed by fellow teachers already in the Order. Apart from the Swiss Marie Gretler proposed by John Sidley in 1909, the teachers were all initiated post-war.¹⁷⁶

An interesting, small group is three therapists. The words masseur/masseuse refer to the profession now known as physiotherapist. Mr William Wiffen, a medical masseur, was initiated in 1916. Mrs Gertrude Fox-Warner, a masseuse and also described as a medical electrician joined in 1919, and Miss Violet Geidt, a

¹⁷⁴ *Crockford's Clerical Directory* 1907, p. 281 and *Crockford's Clerical Directory* 1940, p. 491; Secker was initiated into No. 1 in June 1911: Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 Minutes 4/6/1911; Gilby was affiliated into No. 2 in January 1910: Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 17/1/1910. Chetwynd, James and Martin: Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 20/5/1912, 11/7/1912 and 17/3/1913.

¹⁷⁵ M. Vicinus, *Independent Women*, Table 4, p. 30; Dr. Marie Helen Verheyden of 21 Welbeck Street W1 was initiated into No. 3 in November 1919 and her sister Miss Walravine Johanna Verheyden of the same address in March 1922: Lodge of Unity No. 3 Minutes 10/11/1919 and 13/3/1922.

¹⁷⁶ Occupations are given on Lodge Emulation No. 2 Declaration Forms; for Initiations, Proposers and Seconders: *Slingsby Register* and Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 18/12/1911 (McClatchie) and 19/11/1917 (Rhys-Rhys), 15/4/1918 (Waddington), 17/6/1918 (Norton), 19/7/1920 (Hilyer), 19/1/1925 (Fisher), 19/10/1925 (Haugh) and 18/1/1926 (Pope).

masseuse, in 1922. The latter two were seconded by McClatchie and proposed by two others of the McClatchie network.¹⁷⁷

Both the merchants, Khusroo Vacha, aged 25, born in Aden and a member of the Wool Exchange (initiated in February 1910) and Carl Christian Vogt, aged 56, born in Frankfurt and belonging to the East India Company (June 1910) were proposed by John Sidley, himself described as a merchant and manufacturing agent on the Membership Return of his E.C. Lodge, Clarendon No. 1769 in 1908. This Lodge (see Fig. 10) was based in the City of London and had amongst its members eight merchants including wine merchants and a rubber merchant, as well as merchants' clerks and warehousemen. Sidley was expelled by UGLE in 1910 because of his association with the irregular Order which admitted women and so being unable to introduce these two gentlemen into male Masonry he proposed them into the mixed Order.¹⁷⁸

Amongst the musicians Lucie Mawson, proposed by McClatchie in 1917, herself proposed fellow musicians Katherine Dyer and Beryl Cremer in 1920. No particular pattern emerges with the authors and journalists (six), except that two authors – Hugh Ames and Lilian Wilson – were proposed by Eustace Miles in 1909. Miles, a founder member of HFAM and a Co-Mason, owned a restaurant in Chandos Street near the Strand, which was well-known for its 'progressive' reputation. It provided vegetarian food - 'some of our best-known celebrities who believe in Mr Eustace Miles' foods may be seen at lunch hour building up their brain tissues' and was a

¹⁷⁷ Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes 20/11/1916, 20/1/1919 and 27/11/1922.

¹⁷⁸ Lodge of Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 21/2/1910 (Vacha) and 20/6/1910 (Vogt).

meeting place for suffragist sympathisers - hosting celebratory breakfasts for suffragettes on release from Holloway and meetings of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage – as well as being a venue for HFAM.¹⁷⁹

Working women

Of the seventy eight occupations recorded, fifty three (68%) are of women. Of the married women, one is a missionary, joining in 1913, another an author in 1918, two in 1919 (a welfare worker and a masseuse), one in 1922 (another masseuse) and three in 1925 (a 'buyer', a journalist and an artist). The other forty-five are single. The statistical limitations of this sample – that it is unrepresentative, being mostly from one Lodge only, and the numbers are insufficient – means that significant conclusions should not be drawn. However, even this small sample shows the expanding range of work open to women in the post-War era; the increase in skilled but non-professional jobs, including free-lance workers; and the changing nature of the membership with more career women joining the Order.

¹⁷⁹ Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 15/10/1917 (Mawson), 19/7/1920 (Dyer & Cremer); 23/4/1909 (Ames) and 5/7/1909 (Wilson); GL-HFAM Minutes 10/10/1908; *Votes for Women* 7/1/1910, p. 236; *The Vote* 19/3/1910, p. 247 and 9/4/1910, p. 288; A.V. John and C. Eustance, eds., *The Men's Share?* p. 17.

Fig. 11

1908	-
1909	author, teacher, secretary, actress
1910	publicist
1911	-
1912	journalist
1913	clerk, missionary (married), doctor
1914	-
1915	-
1916	-
1917	musician, tutor, secretary
1918	war work, YMCA, office worker, 2 teachers, matron, book shop, author (married)
1919	welfare worker (married), 6 QMAAC, masseuse (married), civil servant, secretary, 2 clerks, 2 doctors
1920	2 doctors, clerk, teacher, 2 musicians
1921	buyer, secretary
1922	2 doctors, masseuse
1923	-
1924	doctor, teacher, hairdresser, secretary
1925	buyer (married), club secretary, 2 teachers, artist (married), journalist (married), cashier ¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Most of the occupations cited here are from the Declaration Forms of Lodge Emulation No. 2, with a few from other various Lodge Minutes.

Subsidiary analysis 1926-1935

For this period a limited analysis was done on the first three Lodges, according to the availability of Minute Books. Names were taken from Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 from 1926-1934; Lodge Emulation No. 2 from 1925-1930 and Lodge of Unity No. 3 from 1926-1935. No ages or dates of resignation were originally recorded and a very few occupations were found from a handful of Declaration Forms for Golden Rule No. 1.

It was not feasible to analyse the membership of all the Lodges which came into being between these years because it was then that Freemasonry for women spread outside the London area into the provinces. An important factor here was the consecration in 1928 of Lodge Mercury No. 11, the travelling Lodge, which extended the Order over the rest of the country. Freemasonry for women was openly advertised by public meetings in major towns and the Lodge went out to initiate and train candidates, ultimately leading to the creation of new Lodges.

Fig. 12

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Mar/Wid.</u>	<u>Single</u>	<u>Titled</u>
1908-1913	145	80	55%	12
1914-1918	88	38	43%	1
1919-1925	253	117	46%	12
1926-1935 ¹⁸¹	193	92	48%	2

¹⁸¹ The figures given here for this period refer to the three London Lodges only. From 1928, Freemasonry for women was spread through the provinces by Lodge Mercury No. 11, which became

Of the 193 women included, 52% were single and 48% married or widowed. The exception was Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, where married or widowed women were in the majority (55%). The new titled Initiates all joined Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 in 1926. Lady Buckmaster, the Hon. Mrs Anson (proposed by Marion Lindsay Halsey); and Mrs Elizabeth de Falbe. She was a relative of Christian de Falbe, the late Danish Ambassador to London, who had married Halsey's first husband's mother in 1913. She was proposed by Halsey and seconded by Muriel, Countess de la Warr.¹⁸²

The sample shows that, at least as far as the catchment area for the London Lodges was concerned, in this later period the family networks had disappeared. There are no apparent instances of family connections, daughters or sisters being initiated.

There are however local networks, both geographical and occupational.

In Lodge of Unity No. 3 there are four cases of two unmarried ladies from the same address. In Lodge Emulation No. 2, three ladies living at different addresses in Preston Road, Harrow were proposed by a Miss Hilyer, a teacher (of NW10) in 1925/6. Miss Crockett (1925) of Ingram House, Stockwell Road, SW9 proposed three other ladies of the same address, one of which (Lloyd-Edwards) is known to have been a nurse from later war reports in *The Gavel*.¹⁸³ Miss Lloyd-Edwards proposed a fourth from Ingram House, all in 1928. Ingram House was a commercially-run residential house for both couples and ladies, and these names

the chief method of recruitment outside London. Because of their number and their geographical spread it was not possible to collect figures for the provincial Lodges. No direct comparison is therefore possible here between recruitment figures for the Order as a whole before and after 1928.

¹⁸² Buckmaster: Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 15/4/1926; Anson: 21/1/1926; de Falbe: 15/4/1926 and <http://www.thepeerage.com/p1191.htm#i11905/6> (accessed 23/4/2005).

¹⁸³ For example, *The Gavel*, vol. 12, no. 59 (April 1941), p. 1614.

are not cited in the relevant Electoral Roll, so the occupancy may have been transitory.¹⁸⁴ The South Western Hospital was nearby.

Of the occupations recorded, the nursing and medical professions seem to have been a significant source of candidates post-war (there were probably more than is evident, because of the lack of occupational details), and this is also an example of networking by the proposers of candidates. Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 had six women doctors between 1920 and 1926 and the Lodge of Unity No. 3 gained four doctors and two nurses or associated professions between 1925 and 1932.¹⁸⁵

Although this sample is small, there appears to be fewer ladies living at clubs or hotels – three individuals with a club address and two at hotels. Apart from the doctors and nurses already mentioned, the very few occupations recorded consist of: ‘mental work’, music teacher, doctor, secretary, bank clerk, laundry proprietress, ‘decorator’ (all Lodge Golden Rule).

Networks and connections

The first important conclusion to be drawn from an analysis of the membership data is the importance of overlapping networks in both recruiting candidates and establishing Freemasonry for women as a force in society. Networking to facilitate

¹⁸⁴ London Borough of Lambeth Archives Department, *Kelly's Directory for Brixton and Clapham*, (London, 1928), p. 206; Electoral Register 1928, Brixton Division, Stockwell Ward, p. 431.

¹⁸⁵ Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1: Dr Sayer 16/12/1920, Dr McKay 13/7/1922, Dr Dobson 14/12/1922, ?Dr Hort 10/5/1923, Dr Henry 3/7/1924 and Dr McLaren 21/1/1926; Minutes of Lodge of Unity No. 3: Miss Bentley 13/1/1919, Dr Verheyden 10/11/1919, Dr Shepherd 9/2/1920, Mrs Oldershaw 8/3/1926, Dr Murrell 10/6/1929, Dr Focke 10/3/ 1930, Miss Epps 11/1/1932.

the introduction of new candidates was particularly important at this period for mixed Freemasonry, which was in its infancy. The second conclusion is that a significant number (12%) of titled and upper class members joined the HFAM during the period 1908-1925.

Some of the other trends could be mirrored in any society devoted to a common interest and some are to be expected, such as the increase in single ladies joining the Order as it became more acceptable for women to be independent and work for their living and also that the range of occupations available to them grew wider.

Of all the networks evidenced in this survey, that centred on proposer overlaps all others, emphasising the importance of a few dominant figures in the expansion of this order of Freemasonry. The most important of these were the Rev. Dr. William F. Cobb and Marion Lindsay Halsey. Dr. Cobb came from a humble background – his father was a land steward on an estate in Essex – but comments on his life and work strongly suggest that he was a charismatic figure: ‘The Rev. W.F. Geikie-Cobb will live for ever in the memory of those who were privileged to know him. The good he did can never be undone, the influence he exerted can never be dissipated’.¹⁸⁶ His friends and contacts were acquired in the course of his curacies in Surrey and Winchester, his teaching position at Woking College and in his work for Anglican organisations such as the English Church Union and the Indian Church Aid Association. In addition he quickly became influential in the field of marriage and divorce law reform (the Divorce Law Reform Union to which he belonged was

¹⁸⁶ *The Times* 23/12/1941, p. 7 by J.H.R.T. (identity unknown).

founded in 1906) and this brought him into contact with titled and celebrated Vice Presidents of reforming pressure groups, such as Lady Asquith, who contributed to Cobb's obituary in *The Times*), H.G. Wells and J.M. Keynes.¹⁸⁷

In contrast to Dr. Cobb's lowly origins, the Hon. Marion Lindsay Halsey was the grand-daughter of a baronet and the great-grand-daughter of an Earl. She efficiently combined the traits of both the old and the new aristocracy. Her wealth was derived not only from the Balcarres mining and industrial interests but also from her father, who, though not ennobled, became the senior partner in Coutts Bank, so following in the tradition of links between the aristocracy and banking families. Having herself been presented at Court, she was then on the Lord Chamberlain's List and subsequently presented her daughter and a friend. Frequently mentioned in the Court Circular, she was invited to top functions such as the Duchess of Devonshire's ball.¹⁸⁸ Halsey's second husband, although a mere younger son of a recent baronet, Sir Thomas Halsey, worked professionally as the senior land agent of Windsor Great Park and was frequently received in that capacity by the King and Queen.

Together, Cobb and Halsey either proposed or seconded seventy eight candidates into Freemasonry. Cobb proposed twenty eight entrants between 1908 and 1912, that is, 43% of the total joining during that period. Between 1911 and 1924 Halsey

¹⁸⁷ *Crockford's Clerical Directory* 1907, p. 281 and 1940, p. 491; Obituary, *The Times* 15/12/1941, p. 6; *City Press* 'Death of Dr. Geikie-Cobb', 19/12/1941, p. 1; Divorce Law Reform Union, *Annual Report* 1923, p. 12.

¹⁸⁸ *Burke's Peerage*, 107th ed., 2003, vol. I, p. 117; Halsey's marriage to Reginald was announced in the Court Circular (*The Times*, 18/4/1910, p. 13a) as was the dance she gave for her daughter Kitty as a debutante (*The Times*, 5/4/1911).

proposed twenty one people at fairly regular intervals. Dr. Cobb and Marion Halsey as Grand Masters controlled the Order for almost twenty formative years, from its inception in 1908 until her death in December 1927. It is because Cobb and Halsey had the personality, the contacts, the influence and the drive that they were able to establish a membership base that was strong enough to survive and prosper.

Subsidiary and overlapping networks can be seen to be based on family, residence and occupation. The presence of family networks and the inclusion of parents, children and extended family members in a Lodge engendered a different and more cohesive type of Freemasonry than we see today and supports the concept of the Masonic Lodge viewed as a microcosm of society. As a mixed organisation, it is also an example of the complementarity which runs through this thesis. The data on networks in general adds to the empirical evidence on recruitment to sects and cults and reinforces the conclusion that friendship and kin networks were a more important cause than ideology.¹⁸⁹

The subsidiary analysis of membership between 1926 and 1935, although a small sample, leads to the conclusion that many of the earlier networks had ceased to operate and that family and friends were no longer the major source of new members.

¹⁸⁹ R. Stark and W.S. Bainbridge, 'Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 85, No. 6 (May, 1980), pp. 1377, 1392; R. Stark and W.S. Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation* (Berkeley, Ca., 1986), Ch. 14, pp. 307-24.

Pre-war, twelve out of 145 women joining (8%) had titles. These ladies covered the whole spectrum of the nobility - from the old aristocratic families of the Grosvenors, the Stanleys and the Marlboroughs; via the 'new money' of the recently enobled businessmen and industrialists to the chorus girl who married a peer.

Between 1919 and 1925, there were twelve more titled candidates, or 5% of new entrants. Over two-thirds of these titled ladies belonged to Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, the Lodge of both Grand Masters Dr Cobb and Marion Halsey. Lodge Emulation No. 2 had only one title, Lodge of Unity No. 3 had two, whilst Lodge Harmony No. 4 had five, including Countess E.C. Hochberg in 1915 and Grafyn S.M. Petrowsky in 1921.¹⁹⁰ It is clear that Lodge Golden Rule was an elite Lodge, and as such, attracted most of the upper-class potential candidates. even if they were not actually proposed into it by Halsey. Halsey proposed or seconded six titled ladies during this period, and at least one of these, Lady de Clifford, was a close personal friend. Even if she was not the actual proposer, acquaintance could be taken for granted within such a tight social circle. Cobb proposed or seconded four, whilst over twenty titled candidates were proposed by other members.

There was therefore something attractive in Freemasonry to the upper classes.

Although there was an element of fashion in joining a Lodge, shown by the numbers of members with titles leaving after 3-5 years, the statistics show that

¹⁹⁰ Emulation No. 2: Lady Hogg (Lodge Emulation No. 2 Minutes, 27/11/1922); Lodge of Unity No. 3: Lady Margesson and Lady Rodney (Minutes, 4/5/1909 and 5/10/1909); Harmony No. 4: Countess Hochberg (Minutes 2/7/1915), Grafyn Petrowsky (6/5/1921), Lady Lumb (7/5/1920), Lady Crawford (2/12/1921) and the Hon. G.M. Barthwick (4/5/1923).

many continued their membership for a significant period. Late nineteenth-century London hosted a number of organisations which attracted society members of the intelligentsia, particularly the female ones. These included interests groups varying from the Vegetarian Society to the Fabian Society, but prominent among them were several quasi-religious or occult organisations which included not only the Theosophical Society but their unofficial subsidiary the Co-Masons, together with others such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and the British National Association of Spiritualists.¹⁹¹ The exclusivity of the TS is said by Burfield to have been demonstrated by the fact that the London meetings at the end of the century closed at the end of the Season, and its pretensions were demonstrated by the elaborate Masonic ceremony marking the laying of the foundation stone for its grandiose new headquarters in Bloomsbury in 1911.¹⁹² The HFAM may well have been seen as another of these elite societies and attracted a similar and overlapping membership. Marion Halsey herself is said to have also belonged to the *Stella Matutina*, an offshoot of the Golden Dawn.¹⁹³ At least three titled ladies (Blomfield, de la Warr and Margesson) are known to have had an interest in other allied esoteric subjects and oriental faiths.¹⁹⁴

Much has been made by writers such as David Cannadine of the change in the role and composition of the aristocracy in the years between 1880 and 1930. The devaluation of land, together with the wholesale creation of honours, which

¹⁹¹ D. Burfield, 'Theosophy and Feminism', pp. 33, 34, 52; Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, pp. 80-81

¹⁹² D. Burfield, 'Theosophy and Feminism', p. 28; Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁹³ 'Inquire Within', *The Trail of the Serpent* (London, 1936), pp. 197-8.

¹⁹⁴ Blomfield established the Baha'i faith in Britain; De la Warr was a life-long Theosophist; Margesson promoted the Hindu Swami Vivekananda in London.

created a new elite of money resulting in the dilution of aristocratic power both national and locally, fundamentally transformed society by 1914.¹⁹⁵ All this changed the structure of society and one of the changes was in the provision of philanthropy. For centuries this had been one of the prerogatives of the women of the aristocracy, whether the lady of the manor caring for the estate worker's family or the upper classes visiting the poor in city slums, and when the provision of welfare began to be taken over by the state with the Liberal reform legislation following 1908, these ladies needed other outlets for their charity. Such philanthropy inevitably included the welfare of women and children, both in a material and a spiritual sense, because this was an accepted part of the women's sphere.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London, 1990), pp. 27, 200, 298, 351, 391.

¹⁹⁶ Core works are: David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965): Part 3, 'Private Philanthropy & Public Responsibility, 1860s-1914'; and Frank Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London, 1988); whilst M.J. Moore, 'Social Service and Social Legislation in Edwardian England: The Beginning of a New Role for Philanthropy', *Albion*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Spring 1971), pp. 33-43 and Jane Lewis, 'Gender, the Family and Women's Agency in the Building of States: The British Case', *Social History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan. 1994), pp. 37-55 deal with the changes with the developing welfare state.

Recruitment after the War

During the examination of the data it was found that the membership of HFAM rose after the First World War. Such an increase after that and other wars has also been found in the male Fraternity, but without any documentary evidence to suggest a reason.

Fig. 1 shows how the membership expanded after the Great War. In male Masonry, only a limited number of analyses have been made of the trends in UGLE for the first three decades of the twentieth century, because of the lack of collated figures. What data there is shows that male Masonry also expanded after the First World War, a comparison across four Provinces showing similar trends.

In East Lancashire province, apart from an initial small drop in members in 1914 when, in spite of this fall, the number of Lodges increased from 142 to 149, membership grew steadily through the war years. In 1918 there was a fourfold increase – the war ended in November - which was itself doubled in 1919. In

Cornwall the number of initiates in 1919, 1920 and 1921 was treble the average between 1901 and 1918, and then reverted to slightly higher than pre-war levels.

In North Wales figures from this period show that Initiates rose by a factor of three in 1918, whilst in Monmouthshire most of the Lodges show an accelerated increase in membership in the immediate post-War period. These four Provinces therefore show that there was a significant increase in men coming into Masonry

immediately after the war and that this increase in general terms slowed or reversed around 1924-1925.¹⁹⁷

The post-War expansion in male Freemasonry has traditionally been attributed to returning servicemen. It was assumed that a Masonic Lodge could provide and replace the camaraderie experienced between soldiers in wartime – and incidentally supply a discipline similar to that of the armed forces. The following statement is typical:

... many men have turned to Masonry, seeking either a civilian expression and embodiment of the comradeship of arms or the confirmation of status achieved during war service. The number of English lodges rose sharply after both the Crimean and the Boer Wars and dramatically following the World Wars. ... As far as the two World Wars are concerned, a social motive may well have been at work: men who obtained commissions, but did not come from the traditional officer class, certainly hung on to their new status when they returned to civilian life and may have found in Freemasonry a help towards maintaining it.¹⁹⁸

Recently Belton and Henderson have surveyed declining membership in several jurisdictions in a paper for the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No.2076 and the discussion on their paper included the statement:

¹⁹⁷ Unpublished figures compiled by Andrew Prescott from relevant Provincial Year Books.

¹⁹⁸ J.Dewar, *The Unlocked Secret: Freemasonry Examined* (London, 1966), p. 80.

...as long as there were men returning from service in the armed forces where they had experienced and enjoyed all-male comradeship that had been tested under adverse conditions, there was a steady supply of candidates who were already used to working obediently within severely hierarchical organisations, wanted to sustain at least the quality of that experience and who recognised that the Craft supplied that need.¹⁹⁹

There is however no documentary proof for this explanation within the male sphere. In the case of the Women's Services we do have evidence of the link between Freemasonry and returning service personnel.

Mrs. Florence Burleigh Leach, later to become Dame Florence, had been initiated into Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 of HFAM in October 1910, being proposed by a Bro. French and seconded by Dr. Cobb.²⁰⁰ She was one of the founders of the Women's Legion and as head of the Cookery Section she had introduced women cooks into Army camps throughout the country to improve the food and the service. After a War Office investigation into the number of non-combatant tasks being performed by soldiers on the Lines of Communication in France – up to 12,000 men could be freed for front-line service if women took over some of the jobs - the success of the Women's Legion resulted in its expansion into the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in February 1917. The women were not only cooks and waitresses and domestic

¹⁹⁹ J. Belton and K. Henderson, 'Freemasons – an Endangered Species?', *AQC*, Vol. 113 (2001), pp. 114-139 and remarks by Trevor Stewart, p. 145; G. Belson, p. 148.

²⁰⁰ Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 20/10/1910.

workers but clerks, tailors, librarians, storemen, shoemakers, orderlies, bakers, telegraph, telephone and postal operators, printers, photographers, drivers, garage cleaners and dispatch riders.²⁰¹

After demobilisation, a need was felt to continue the spirit of friendship and co-operation. As the *Daily Mail* wrote:

Women have learned to work and endure and to play and to pray together, to help one another over rough roads, sharing privations and joys. In this great new comradeship of the war is the potential beginning of a wonderful sisterhood of women. If the end of the war sees the end of the "Waacs", the nation will lose; in some adapted shape their services, if carefully organised on a voluntary basis, would be of tremendous use to the country. That the spirit of the "Waacs" should be preserved in some great society of women is of still greater importance.²⁰²

Not long after the end of the War, the Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 give the following:

M.W.Bro. M.L. Halsey speaking as G[rand] M[aster] in the interval allotted to Gr[and] Lo[dge] business said she wished to take that

²⁰¹ Imperial War Museum, *Women, War and Society 1914-1918* database: 'Brief History of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corp.', 24/07/1918, Ref. Army 3 12/4 and *The Queen*, Feb 15 1919 ref. Journals 1/5; Imperial War Museum, Information Sheet No. 39, *Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps in the First World War*, 2001.

²⁰² *Daily Mail* 10/12/1918 - Imperial War Museum, *Women, War and Society 1914-1918* database, ref. B.O.5 7/36; *ibid.*, *The Times* 11/2/1918, ref. SUPP.32/125 and *The Queen*, Feb 15 1919, ref. Journals 1/5.

opportunity of calling the attention of the Brethren to what she felt might be a new and important field of activity for the Order. She had felt for some time that Masonry should specially appeal to the Women's Armies, and more especially at the moment of demobilization when it might offer a valuable link to cement that sense of comradeship brought about by war service. Bro. Dame Florence Leach, Commander in Chief [*actually Chief Controller*] of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps was of the same opinion and was bringing some of her best officers forward for Initiation. If the movement grew the Grand Master hoped it might be possible to consecrate at no distant date a Lodge to be called the United Services Lodge to take officers from all the Women's Corps.

At the same meeting six QMAAC ladies were proposed as candidates and initiated at the following meeting. They were variously described as Chief Controller QMAAC (Miss E.H. Horniblow), Assistant Chief Controllers (Miss Blanche Ireland, later to become Camp Commandant of Bostall Heath Camp, Abbey Wood, south east London), Assistant and Deputy Assistant Controllers (Mrs. Dora Esslemont – later to be in charge of Patrols, the equivalent of the Military Police) and a Unit Assistant.²⁰³

Lodge Harmony No. 4 had been consecrated in 1910 and it was decided to make this the Lodge primarily for Servicewomen. The six QMAAC officers transferred

²⁰³ Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 20/2/1919 and 20/3/1919.

from Lodge Golden Rule to Lodge Harmony in 1921.²⁰⁴ This Lodge recruited many from the services who were to become important figures in the Order, using their organisational abilities to further its expansion.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Consecration of Lodge Harmony No. 4: GL of HFAM Minutes 15/4/1910; Transfer from Golden Rule to Harmony: *Slingsby Register*.

²⁰⁵ For example, Blanche Ireland MBE became Grand Treasurer, Dorothy Taylor was Deputy Grand Master for twenty years, Florence Leveridge was Grand Secretary for fifteen years and Lucy, Lady Markham, though not a member of the WAAC, helped to set up clubs for demobilised servicewomen and later became Grand Master as Lucy O'Hea (Imperial War Museum, *Women, War and Society 1914-1918* database, *Morning Post* 30/10/1918, ref. B.O.5 7/36).

Fig. 13 Details of titled members to 1928

Name	Date jnd.	Lodge	Proposer	Seconder	Details
Blomfield, Lady Sara	1909	1	Cobb	H.Cobb	Wife of knight Estab. Baha'i faith in GB Save the Children Fund
Corbet, Lady	1909	1	Cobb		w. of 3rd Bt. 1854
Corbet, Hon. Mrs Katherine	1909	1			d.-in-law of Lady Corbet
De la Warr, Countess Muriel	1909	1			d. of Sir Thos. Brassey (railways) m. 8th Earl de la Warr Idiv) Theosophist
Forester, Hon. Mrs. E.	1909	1	Lloyd	Cobb	
Fortescue, Hon.Mrs.	1909	1			m. son of 3rd Earl Fortescue
Grove, Lady Agnes	1909	1	Mackenzie	Leigh (MLH)	g-d 2nd Baron Stanley wife of Bt. diarist & writer
Margesson, Lady Isabel	1909	3	Symonds	Faulding	d. Lord Hobart g-d 6th Earl of Buckinghamshire interest in Hindu

Rodney, Lady Corisande	1909	3	Symonds	Faulding	d. 1st Baron Wimborne g-d 7th Duke of Marlborough 1st cousin Winston Churchill m. 7th Baron Rodney (divorced)
De Clifford, Lady Eva	1910	1	Corbet	Leigh	ex chorus girl & Whistler model m. 1) 25th Baron de Clifford 2) Arthur Stock - Lodge member 3) George Tate - sugar Friend MLH
Legh, Hon.Mrs. (Gilbert)	1911	1	R. Halsey	Cobb	m. 1) Hon. George Villiers, son 4th Earl of Clarendon 2) Hon. G.Legh, son 1st Baron Newton
Wilson, Lady Violet Rivers	1911	1			sister 7th Baron Vaux wife of Comptroller-General of National Debt
Moreton, Lady Evelyn	1912	1	MLH	de la Warr	d. 4th Earl of Dulcie
Hochberg, Countess E.C.	1915	4			
Villiers, Hon.Mrs. Katherine	1919	1	MLH	D.Leigh	d. of Legh (above)
Lumb, Lady S.M.	1920	4			
Bowen, Lady Alice	1921	1			m. businessman, created 1st Bt. 1921

Crawford, Lady G.E.	1921	4			
Manners, Lady Mildred	1921	1	Jefferson	MLH	m. son of 7th Duke of Rutland
Petrofsky, Grafyn S.M.	1921	4			
Hogg, Lady Emily	1922	2			
Seymour, Lady Barbara	1922	1	MLH	Cresswell	d. 2nd Earl of Lathom
[Webster]- Savill, Lady H.	1922	1	M.Hope	A.Hope	
Barthwick, Hon.Mrs. G.M.	1923	4			
Glyn, Hon.Mrs. Maud	1924	1	Swinton	MLH	nee Grosvenor, d. 2nd Baron Ebury m. member of Glynn Mills bank (MLH banking link)
Anson, Hon.Mrs. Edith	1926	1	MLH	Collet	m. son 2nd Earl of Lichfield & descendant of Russell family
Buckmaster, Lady Edith	1926	1	Richardson	Collet	m. 1st Baron (Lord Chancellor)
Haig, Lady Dorothy	1928	11			w. of Earl Haig of WW1

Chapter Three

Service and Suffrage

'... surely it was fitting that an Order pledged "to ceaseless endeavour to promote the welfare of humanity" should play a part in aiding women, who view the exercise of the franchise as an opportunity for greater service to their country, to secure political justice for their sex'.²⁰⁶

The fight for the vote was an important episode in feminist history and has been given due prominence in general surveys, such as those of Olive Banks and Barbara Caine. Current opinion amongst historians is that non-militant methods were more successful than they have been given credit for, and that militancy tended to be a liability in alienating both the women themselves and public opinion (although this view was propounded at the time by Feminist historians such as Ray Strachey).²⁰⁷

Historians looking to rehabilitate the moderates include Leslie Hume, who wrote on the NUWSS in 1982, while Les Garner in *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty* assessed the three main suffrage societies: the constitutional NUWSS, the militant WSPU and the midway WFL (which broke away from the autocracy of the

²⁰⁶ E. Severs on 'The Order of Universal Co-Masonry', *The Common Cause*, 28/9/1911, p. 425.

²⁰⁷ M. Joannou and J. Purvis, eds., *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 5, 7; O. Banks, *Faces of Feminism*, pp. 118-133; B. Caine, *English Feminism 1780-1980* (Oxford, 1997), Ch. 4, 'The 'New Woman' and the Militant', pp. 131-172.; Ray Strachey, *The Cause: A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (London, 1928, reprint London, 1978), p. 307.

Pankhursts and one of whose leaders was Charlotte Despard), together with the left-wing East London Federation of Suffragettes. The definitions of militant and constitutional have themselves been challenged, particularly by Holton, who also emphasises the fluidity and overlapping nature of the membership of the various societies. Martin Pugh has also downplayed the importance of militancy, maintaining that WSPU women wanted to join rather than overthrow the system, mainly because most of them belonged to the wealthy upper class, from families firmly in the establishment. He also refutes the argument that it was the contribution made by women to the war effort that gained them the vote.²⁰⁸

The role of men in the anti-suffrage movement has been discussed by Harrison in *Separate Spheres* but brought up-to-date with the valuable and detailed contributions for and against in the contributions in *The Men's Share*, edited by John and Eustance in 1997. This includes considerable discussion on the gender issues in the suffrage campaigns. However, there has been as yet no close focus on the various Church Leagues in favour of suffrage, which attracted many moderate men, of all denominations, who rejected militancy. The Rev. Dr. Cobb and the Rev. Hugh Chapman, whose role in the support for women's votes will be discussed in this chapter, both belonged to the (Anglican) Church League for Women's Suffrage. The object of the CLWS was 'to band together, on a non-party basis, Suffragists of every shade of opinion who are Church people in order to secure for women the

²⁰⁸ L.P. Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1897-1914* (New York and London, 1982); L. Garner, *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty: Feminist Ideas in the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1900-1918* (London, 1984); Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London, 1996); M. Pugh, *The March of the Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 184, 216; M. Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1959* (London, 1992), pp. 4-5, 38.

vote in Church and State, as it is or may be, granted to men', and their methods were 'Devotional and Educational'.²⁰⁹

More recently, several collections of essays, such as that edited by Eustance, Ryan and Ugolini, *A Suffrage Reader – Charting directions in British suffrage history* (2000) and Joannou and Purvis, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: new feminist perspectives* (1998) survey some of the smaller societies such as the Women's Franchise League, the Women's Tax Resistance League and the United Suffragists. The US, discussed later in this chapter, was intended to draw together supporters from all points on the suffrage spectrum.²¹⁰

Martha Vicinus, in her survey of two generations of middle class, independent, single women between 1850 and 1920, is concerned with the suffragette movement as 'the most passionate and concerted feminist attack upon male privilege'.²¹¹ Male and female Freemasons belonging to mixed orders such as International Co-Masonry (*Le Droit Humain*) and the seceding HFAM, participated in this attack on male privilege. The connection between Freemasonry and suffrage has not, as far as is known, been explored in detail before, although the subject is mentioned briefly by Joy Dixon in her study of Theosophy and Feminism. The first issue of *The Co-Mason* explicitly stated in 1909 that Co-Masonry was 'part of that

²⁰⁹ B. Harrison, *Separate Spheres: the Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (London, 1978); A.V. John, and C. Eustance, eds., *The Men's Share? Masculinities, Male Support & Women's Suffrage in Britain 1890-1920* (London, 1997); Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: a Reference Guide 1866-1928* (London, 1999), p. 111.

²¹⁰ C. Eustance, J. Ryan and L. Ugolini, *A Suffrage Reader – Charting Directions in British Suffrage History* (Leicester, 2000); M. Joannou, and J. Purvis, eds., *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives* (Manchester, 1998).

²¹¹ M. Vicinus, *Independent Women*, p. 147.

great stirring of the whole world which is known as the women movement...'²¹²

This chapter, which covers the first two decades of the twentieth century, will show how the support for women's suffrage of Freemasons belonging to mixed Orders fitted with the spirituality of Edwardian feminism. It will demonstrate – mostly from contemporary accounts – that the sympathy which these Freemasons felt for the suffrage cause matched their principles and will go on to give examples of the contribution of both male and female Freemasons to the fight for the vote. The second part of the chapter will pursue the theme of service as exemplified by women Masons during the First World War and immediately afterwards.

Freemasonry's contribution to the suffrage cause - Ideological background

Spirituality

There has been little research on the link between the suffrage movement and the spirituality of those involved in it.²¹³ In her seminal study *Independent Women of 1985*, Martha Vicinus believes that 'Underlying the suffrage campaign was an insistence upon radically changing the spiritual relationship both between women and men and between women and society'.²¹⁴ More particularly, there was '... a conscious effort on the part of the [militant] WSPU and many of the other suffrage

²¹² E. Ward, 'Foreshadowings', *The Co-Mason*, (January, 1909), p. 9.

²¹³ See A. Pilcher-Dayton, 'Freemasonry and Suffrage: the Manifestation of Social Conscience', in Alexandra Heidle and Jan A.M. Snoek, eds., *Women's Agency and Rituals in Mixed and Female Masonic Orders* (Leiden, 2008), p. 341. This paper draws upon contemporary accounts of events in the main suffrage periodicals, *The Vote*, *The Common Cause* and *Votes for Women* and on the Masonic activities of some prominent suffragists; also A. Pilcher-Dayton, 'Freemasonry and Suffrage', *Freemasonry Today*, Issues 48 (Spring 2009) pp. 27-29 and 49 (Summer 2009) pp. 39-41; J. Dixon, *The Divine Feminine*, p. 80.

²¹⁴ M. Vicinus, *Independent Women*, pp. 251- 2.

organisations to forge a new spirituality, based upon women's traditional idealism and self-sacrifice but intended to reach out and transform not only the position of women in society, but that very society itself'.²¹⁵

Joy Dixon, in her more recent account of Theosophy and feminism, puts forward the view that the esoteric religions which were popular around the turn of the century provided a 'crucial space for the articulation of this unorthodox vision'.²¹⁶ Theosophy was one of the most widespread of these quasi-religions, and Co-Masonry was a major, although unofficial, part of Theosophical activities. In 1925, for example, Reginald Snell in his history of the Theosophical Educational Trust's flagship school gives Co-Masonry as one of the three equally important instruments waiting to serve the coming World Teacher in his mission on earth (the others were the TS educational activities and the Liberal Catholic Church); and disaffected theosophist and occultist Alice Bailey, in describing the prevailing problems in the TS just before she retired from it, states the link more directly:

Orders were going out from Adyar, based upon what were claimed to be orders to the Outer Head by one of the Masters, that every member of the Theosophical Society had to throw his interests into one or all of the three modes of work – the Co-Masonic Order, the Order of Service and an educational movement. If you did not do so you were regarded

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

²¹⁶ J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 3.

as being disloyal, inattentive to the requests of the Masters and a bad

Theosophist.²¹⁷

Annie Besant, initiated into a French Co-Masonic Lodge of *Le Droit Humain* in 1902, was not only instrumental in bringing the Co-Masonic movement to England, but combined the leadership of the TS with her Masonic role as ‘Vice-President Grand Master of the Supreme Council and Deputy for Great Britain and its Dependencies’. Freemasonry for women, which at this time was therefore dominated by Theosophists, could give expression to the spirituality which was present in the feminist movement.²¹⁸

The Masonic journal *The Co-Mason* openly expressed the religiosity of the suffrage cause and offered the support of all true Freemasons: ‘... the Co-Masonic Order, who take the mystical and symbolical view of Freemasonry ... recognised the sacramental nature of a seemingly very prosaic act, and gladly took English women's part in the effective practical presentation of that opportunity of greater service to their country for which they yearn’.²¹⁹

There was indeed a sacramental – and sacrificial – aspect to the suffrage fight. The Church League for Women’s Suffrage was founded in 1909, to emphasise ‘the deep religious significance of the women’s movement’. Contrary to what might be

²¹⁷ R. Snell, *St Christopher School 1915-1975* (Letchworth, 1975), p. 102; Alice Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography* (London, 1951), p. 169 Kenneth Sørensen, ‘Alice Bailey and Theosophy – A Case Study in Psychism’, trls. Anne Rasmussen, www.kentaurnet.dk/ English articles.

²¹⁷ J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 81 and Chapter 3.

²¹⁹ E. Severs, ‘The Co-Masons and the Women’s Suffrage Procession’, *The Co-Mason*, vol. 3 (July 1911), p. 129.

expected from a conservative element in society, many prominent clergy were active in supporting women's suffrage. This has been attributed to the fact that equality for women in the membership of the councils of the Anglican Church had already been partly gained – in 1914 women were declared eligible to serve on councils at the parochial level, although it was not until 1919 that through constant lobbying this was raised to diocesan level. The Church League for Women's Suffrage played a prominent part in both campaigns, and would go on (as the League of the Church Militant) to call for the ordination of women from 1919 onward.²²⁰ The League instituted a special weekly Eucharist dedicated to suffrage. Meetings were held to discuss the spiritual dimension of the suffrage cause and, on the first Sunday of every month, intercession was made at Holy Communion for the objects of the League and its members.²²¹

In the first week of November 1913 a national Call to Prayer was arranged by several of the denominational religious suffrage societies: at least one meeting was to be held to emphasise the spiritual aspects of the women's movement.²²² The Theosophical Order of Service, which set up the League to Help the Women's Movement in 1913, also took part. This organisation was chaired by Harold Baillie-Weaver, General Secretary of the TS from 1916 to 1921, and Charlotte Despard was on the Executive Council – both were Co-Masons. Regular meetings for meditation and discussion were held 'to draw together all those interested in the Women's

²²⁰ Sean Gill, *Women and the Church of England: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (London, 1994), p. 238.

²²¹ B. Heeney, *The Women's Movement in the Church of England: 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 104-106; see also below on Hugh Chapman.

²²² J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 181; E. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 111.

Suffrage Cause who realise the importance of meditation and right thinking as a force behind this movement'.²²³

The Rev. Hugh Chapman, Chaplain to the Chapel Royal at the Savoy, was a colleague of Dr Cobb's in their support of the suffrage movement. They also had in common a High Anglican background and it seems that they had similar views on the religious nature of the suffrage cause. In an interview in *The Vote* in 1910, Chapman said:

The Church League [for Women's Suffrage] has been formed to band together Church people, who are Suffragists for devotional purposes and to further the cause of Women's Franchise – 'in the name of God'. It is non-party, and its object is to secure for women the Parliamentary Vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish 'equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the moral, social, and industrial well-being of the community'.

My own feeling is, *he said*, that there is at the back of this movement a strong idea of the religious status of woman. What we want in every country is a readjustment of the relations between men and women, and it is well to realise that women count from the patriotic point of view, and that a woman is not a man's toy but his equal.

²²³ M.E. Allwork, 'TS Order of Service: League to help the Women's Movement', *The Vahan* (Feb. 1914), p. 149; Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 181.

In response to the interviewer's question '*But you dwell more on the spiritual side of the movement than on the political side of the agitation?*' he replied:

Yes; I think that that which will eventually win is the deep moral point of view – that the woman who is self-supporting physically and mentally will be recognised as having a civic side to her nature, and that the aim of her life will not be regarded as necessarily merely to be peaceful and moral.²²⁴

Many of the women who suffered the appalling indignity of forced feeding and brutality at the hands of the police and prison officials felt that they were sacrificing themselves for the sake of a higher cause:

... to many the cause amounts to a religion, ... to them prison may become a pleasure and waiting may cease to become wearisome, considering the crown involved, which ... shall be laid in spirit at His feet who was the King of Reformers, and who imbibed His passion of ministry from a woman.²²⁵

Indeed, the suffragist Edith How Martyn defined militancy itself as 'the spirit of self-sacrifice which leads its members to protest against the exclusion of women from citizenship even when the result of that protest is the prison cell'.²²⁶ Ray Strachey described the feeling in 1906, when militancy accelerated: 'To hundred and thousands [of women] the thing came as a new gospel: even those who had

²²⁴ Hugh Chapman in *The Vote*, 27/8/1910, p. 208.

²²⁵ H. Chapman, *Votes for Women*, 23/7/1909.

²²⁶ *The Vote*, 9/12/1909, p. 7.

believed in the Cause before now began to see it in a new light, and an almost religious fervour entered into their support'.²²⁷

As Brian Harrison later commented:

Edwardian feminist enthusiasm had implications for theology, liturgy, and morality, and suffragism seemed an almost holy cause - with its own martyrs, its own semi-religious symbolism, and at times its own almost mystical tone. 'To re-enact the tragedy of Calvary for generations yet unborn', wrote Emily Davison, 'that is the last consummate sacrifice of the Militant!'.²²⁸

Theosophical Freemasons however looked beyond the gaining of the vote to the dawning of a new age - the next stage in human evolution, the emergence of the Sixth Root Race which would bring with it the reconstruction of society. This was linked with the coming of the new World Leader (or Messiah), which at that time was thought to be Annie Besant's protégé Krishnamurti. Charlotte Despard, writing on the ideals and future of the Women's Freedom League, expressed this in her typical rhetoric:

Does the winning of the Vote end our mission to the world? Are we to sit with folded hands and rapturous faces, saying 'All is over; we have deserved well of the world; we have achieved the purpose which brought us into being as a League; we may dissolve our Union and

²²⁷ Ray Strachey, *The Cause: a Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain* (reprint London, 1978), p. 305.

²²⁸ Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford, 1982), p. 45.

depart in peace?'. I think not. ... I see the Vote won, and I see beyond it. I see our League, settling itself, through the instruments it has obtained, to help in the great synthetical work of the opening century. Our mission, as women who believe in the future, is to construct. Over this, dimly conscious, the woman-element has brooded through incalculable ages of the past ... And now, conscious and alert; now, when reconstruction of society is demanded, it is here.²²⁹

Dixon's view is that Despard 'saw the suffering of militant suffragists as quite literally a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'.²³⁰

Equality and brotherhood

The feminists' ideal society - men and women working together on equal terms to improve society – could be said to be reflected in the practice of mixed Masonry. Both wanted to bring about the equality of men and women and thereby implement the social reforms necessary to improve the lot of the disadvantaged. The suffrage movement came to be based on the premise that gaining the vote would bring about this equality.

Theodora St John, in a survey on 'Women and the Craft' in *The Co-Mason* stated that one of the:

²²⁹ C. Despard, *The Vote*, 18/2/1911, p. 201.

²³⁰ J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 188.

objects of the TS [is] to form a nucleus of universal brotherhood, [and] Freemasonry is one of the largest and most far reaching brotherhood movements in the whole world ... all students of religion will admit that the fundamental teachings of all the great religions are identical; so when Theosophy saw that these same teachings were also to be found in modern Freemasonry, that Masonry is in fact a real link with religion, carrying on the traditions of the past and linking them with the work of the future, they were naturally drawn to a movement to which they could belong irrespective of their creed, their race or their sex.²³¹

... Some people laugh at the idea of a woman being a Mason and a brother...What does brotherhood really mean? The brotherhood for which we really stand has nothing to do with sex. It is founded on a spiritual basis; we are brothers because we are children of the one Divine Father, who is the source of all life; our consciousness, as of every other human being, part of the one Universal Consciousness; our life, as that of all created things, part of the one Universal Life in Whom we live and move and have our being, and it matters not whether such a brother is wearing a frock or a suit. ...Co-operation between the sexes and mutual understanding must surely be a solution of many of the social problems which confront us now and loom so large. It is in [the] Masonic Lodge that we may learn, if we will, the true meaning of

²³¹ For nearly a century, from 1813 when the two male Grand Lodges merged to become the United Grand Lodge of England, most of the explicitly Christian references had been removed from the ritual of Freemasonry in an attempt to broaden its appeal to include all faiths – the only requirement being to believe in a Supreme Being (see Rev. Neville Barker Cryer, 'The De-Christianizing of the Craft', *AQC*, Vol. 97 (1985), pp. 55-8).

brotherhood and all that that implies, and it is in Masonry that we may learn the true art of government, which begins of necessity with a government of our own nature.²³²

Comradeship was also an example of the militaristic rhetoric used by the more militant suffragettes. In a stirring description of the huge Coronation protest march of June 1911 a writer in *The Vote* exclaimed: 'Comrades all! Never perhaps in the history of our whole movement was the spirit of comradeship so overwhelmingly evident as on this great occasion ... On they come, the great army of women which is to herald the dawn of a new and brighter day ...'.²³³

The procession was organised by marshals into contingents and led by 'The General' (Florence Drummond) in uniform on horseback. Instructions to the marchers is given in military terms - 'Remember that the outside marcher on the left of the rank is responsible for setting the pace. Start marching with left foot first, and see that your shoulder is kept in line with your left hand neighbour. Hold yourself erect and keep in step'.²³⁴

Masonic speakers in favour of female suffrage frequently expounded the idea of equality. Dr Cobb believed that for women to be in Freemasonry was no more than a restitution of their rights. 'Not only does Masonry appear to have lost its original

²³² Theodora St John, 'Women and the Craft', *The Co-Mason*, vol. 12 (April 1920), p. 79.

²³³ *The Vote*, 24/6/1911, p. 110.

²³⁴ *The Vote*, 17/6/1911, p. 97

spirit, but it has done what no religion of antiquity ever did: it has excluded women from its mysteries. That is, it professes to be the basis of a universal brotherhood, but excludes women, which is a contradiction in terms'.²³⁵ In his Order's periodical *The Gavel* he wrote in 1909: 'The admission of women is not so much an innovation as a recovery. It is but one recognition of the right of women to share in the labours of men, and to give them that training in common work which has taught men most of the virtue they possess'.²³⁶

Other Masons echoed this view and underlined the fact that the United Grand Lodge of England (male Masonry in England) refused to countenance the equality of the sexes within a Brotherhood. Ursula Bright, a 33rd degree Freemason who followed Annie Besant as the head of the Co-Masonic Order (*Le Droit Humain*) in Britain wrote:

Co-Masonry is the latest development of two great ideas - the religious and the political - I almost said the feminist - for the emancipation of women includes all politics. Our Supreme Council in Paris makes the complete equality of men and women, in every department of human life, its chief object...It is true that male Masonry proclaims the brotherhood of half the race, but even here we find that the maimed, the halt and the blind, as well as the whole sisterhood of humanity, is shut out.²³⁷

²³⁵ *City Press*, 22/7/1911.

²³⁶ *The Gavel* (April 1909), p. 3.

²³⁷ *The Co-Mason*, Vol. 3 (Jan. 1911), p. 4.

Elizabeth Severs, in an article on 'The Order of Universal Co-Masonry' published in the suffrage journal *The Common Cause*, put it even more succinctly: 'Brotherhood, the main principle of Freemasonry, must include, if it is to deserve the name, the relation of man to women and their co-operation in life and work'.²³⁸

Annie Cobden Sanderson, a militant 'suffragette'²³⁹ who was also a Freemason, expressed the same principle from the feminist point-of-view:

It is, however, the need for women's equality with men as a moral factor that transcends all other reasons for women's claim to the Vote ... The present awakening of women to claim their political rights as moral and intelligent human beings touches the heart of the social question both moral and economic. It is only by raising women in their own estimation that you can abolish the sweated worker or the woman of the streets.²⁴⁰

In an article on *The Feminist Movement* in 1914, she wrote:

Democracy stands for equality and the new social structure must have for its basis the equality of woman with man ... The woman of the future must think of the city, the State and the race. She must be a citizen, and the rights of women will be the duties of the community, and homes will then be built on solid foundations.²⁴¹

²³⁸ *The Common Cause*, 28/9/1911, pp. 425-6.

²³⁹ The term 'suffragette' was coined by *The Daily Mail* in 1906 to describe the militant wing of the suffrage movement. The constitutional and non-militant wing was called the 'suffragists'.

²⁴⁰ *The Vote*, 26/3/1910, p. 260.

²⁴¹ *The Vote*, 31/7/1914, p. 239.

The idea of support for one's fellows was as important in Freemasonry as in the suffrage movement. The Order and the individual Lodges and individual members supported each other in good times and bad. This is well illustrated by the support given to Annie Cobden Sanderson by her Lodge when in 1906 she was arrested following a militant protest demonstration and sentenced to two months in prison. The Lodge sent a message to her – 'This Lodge desires to convey the assurance of its sympathy with Sister Cobden Sanderson in her present suffering and self-sacrifice in the cause of political equality of the sexes, and to express its admiration for her courage and endurance in conditions so trying'. Following an objection by a Sister Webb, who may or may not be Beatrice Webb the social reformer, the words 'in the cause of political equality' were omitted.²⁴² There is no unequivocal evidence on either side as to whether Beatrice Potter/Webb was a Freemason - there is a record of the Initiation of g Mrs. Beatrice Webb into Lodge Human Duty No. 6 on 19 April 1904 in the papers of the International Federation of Co-Masonry at Surbiton, and co-incidentally a tantalising reference to Theosophy in the diary of Beatrice Webb on 2 May 1904.²⁴³ Beatrice Webb felt no reticence in recording her spiritual difficulties – Volume One, Chapter Two of *My Apprenticeship* – 'In Search of a Creed' - deals exclusively with that subject.²⁴⁴ If she had been initiated in 1904, it is likely therefore that she would have written about it, but there is no record of this. On the other hand, her cousin Juanita Bulteel was a member of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 and the two may have spoken of Freemasonry.²⁴⁵ The freedom within

²⁴² Lodge of Human Duty No. 6, Minutes 5/11/1906 (Surbiton Archive).

²⁴³ N. and J. MacKenzie, eds. *The Diary of Beatrice Webb: Two 1892-1905* (London, 1983), p. 322.

²⁴⁴ <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks07/0700201.txt> (accessed 29/8/2011).

²⁴⁵ Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 26/5/1910. Juanita Bulteel was proposed by Lady Corbet and seconded by Marion Lindsay Halsey.

Co-Masonry to discuss politics and social problems and the desire of the movement to bring about a new social order may well have attracted Webb. If she was indeed a Mason – had chosen Freemasonry as her way of serving humanity - her membership would have added considerable weight and importance to the Order as a force for social change. It would also have been a rare example of her acting independently of her husband.

Support was also a vital constituent in suffragist organisations as a whole and particularly the more militant groups, where, for example, the degrading treatment of female prisoners was made bearable by the support of sisterhood. As Vicinus states: 'The WSPU demanded a very high level of commitment from its cadre, yet it also rewarded them with a powerfully supportive community'.²⁴⁶ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, who was not a Freemason but was for many years one of the stalwarts of the WSPU and with her husband owned and edited *Votes for Women*, in her autobiography remembered that: '[Women could discover] the wealth of spiritual sympathy, loyalty and affection that could be formed in intercourse friendship and companionship with one another'.²⁴⁷

Annie Besant, in an impassioned speech at the Albert Hall following the Coronation March, pointed out that although women needed the vote to achieve their aims:

Our use of the vote will be the judgement on the value of our claim to equality. Men have had the vote...yet the world is full of misery. By working, and working together, adding not their sameness but their

²⁴⁶ M. Vicinus, *Independent Women*, p. 257.

²⁴⁷ E. Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World* ([London?], 1938), p. 215.

difference, and remembering that the human race is a family, you will not be doubling a vote but multiplying a nation.²⁴⁸

How Freemasons supported the suffrage cause

Masons supported the suffrage cause both collectively and individually, in public and in more private ways.

The one and only public demonstration which involved women Masons officially took place in London five days before the Coronation of George V in 1911. London was crowded with visitors, hungry for spectacle. On the afternoon of 17 June 40,000 women formed up along Westminster Embankment in the fifth, the last and the biggest procession ever seen in the campaign for the vote.²⁴⁹ In the words of Lisa Tickner, 'The pavements were soon almost impassable, and only with difficulty could the stewards and marshals join up the bewildering mosaic and slip participants into the place allotted them'.²⁵⁰ The weather was brilliant and the mood celebratory and expectant. In Trafalgar Square the seats erected for the Coronation procession were all filled and, as a commentator in *The Vote* related at the time,

²⁴⁸ *The Common Cause*, 22/6/1911, p. 188.

²⁴⁹ See *The Common Cause*, 22/6/1911, p. 187; *The Vote* 17/6/1911, p. 95 and 24/6/1911, p. 110; *Votes for Women* 30/6/1911.

²⁵⁰ Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914* (London, 1987), p. 124.

On the big branches of lamp-posts – more people. Up ladders, on signboards, on scaffolding, on the tops of drays, motors, taxi cabs, on other people's toes, on their backs, on the very verge of the fountains, up the long streets which lead to the Square (whether they could see or whether they could not see), anywhere where they could stand, sit, lean or be pushed, were people – buzzing, excited people.²⁵¹

At 5.30 p.m. the procession moved off – seven abreast and five miles long – to the strains of Ethel Smyth's *March of the Women*. They were led by Florence Drummond (famous for chaining herself to the railings in Downing Street and nicknamed *The General*) on horseback, followed by a colour-bearer and Joan Annan Bryce (an MP's daughter) representing Joan of Arc, in full armour on a white palfrey. There were forty five separate contingents, representing all aspects of women in society and throughout the ages and - unique in these demonstrations - drawn from the full spectrum of the suffrage societies. Charlotte Despard and the Women's Freedom League with their green, white and gold colours marched together with Millicent Fawcett of the conservative National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies under their white and red and also the white, purple and green banners of the Women's Social and Political Union – the militant wing of feminist protest. As *The Vote* reported 'United they march! All animated by one great hope, by one great vision of the future – the emancipation of half the human race'.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Frederic Lawrence in *Votes for Women* 30/6/1911 (cited in L. Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, p. 125, n. 231).

²⁵² *The Vote*, 17/6/1911, p. 95.

Contingent number 35 – tucked between the Ethical Societies and the women pharmacists and health visitors – were ladies of the Order of Universal Co-Freemasonry, in full Masonic regalia and led by Dr. Annie Besant, bare-headed and in a yellow silk sari, who was on a visit to England with her protégé and the future world leader Krishnamurti. Lady Emily Lutyens, wife of the architect Sir Edwin, took part as an Entered Apprentice, and the participants were said to be much admired by the watching crowds. ‘... The crowd liked us...we amused and interested them’.²⁵³

Although male Masons belonging to UGLE, sometimes in regalia, did participate in community events at this time – before concern about the possibility of attacks by Fascist and Communist groups during the 1930s drove them underground – they did not take part in political demonstrations. For lady Masons, a completely unknown quantity, to do so was unprecedented. According to the periodical *The Co-Mason*, this significant and momentous action was justified, and authorised by Dr. Besant, who ‘sanctioned wearing regalia on this occasion because she regards the women’s movement as a matter of national concern, not as one of party politics’²⁵⁴ For the lady Masons it was a gesture of solidarity – they were demonstrating alongside their sisters. It was also appropriate because Co-Masonry encouraged the free discussion of social and political problems, as Ursula Bright wrote:

Co-Masonry is the expression of service, tolerance, freedom of speech
on all subjects. Masons working under the Grand Lodge of England and

²⁵³ Elizabeth Severs in *The Co-Mason*, vol. 3 (July 1911), p. 128.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Scotland may not discuss...the two subjects of deepest interest to mankind...religion and politics. We expect the members of our organisation to be able to speak on any subject fit for public discussion...²⁵⁵

The Coronation March was the only public demonstration by women Freemasons in support of suffrage. So it was that most of the Masonic articulation of protest came from individual speakers rather than large-scale efforts. Such support took place both within the Masonic context of a Lodge meeting and also in public.

Prominent Masonic Supporters of Suffrage

Rev. Dr. W.F. Cobb

Dr Cobb was an enthusiastic supporter at suffrage meetings, particularly for the Women's Social and Political Union, the most radical of the suffrage societies. In 'the most exciting 'At Home' meeting of the Season' in the Caxton Hall in London in 1910 he was the first speaker. As *The Vote* describes:

With the prophetic eye of the Church of England, he said that he made bold to declare that they would not have long to wait for the suffrage! When they had obtained the vote, he urged them to do their best to elevate civic life, to endeavour to eliminate party from politics, and to

²⁵⁵ *The Co-Mason*, Vol. 3 (January 1911), p. 4.

insist that whatever bills were for the good of the country must be got through without considering which party had introduced them.²⁵⁶

Votes for Women gave another aspect:

Another representative of the Church has spoken with no uncertain voice in sympathy with this movement. At the Queen's Hall on Monday last the Rev. Dr. Cobb delivered a broadminded and inspiring address, which was listened to with the greatest appreciation by the large audience. After dealing with the reasons why women should have this common measure of justice, and after wittily refuting some of the common arguments urged against it, Dr. Cobb pointed out how the duties of citizenship would make women's minds broader and more beautiful, and they would then help men to ideals, no longer as unpaid servants, but as friends with equal rights and privileges. He considered that the greatest question before the Government was that of women's franchise, but politicians would do nothing unless they were forced to it, and therefore the women would have to go on fighting, regarding the whole official class as their enemies.

He then added a quite revolutionary statement coming from a high Anglican clergyman and one which appears never to have been otherwise endorsed by the

²⁵⁶ *The Vote*, 19/2/1910, p. 194.

clergy – ‘Much as he deplored unnecessary violence, he admitted that he could see no other methods open to women at present except the militant ones’.²⁵⁷

In the same month of February 1910 he chaired a meeting at his church, St Ethelburga’s in the City of London, during the suffragists’ ‘Special Effort Week’ – a meeting arranged particularly to attract businessmen working in the City.²⁵⁸ He also spoke for the WSPU at Debenham in Suffolk, near his country home at Rishangles. Here in the course of his speech he said it required some courage nowadays for a man to stand on a platform and speak for women who spoke so well for themselves. One of the elements of democratic government was government by the consent of the governed. The women were working for a simple measure of justice.²⁵⁹ A special service of prayer was held by Dr Cobb at St Ethelburga’s on 22 March 1912 with regard to the passing of the Conciliation Bill, which would extend the right of women to vote in the UK to around 1,000,000 wealthy, property-owning women. The third such Bill in 1912 lost by only eighteen votes.²⁶⁰

As a Mason, Dr Cobb also spoke out on the refusal of male Freemasonry to acknowledge the importance of the Woman Movement:

Now at this present moment particularly one movement amongst many others stands out pre-eminently as characteristic of our age. It is what may be called tersely the Woman Movement. Whatever may be the reasons alleged for or against the emancipation of women, no

²⁵⁷ *Votes for Women*, 10/12/1909, p. 162.

²⁵⁸ *The Vote*, 26/2/1910, p. 211.

²⁵⁹ *Votes for Women*, 15/4/1910, p. 463.

²⁶⁰ *The Times*, 19/3/1912, p. 14, col. F.

thoughtful observer can fail to see that a cosmic process is at work in bringing them from the background, and putting them into a place side by side with man. In social movements, in education, in municipal affairs, in politics and the economic realm women are assuming a new importance. We may applaud their appearance on equal terms with men, or we may decry it as monstrous and dangerous, but it is there and has to be dealt with. English Masonry has so far shown no signs that it at all appreciates the enormous importance of this movement. It has been left for other Masonic bodies to step into the breach and to assume the duty which English Masonry has not cared to undertake.²⁶¹

Cobb's contribution to other concerns of the feminist movement, such as marriage law and divorce law reform, also exemplify his commitment to equal rights and the removal of discrimination.²⁶² His standing amongst those concerned with feminist issues is shown by the fact that he was invited to give the address at Mrs. Pankhurst's funeral.²⁶³

The principle of free speech in Co-Masonry allowed many individual Masons to give their views on social and political issues at Lodge meetings. By doing so, they hoped to relate the tenets of Freemasonry – Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth – to their efforts to change society for the better. Two who held this wider view were Annie Cobden Sanderson and Charlotte Despard.

²⁶¹ *The Gavel* (July 1910), p. 3.

²⁶² *City Press*, 19/12/1941, Obituary of Cobb; *The Times*, 30/11/1929, p. 9, col. C.

²⁶³ *The Times*, 19/6/1923, p. 19, col. E.

Annie Cobden Sanderson

A member of the Women's Freedom League, Annie Cobden Sanderson belonged to the mixed Lodge in Paris, Maria Deraismes Lodge No. 1, the Co-Masons in England and later the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry under Dr Cobb.²⁶⁴ She was a frequent speaker at suffrage meetings and in an interview in *The Vote* of March 1910, she explained 'Why I want the Vote'.

I came to believe in the Vote as part of my political faith four years ago, when two girls, earning their living in the same labour market with men, were thrust out of a public meeting with brutal violence for asking a Liberal Cabinet Minister how much longer they were to be excluded from sharing in political representation with their fellow working men. Since that time 500 women have been sent to prison as common criminals for refusing to submit in silence to this exclusion from their constitutional rights of citizenship.

I joined in the revolt against such intolerable injustice, maintained, as every injustice must be, by the employment of the physical force of the law. It is in order to get rid of this injustice, and all that it means, which makes me want to have the Vote. I now see in the ballot the symbol of the natural equality of women with man.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Minutes of Lodge Human Duty No. 6, 1/12/1902; Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 19/9/1908.

²⁶⁵ *The Vote*, 26/3/1910, p. 260.

She was a strong Labour supporter and in May 1906 gave a paper to her Co-Masonic Lodge on *Masonry and the Labour Movement*.²⁶⁶ In a discussion within the Lodge on the purpose of the Co-Masonic movement, Annie Cobden Sanderson said that she had hoped that they might put themselves directly in touch with some of the great movements – such as women’s suffrage – outside.²⁶⁷ She was involved in several violent struggles during demonstrations. In one of these in Parliament Square in 1910 she came face to face with her friend, social equal and sometime dinner guest Winston Churchill. Afterwards she wrote to Churchill at the Home Office:

... I had been left on the pavement by the police, exhausted by the struggle ... when I saw you approach. I went forward to speak to you, for you were not unknown to me, when, without enquiry as to my purpose ... you ordered the police to remove ‘that woman’. ... You are a Secretary of State, but your office does not release even a member of the present Government from the obligations of a gentleman, or authorise him to make allegations without foundation...

Sylvia Pankhurst in reporting the incident commented that: ‘The shock to her was great; she had often been his hostess and was on intimate terms with his wife’s family’.²⁶⁸

At the height of the suffrage campaign there were three suffrage journals, representing the three main organisations: *The Common Cause* was published by

²⁶⁶ Minutes of Lodge Human Duty No. 6, 7/5/1906.

²⁶⁷ Minutes of Lodge Human Duty No. 6, 3/2/1908.

²⁶⁸ *Votes for Women*, 30/12/1910, p. 209; E.S. Pankhurst, *The Suffrage Movement* (London, 1931), p. 345.

the moderate and constitutionalist NUWSS; *Votes for Women* by Charlotte Despard's middle-line WFL; and *The Vote* by the militant WSPU. Each had a regular interview feature, which at different times included Annie Cobden Sanderson and Hugh Chapman.²⁶⁹ Dr Cobb aired his views on the restitution of women's rights and equality in the *City Press* (because he was the Rector of a City church) and in the HFAM journal *The Gavel*, which in its early days was completely written by him and so a vehicle for his opinions. *The Common Cause* was sufficiently familiar with and favourable to Co-Masonry to publish an article by Elizabeth Severs on the 'Order of Universal Co-Masonry'.²⁷⁰

Lady Agnes Grove

Lady Agnes Grove, wife of Sir Walter, 2nd Baronet and a member of the great Liberal Stanley family, was initiated into Lodge Golden Rule No.1 of the HFAM in July 1909, proposed by Millicent Mackenzie and seconded by Marion Lindsay Leigh (Marion Halsey). An outspoken supporter of the suffrage cause, she was encouraged in her writing by Thomas Hardy and became a frequent contributor to newspapers and periodicals of articles of interest to women. In 1908 she published *The Human Woman* (a collected volume of essays which had appeared in magazines such as *Cornhill Magazine*, *Fortnightly Review*) which a Scottish reviewer described: 'Lady Grove's latest book will do more than all the antics of the Shrieking Sisterhood to advance the cause of women's suffrage among reasonable

²⁶⁹ Cobden Sanderson: *The Vote*, 26/3/1910, p. 260; Hugh Chapman: *The Vote*, 27/8/1910, p.208.

²⁷⁰ *City Press*, 22/7/1911; *The Gavel* (April 1909), p. 3; *The Gavel* (July 1910), p. 4; E. Severs: 'The Order of Universal Co-Masonry', *The Common Cause*, 28/9/1911, pp. 425-6.

people'.²⁷¹ However, *Votes for Women*, although welcoming the book 'as a sane and clear exposition of the reasons in favour of woman suffrage' was less generous in criticising her opinion that militant action was not justified and her failure to give reasons for such a statement. Chapters include 'War and the Women's Vote', where she refutes the physical force argument and the 'Disabilities of Women', a survey of women's position under the law at that time.²⁷²

Charlotte Despard

Charlotte Despard was a Co-Mason and a founder of the Women's Freedom League, one of the main suffrage organisations. She headed the League's contingent in several protest marches through London, including the Coronation March of 1911. Despard joined the TS in 1899 and found that theosophical principles allowed her to integrate her early interest in Eastern religions with her more recently acquired Roman Catholicism. The occult, socialism and Catholicism were drawn into one undivided vision by Theosophy 'which saw Catholics, suffragettes and strikers as manifestations of the same irresistible spiritual force'.²⁷³ She lived and worked for some years amongst the poor of Battersea, where she set up free clinics and a community centre, also becoming a Poor Law Guardian in Vauxhall. Practical experience showed her that the lack of the vote restricted both women themselves and social workers in implementing reforms.²⁷⁴ Having joined the Adult Suffrage League and then the WSPU, in 1907 she helped to found the

²⁷¹ Lady Grove, *The Human Woman* (London, 1908), p. 174 (Kessinger Publishing's Legacy Reprints, 2007); Review cited in D. Hawkins, *The Grove Diaries: the Rise and Fall of an English Family, 1809-1925* (Wimborne, 1995), p. 338.

²⁷² *Votes for Women*, 19/11/1908, p. 125.

²⁷³ Andro Linklater, *An Unhusbanded Life*, p. 158.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85; J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 185.

Women's Freedom League in protest against the autocratic governance of the WSPU by the Pankhursts.

Charlotte Despard had earlier given a paper in 1906 to her Lodge of Human Duty No. 6 on *Masonry and Society* and thought that Masons should be in touch with all the great movements of humanity.²⁷⁵ In 1908, after hearing a paper in Lodge on *Masonry and the social problem*, she described the ideals which inspired her so greatly on coming into Freemasonry: the recognition of brotherhood, with glimpses of a time when true brotherhood existed in a way that it did not then; the reverence accorded to work and labour, depicted by the constant presence of the Working Tools; and the protection of the helpless, symbolised in the Initiation Ceremony by the Candidate who enters blind and penniless.²⁷⁶

In her pamphlet *Theosophy and the Women Movement* of 1913, she wrote that we should try to : 'Conceive a time when men and women ... shall be able, through the two great forces, politics and public opinion, to turn social activities now wasted...into channels of use and service'²⁷⁷

Muriel, Countess de la Warr

Another notable figure in the suffrage movement, a Theosophist and Director of the Theosophical school at Letchworth, and also a Freemason was Muriel, Countess de la Warr. A very wealthy woman who inherited her fortune from her grandfather,

²⁷⁵ Minutes of Lodge of Human Duty No. 6, 7/5/1906.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 4/5/1908.

²⁷⁷ C. Despard, *Theosophy and the Women's Movement* (London, 1913), p. 44.

the railway magnate Thomas Brassey, her money helped to keep her friend George Lansbury's newspaper the *Daily Herald* going, a paper which strongly supported the suffrage cause. In one of his autobiographical books he eulogises her:

Of all the women, outside those belonging to my family and the working classes, whom I have known and worked with, none stands higher in my memory and esteem than Muriel, Countess De La Warr. ... Her work for all the causes she assisted was very little known, because she always insisted in being kept in the background. ... Over and over again she and her friends saved the *Daily Herald* from death in the old days when it was independent, and often it was her example and her work which helped women suffragists to hold on in the darkest days of defeat. ... she was one of the almost unknown women who has left a lasting mark on the political and social life of the past thirty years.²⁷⁸

Lansbury was a member of the TS and on the Building Committee for the new headquarters in Tavistock Place designed by Edwin Lutyens, husband of Co-Mason Lady Emily.

Muriel de la Warr lived with the American heiress Miss Dodge - of the motor family - who almost single-handedly funded TS activities.²⁷⁹ Representative of the moderate constitutional feminists, de la Warr was president of the Federated Council of Suffrage Societies, founded in 1911 to unify the many disparate groups and determine a united policy. She was also Honorary Treasurer of the National

²⁷⁸ G. Lansbury, *Looking Backwards – and Forwards* (London, 1935), pp. 179-181; see also E.S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 423; R. Snell, *St Christopher's*, p. 74.

²⁷⁹ E. Lutyens, *Candles in the Sun* (London, 1957), p. 34.

Political League, which tried to further social and political reforms on a non-party basis and, as a member of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, she formed her own branch at her home in East Grinstead in Surrey. In 1912 the NUWSS formed an Election Fighting Fund to support Labour candidates at by-elections and so put more pressure on the Liberal Party. Muriel de la Warr was a member of the first organizing committee. She was a member for sixteen years of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 of Dr. Cobb's Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry and mother-in-law of Marion Halsey's daughter Diana.²⁸⁰

Eustace and Hettie Miles

A prominent married couple in Masonry were Eustace Miles and his wife Hettie, both of whom had been originally Co-Masons before becoming members of Dr Cobb's Order. Vegetarianism was one of the in-things of the time and we find advertisements for Eustace Miles' fashionable vegetarian restaurant in Chandos Street, Charing Cross in the suffrage periodicals such as *The Vote* and *Votes for Women*: 'Best Light and Sustaining Luncheons for Brain Workers' and 'Eustace Miles Proteid Food – best food basis instead of meat for clear thought'.²⁸¹ Some of the early meetings of the Fraternity of Antient Masonry were held at this restaurant, which also hosted celebratory meals for suffragettes on their release from prison –

²⁸⁰ A.J.R., *The Suffrage Annual*, pp. 31, 59; *The East Grinstead Observer* (14/10/1911) records a meeting at the Queen's Hall in London arranged by the East Grinstead branch, with Muriel de la Warr as President, supported by Evelina Haverfield; *The Common Cause*, 19/9/1912, p. 408; Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 16/12/1909.

²⁸¹ *The Vote*, 19/3/1910, p. 247.

such as Charlotte Despard and Sylvia Pankhurst in 1907 - and meetings of the Men's Society for Women's Suffrage.²⁸²

Women's Freemasonry at the beginning of the twentieth century included other personalities who figured in the suffrage agitation, but about whom we have little evidence. Marion Lindsay Halsey, although not recorded as playing an open part in supporting suffrage, nevertheless was reported in *Votes for Women* in 1910 as wishing 'to thank all members of the WSPU who have so very kindly sympathised with her during the illness and on the loss of her brother'.²⁸³ This is the only reference discovered so far to a link between Halsey – the leader of women's Freemasonry for much of this period – and the suffrage movement and must suggest a closer relationship between them than is obvious in print.

Wartime Relief Work

The same principles of support, care and relief that had been demonstrated by Freemasons towards those working for the suffrage cause were evident during the First World War, when almost all suffrage activity ceased and militancy, certainly on the part of the WSPU and the Pankhursts, was rapidly converted to patriotism.²⁸⁴

²⁸² Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 10/10/1908; *Votes for Women*, 7/1/1910, p. 236; *The Vote*, 9/4/1910, p. 288; E.S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 255.

²⁸³ *Votes for Women*, 16/9/1910, p. 819.

²⁸⁴ E.S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, pp. 591-3.

Of the older literature on women in wartime, Mitchell gives individual portraits of some of the activists discussed here, including Evelina Haverfield and Muriel St Clair Stobart during the War; the munitions work of Lilian Barker, whose later career is discussed in Chapter Five; and Charlotte Despard.²⁸⁵ Arthur Marwick, in his review of the women's paramilitary units, is patronising: 'each an odd, but not necessarily ineffective mixture of Girl Guides, County Charity and Territorial Army'.²⁸⁶ A later survey of women in the army by Lucy Noakes gives a more balanced and well-researched account, which also includes the problems of demobilisation.²⁸⁷ Other writers cover the issues of patriotism (Grayzel, Ward); women's work on the home front (Braybon); the gender and class implications of women paramilitaries (Kent, Roberts, and Pedersen); and the nursing units (Summers, Donner).²⁸⁸

The number of women Freemasons – of any Masonic allegiance - in this country at the outbreak of the Great War was to be reckoned in terms of a few hundreds.

Based on the figures cited in Chapter Three, the number of women belonging to the

²⁸⁵ D. Mitchell, *Women on the Warpath* (London, 1966).

²⁸⁶ Arthur Marwick, *Women at War: 1914-1918* (London, 1977), pp. 38-9.

²⁸⁷ Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: War and the Gentle Sex, 1907-1948* (London, 2006), especially pp. 83-92.

²⁸⁸ S. Grayzel, "'The Outward and Visible Sign of her Patriotism": Women, Uniforms and National Service During the First World War', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1997) p. 157; P. Ward, "'Women of Britain say Go": Women's Patriotism in the First World War', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2001), pp. 23-45; G. Braybon, *Women Workers in the First World War: The British Experience* (London, 1981); S.K. Kent, 'The Politics of Sexual Difference: World War I and the Demise of British Feminism', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 27 (July 1988), pp. 232-253; S.K. Kent, 'Gender reconstruction after the First World War', in H.L. Smith, ed., *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 66-83; K. Roberts, 'Gender, Class and Patriotism: Women's Paramilitary Units in First World War Britain', *International History Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1997), pp. 52-65; S. Pedersen, 'Gender, Welfare and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (Oct. 1990), pp. 983-1006; A. Summers, *Angels and Citizens: British Women as Military Nurses 1854-1914* (London, 1988); H. Donner, 'Under the Cross – Why V.A.D.s performed the filthiest task in the dirtiest war: Red Cross Women Volunteers, 1914-1918', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Spring 1997), pp. 687-704.

HFAM to the end of 1914 was 147.²⁸⁹ The group of women who seceded from the HFAM in 1913 to form HFAF would have not had a chance to independently gain many more members in just over a year. There are no figures for the female membership of the Co-Masons over the same time but it is unlikely to have been many more than that number. This means that there would have been probably no more than 350 women Masons throughout the country.

The fact that several of the major support agencies working during the war were set up by women who were also Freemasons is therefore statistically significant. This work was not done by women who co-incidentally were Freemasons, but by women whose belief in the idea of service inherent in Freemasonry prompted them to demonstrate this by taking practical action in creating major initiatives for the relief and support of both participants and home workers during the War.

Evelina Haverfield

One of these ladies was the Hon Evelina Haverfield, daughter of the 3rd Baron Abinger. She was a prominent suffragette, having taken part in demonstrations and been arrested and imprisoned. She was a member of Lodge Golden Rule No. 21 of the Co-Masons, a Lodge which had been founded in 1905 by Annie Besant. The Lodge's name reflects its aspirations – 'do unto others as you would be done by' - the golden rule of brotherhood. The founders intended the Lodge to be of service to humanity.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ 158 less the 11 for which we have known resignations during that period: *Slingsby Register* and figures from Chapter 3.

²⁹⁰ <http://www.droit-humain.org/uk/> (accessed 1/2/2006)

A well-known horsewoman, she was a mounted marshal in the 1910 suffrage protest procession and was put in prison following the 'Black Friday' demonstration, when she deliberately led the police horses out of their ranks. According to Sylvia Pankhurst, 'When first she joined the Suffragette movement her expression was cold and proud; one felt that bitterness, rather than love, was the impelling motive of her militancy ... During her years in the Suffrage movement her sympathies so broadened that she seemed to have undergone a rebirth'²⁹¹

Evelina Haverfield was instrumental in forming the Woman's Emergency Corps, the Woman's Volunteer Reserve; and the Green Cross Corps (the women's ambulance reserve). She initiated the idea which eventually materialised in the Woman's Army Corps of the later years of the war – the WAAC, the WRNS and the WRAF.²⁹²

The earliest proposal, the Women's Emergency Corps, came into existence in August 1914 through the efforts of Decima Moore (formerly a singer and actress with the D'Oyly Carte Company) and Evelina Haverfield, who seized the opportunity provided by the crisis to organise a role for women. It was soon joined by many upper and middle class women and was in the early days an unlikely mix of feminists and women who would not normally have mixed with such dangerous types. They became involved in several ventures, not least of which was in providing until 1918 a uniformed group called the Lady Instructors Signals

²⁹¹ E.S Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 345.

²⁹² Obituary by E. Lauder in *The Co-Mason*, Vol. 12 (July 1920), p. 135; see also the biography of Haverfield: B. Gaddes, *Evelina: Outward Bound from Inverlochy* (Braunton, Devon, 1995).

Company, who trained Aldershot army recruits in signalling. However the majority of the work was largely of a domestic, fund-raising nature.²⁹³

The Women's Volunteer Reserve was formed in August 1914 as an offshoot of the Women's Emergency Corps. Haverfield became Honorary Colonel of the WVR, with the Marchioness of Londonderry as Honorary Colonel in Chief. The WVR adopted a clear military structure, with battalions, officers, NCOs, other ranks, parades, drills and saluting. Members wore khaki and their uniforms acted as a template for other subsequent women's services. Coinciding with widespread male enlistment, the adoption of khaki aligned the WVR with men in defending Britain, its values and way of life. The aim of the WVR was to train a body of fit, disciplined women who could undertake a range of tasks in support of the civil powers, including signalling, first aid, crowd control, driving, delivering messages and domestic duties.

Haverfield went on to work in Serbia, founding the Serbian Soldiers Comforts Fund, the Fund for Disabled Serbian Soldiers and setting up an orphanage. Her personal papers were taken to Canada by her son and material from these was subsequently used in a biography by Boyce Gaddes.²⁹⁴

Mabel St Clair Stobart

Mabel St Clair Stobart was the daughter of Sir Samuel Boulton, 1st Bt., merchant and contractor. Very much grounded in the idea of service, she was 'an ardent

²⁹³ David Mitchell, *Women on the Warpath: The Story of the Women of the First World War* (London, 1966), p. 88; http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/haverfield_01.htm (accessed 1/2/2006).

²⁹⁴ Boyce Gaddes, *Evelina*, Chapter 5, pp. 116-124.

feminist, who believed in the potential wartime usefulness of women and that the reward of proving their national worthiness would be enfranchisement'. In 1907 she formed the Women's Sick and Wounded Convoy Corps to serve between field and base hospitals in the first Balkan War and in 1914 the Women's National Service League to provide assistance at home and abroad, including France, Belgium and Serbia. This included women doctors, trained nurses, cooks, interpreters, and all workers essential for the independent working of a hospital of war.

She converted to Spiritualism, leading that community during the 1920s.

Spiritualism was another of the spiritual quests, like Theosophy, which became popular, particularly with upper and middle class women, from the late nineteenth century. Diana Burfield, in her study of women in Theosophy, states that often these women were attracted by Spiritualism before they moved on to the more sophisticated and elaborate philosophy of Theosophy. Stobart became a member of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 of HFAM.²⁹⁵

Florence Burleigh Leach and Lucy, Lady Markham

Although egalitarian and non-political in principle, the WVR's military structure and the cost of the uniform (over two pounds) meant that it largely attracted middle and upper class recruits and encouraged the formation of a more accessible organisation. The Women's Legion was founded by Lady Londonderry and Mrs.

²⁹⁵ D. Burfield, 'Theosophy and Feminism,' p. 50; Harriet Blodgett, 'Stobart, Mabel Annie St Clair (1862-1954)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004), [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56253] (accessed 7/3/2006).

Florence Burleigh Leach, later to become Dame Florence. Mrs Leach was initiated into Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 of the HFAM in October 1910, being seconded by Dr. Cobb.²⁹⁶ Her war service involved the expansion of the Women's Legion and the subsequent formation of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the members of which relieved many thousands of men in France from non-combatant tasks to front-line duty. She proposed six of her senior officers into Lodge Golden Rule.²⁹⁷

During the war Florence Leach had worked with Lucy O'Hea (then Lady Markham) and it was through their friendship that O'Hea was proposed into Lodge Harmony in 1923 – she was to become Grand Master in 1938. Her first husband was Sir Arthur Markham, a colliery owner and Liberal MP for Mansfield, Notts., who was rewarded with a baronetcy by Asquith in 1911. Sylvia Pankhurst wrote of him: 'Sir Arthur Markham, who, next to Keir Hardie, was the most persistent opponent of the "Cat and Mouse" Bill, dubbed it "mean, cruel, unworthy of the House of Commons and framed with diabolical ingenuity"'.²⁹⁸ Towards the end of the war and after the death of Sir Arthur, Lucy, Lady Markham was active in looking after the interests of women in the services. With Margaret Lloyd George, wife of the Prime Minister, she set up the first residential Women's Active Service Club in Eaton Square, London in 1917 for women on leave from overseas. There was one house for officers and one for the rank and file. Accommodation and meals were provided for a nominal amount. In a letter to the *Morning Post* and other newspapers, the two

²⁹⁶ Imperial War Museum, *Women, War and Society 1914-1918* database, *The Times* 11/2/1918, ref. SUPP.32/125 and *The Queen*, Feb 15 1919, ref. Journals 1/5; Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 20/10/1910.

²⁹⁷ Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 20/2/1919 and 20/3/1919.

²⁹⁸ E.S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 454.

founders appealed for funds in order to extend the idea to the provinces - 'So far the initial expenses have been borne, for the greater part, by a few patriotic ladies and gentlemen who have the welfare of these noble women at heart'.²⁹⁹

The United Suffragists and the Women's Suffrage National Aid Corps

In January 1914 there were fifty three different suffrage organisations. Diversity did not necessarily mean strength; resources tended often to be spread too thinly; militancy was unacceptable to many. The United Suffragists was formed in February 1914 and aimed to be a totally inclusive suffrage body. It was open to both men and women, was non-party and adopted only passive militancy such as heckling. As a unifying organisation, it was recognised by the government and included in negotiations on a possible suffrage bill: as such the United Suffragists was an important agency and the only one which supported suffrage activity during the War. The other main organisations declared a moratorium for the duration. Giving their support as Vice Presidents were such Freemasons as the Rev. Dr Cobb, the Hon. Mrs Haverfield and Mr and Mrs Baillie-Weaver.³⁰⁰

The United Suffragists undertook no war relief work themselves, but supported Evelina Haverfield's Women's Emergency Corps. *Votes for Women*, founded and owned by Mr and Mrs Pethick-Lawrence, had ceased to be the official paper of the

²⁹⁹ D.A. Taylor, *The Gavel*, Vol. 31, No. 117, (March 1960), p. 6; Imperial War Museum, *Women, War and Society 1914-1918* database, *Morning Post* 30/10/1918, ref. B.O.5 7/36.

³⁰⁰ E.S.Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 520 and Note 1; *The Vote*, Vol. 9, No. 224, (6/2/1914), p. 245; K. Cowman, 'A Party between revolution and peaceful persuasion': a fresh look at the United Suffragists', in M. Joannou and J. Purvis, eds., *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, pp. 77-86.

WSPU and was given to the United Suffragists as a medium for educating the public.³⁰¹

Charlotte Despard and the Women's Freedom League were quick to establish a relief organisation at the beginning of the War.

'The National Executive Committee of the Women's Freedom League re-affirms the urgency of keeping the suffrage flag flying ... and in view of the earnest desire prevalent in the ranks of Suffragists to render service to their country at this critical time ... are organising a Women's Suffrage National Aid Corps, whose chief object will be to render help to the women and children of the nation'.³⁰²

Despard was President of the Corps. They set up clinics for expectant and nursing mothers, provided meals for school children, clothes for the poor and workrooms where unemployed women and girls could learn to make clothes and soft toys.³⁰³

Conclusions

The contemporary accounts quoted here reveal a range of objectives amongst those Masons supporting the suffrage movement. The approach of these speakers in this period is a broad one – they looked to the dawning of a new age and the reconstruction and reform of society. It was generally believed that this would be achieved by the granting of the vote to women on the same basis as men. Some,

³⁰¹ E.S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 593.

³⁰² *The Vote*, 14/8/1914, p. 278.

³⁰³ *The Vote*, 4/9/1914, p. 304; 11/12/1914, p. 420; D. Mitchell, *Women on the Warpath*, p. 304.

such as Despard and Besant, had personal experience as Poor Law Guardians of the terrible conditions experienced by the poor and destitute, which gave further impetus to their campaigning.

The equally broad concept of brotherhood was of course common to all Freemasons and was the link between Theosophy and Freemasonry. The Theosophical Society's first objective was 'To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour': the Masonic principles were 'Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth'.³⁰⁴

Equal rights, the feminist approach of claiming political rights as moral and intelligent human beings, was exemplified by Annie Cobden Sanderson in her writings. Dr Cobb specifically believed that this would be a restitution from antiquity as well as a recognition of the rights of half the human race. Cobb and Besant, in particular, laid emphasis on a concept which was to become central in the following decade – that of citizenship, how the vote when won was to be used to the best purpose and training women to do that.

The Coronation march in 1911 suddenly and unexpectedly thrust women's Masonry into the public, political arena. At the time, women's role in Freemasonry was almost unknown. Thanks to Besant's sanction of the wearing of regalia because she thought it was 'in the national interest', London experienced not only the novelty of lady Freemasons, but those who were making a high-profile, political protest.

³⁰⁴ H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, (London, 1889), p. 39; J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, pp. 3-4.

This public protest by Freemasons in the political arena was only possible because Co-Masonry did actually allow free discussion of religion and politics. It is noticeable that, as far as known, Dr Cobb, for all the strength of his support of suffrage, did not openly acknowledge that he was a Mason, because his Order followed the practice of UGLE in banning these subjects in Lodge. Reports and Masonic articles in the widely-read suffrage periodicals also served to disseminate information about women's Freemasonry to a wider public, both female and male. In the narrower orbit of the Freemasons' own journals, the cause was given extensive coverage.

Some of the activists described here further illustrate the association of the emerging Labour party with equal rights for women – by 1912, womanhood suffrage had become official Labour party policy, so long as the vote was extended to all men at the same time. Cobden Sanderson and Despard were strong Labour supporters and Countess de la Warr was a member for some years of the NUWSS Election Fighting Fund Committee. This was formed in 1912 to support any party candidate who challenged an anti-suffrage Liberal, the effect being effectively to support the Labour party.

The prayer meetings, the special services and the support of the Church League for Women's Suffrage helped to supply a spiritual underpinning to the suffrage movement which had previously been lacking. There were links between the Church League and the women Masons – for example, Ethel, the wife of Archdeacon C.E. Escreet, a Vice President, became a member of the Lodge of Unity

No. 3. Significantly, she was a social worker.³⁰⁵ Freemasonry could further give feminists not only the opportunity for spiritual expression but a system of guided spiritual development.

Several of the initiatives concerned with relief work during and after the First World War were led by upper class ladies, who were not only also Freemasons but in addition were able to utilise their influence, money and network contacts in both recruiting and in getting things done. The Masonic theme of service to others therefore here takes on a further dimension. The concept of service – philanthropy – was embedded in the ethos of the aristocracy. These ladies of the aristocracy or upper class who were also Freemasons saw in their relief work during and after the War a genuine opportunity of serving others by the practice of their Masonic principles.

Two of the important women's military or quasi-military organisations of the War were founded by women who were Freemasons and another by a lady who later became one. This is a startling fact. Strength of personality is not exclusively a Masonic trait, neither is independent means nor a caring and altruistic nature, but it is possible that all these qualities, coupled with the spiritual inspiration and direction provided by Freemasonry, gave these particular ladies the impetus to undertake their relief work. The examples described here add to our knowledge and understanding of the motivation of some of the leading female figures in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

³⁰⁵ A.J.R., *Suffrage Annual*, p. 18; Lodge of Unity, Minutes, 8/11/1920.

Chapter Four

Education as National Service

This chapter will show how, between 1916 and 1922, some members of the HFAM expressed Masonic ideas of service and their support of feminism by a scheme to set up and run a training college for women teachers who wanted to specialize in a particular aspect of secondary education and also in social work. The nature of the scheme and the reasons for undertaking it are described, together with the causes of its failure, which were not inherent within the organisation but originated with outside factors. As a result of this initiative the HFAM came to be seen as a force in society and particularly in professional education. The associated question of a theosophical presence in the HFAM is discussed.

The background to this enterprise, the Halsey Training College for teachers of continuation classes, also known as The Guild of Education for National Service, has two distinct elements, namely, the state of the provision for secondary education at the time and the developments in child-centred education initiated by Theosophists. Educational developments in England between 1906 and 1925, together with the ramifications of the 1918 Education Act, have not been studied in depth since the work of Dean and Sherington in the 1970s. Dean concentrated on assessing H.A.L. Fisher's distinctive contribution to education reform with his insistence that education liberated and empowered young people and on Fisher's role in the reconstruction process following the War. Sherington disagreed with the

emphasis placed on Fisher's personal role and stressed the continuity of educational policy from the pre-war period. Continuation schools have been the subject of studies by Doherty (1966) and Thoms (1975), written in the same period.³⁰⁶ Challenging the received opinion that it was primarily the economic cuts following the war which prevented the implementation of continuation education, Docherty outlines the various political and administrative, as well as economic, factors which converged to impede progress on continuation education. Thoms ascribes the failure of the compulsory element in the continuation school scheme to a combination of administrative uncertainty, the lack of a uniform plan of implementation and the changing social climate of the post-war period which had no place for a humanising curriculum.

Both Annie Besant and Krishnamurti expounded the theosophical approach to education in works written in 1912. Blavatsky herself had touched on this in her *Key to Philosophy* of 1889. The works of Rudolf Steiner, who developed a similar, child-centred educational system, date to the 1920s. The only more recent evaluations of the theosophical contribution are those of Maxwell Lawson (1972) and the careful consideration by Kevin Brehony (1997 and 2004).³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ D.W. Dean, 'H.A.L. Fisher, Reconstruction and the Development of the 1918 Education Act', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Oct. 1970), pp. 259-276; G.E. Sherington, 'The 1918 Education Act: Origins, Aims and Development', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Feb. 1976), pp. 66-85; B. Doherty, 'Compulsory Day Continuation Education: An Examination of the 1918 Experiment', *The Vocational Aspect*, Vol. 18, No. 39 (Spring 1966), pp. 41-56; D.W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', *History of Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1975), pp. 36-50.

³⁰⁷ A. Besant, *Education in the Light of Theosophy*, Adyar Pamphlets No. 16 (Adyar, 1912); H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London, 1889), Section 13, 'Misconceptions about the Theosophical Society'; part 3, 'Theosophy and Education'; Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Education As Service* (Adyar, 1912) and see also Scott H. Forbes, 'Jiddu Krishnamurti and his insights into education', (presentation at the first Holistic Education Conference, Toronto, Canada, 1997),

The present study adds to the literature by describing an example of theosophical educational principles at work in the Halsey Training College, which was featured at the time in an article by Mackenzie in the theosophical journal *Herald of the Star* in 1919.³⁰⁸

The 'Outside Work' Scheme

At the Board of General Purposes meeting in March 1913, Grand Master Marion Halsey put forward for consideration a proposition concerning 'a sphere of work outside our ordinary Masonic activities'.³⁰⁹ Nothing further is heard until March 1916 when a small committee of five was formed to consider suggestions and recommendations for an Outside Work Scheme, which would give members of the Order an opportunity to join in social work as well as providing a possible source of new membership.³¹⁰ It was realised that any such scheme could only be on a small scale but there were 'good grounds for assuming a fair measure of success'.³¹¹

Millicent Mackenzie, a former Professor of Education at Cardiff University, was a

<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-krish.htm> (accessed 10/12/2007); R. Steiner, *The Spiritual Ground of Education: 9 Lectures, Manchester College, Oxford, 1922* (Reprinted Herndon, Va., 2004); Maxwell Donald Lawson, 'Theosophy and Education'. Thesis submitted to the University of Sydney in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Honours Degree of Master of Education, 1972; K.J. Brehony, 'A Dedicated Spiritual Movement': Theosophists and Education 1875-1939', *Faiths and Education: XIX International Standing Conference for the History of Education at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 3-6 September 1997* (www.roehampton.ac.uk/staff/Kevinjbrohony/docs/theosophy.pdf) (accessed 1/11/2007); K.J. Brehony, 'A new education for a new era: the contribution of the conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the disciplinary field of education 1921-1938', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 40, Nos. 5-6 (October 2004), pp. 733-755.

³⁰⁸ Muriel [recte Millicent?] Mackenzie, 'The Halsey Training College - An Experiment', *Herald of the Star*, Vol. 8 (1919), pp. 397-400.

³⁰⁹ Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, 19/3/1913.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17/3/1916. The committee consisted of five members, including Halsey, Mackenzie and Adelaide Litten (Grand Treasurer) and met at Halsey's London home 14 South Audley Street; *Ibid.*, 14/6/1916

³¹¹ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 29/3/1916.

member of this sub-committee and instrumental in the preparation of the scheme which followed for setting up a training college for teachers and social workers. She was a founder member of the Order in 1908 and therefore had been a Co-Mason, with all the theosophical links that this implied.

The committee met in March, April, May and June 1916. At the opening meeting Mrs. Mackenzie outlined several alternative plans designed to meet the shortage of training for teachers and social workers 'on broad and modern lines, fitting them for the modern conditions of social work generally [and equipping them] not only to teach "subjects", but in the more important work of training and developing character'. It was thought that the ordinary Training Colleges were not working in this direction, that ethical considerations and the 'newer' psychology were inadequately represented, that the training was too narrow and that the opportunities for gaining a broad outlook on life were non-existent.³¹²

One of the plans involved finding premises where lectures on ethical and educational subjects could be given and where students could meet members of the Order, with possible incidental recruitment from both students and teachers. As far as funding was concerned, back in 1913 when the subject was first broached Grand Master Halsey herself guaranteed £100 a year for the first three years. Some concern was expressed at Grand Lodge as to the Order's financial responsibility for the scheme, to which the Grand Master replied that no part of the Order's funds would be involved and no responsibility cast on the Order. 'For some time at least

³¹² Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, 14/6/1916 (Synopsis of the Sub-Committee's Report).

the real work would fall upon the Educational Committee consisting of well-known men and women in the educational world aided by probably two or three of the Grand Lodge officers'.³¹³ It was thought that with a moderate initial outlay the scheme would be largely self-supporting. A hostel to accommodate students at the training college would be included in the scheme, and Mrs. Mackenzie had already had a promise to help in furnishing this. There was, however, also the possibility of hiring one of the London County Council training colleges currently being closed down. Initially, the provision of a hostel was probably to attract and accommodate female students coming from outside London, but it subsequently became even more important when the 1918 Regulations for the Training of Teachers forbade the recognition of women for grant purposes unless they resided in a college or hostel.³¹⁴

Millicent Mackenzie in the meantime told many of her friends and contacts about the possible scheme and received permission from the committee to circularise a letter - written over her own name and not mentioning the Order - for the notice boards of the principal women's colleges in England, Scotland and Wales. It was thought that a few notices could be sent to America, which would, on the contrary, refer to the Order 'as American women were known to be keen about Masonic and kindred organisations, and it was felt that an allusion to the Order might be an added attraction'. The committee were later sharply criticised on this point by the general membership of the Order.

³¹³ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 12/7/1916.

³¹⁴ Tomlinson, Leila, 'Oxford University and the Training of Teachers: The Early Years (1892-1921)', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Oct. 1968), p. 307.

In April 1916 Mrs. Mackenzie reported interviews with 'Miss McTaggart of the School of Economics; Dr. Scott of the Board of Education; Miss Tuke, Principal of Bedford College; Mr. Holmes; Mr. and Mrs. Mead and others, and that in every case interest and sympathy had been expressed'.³¹⁵

King's College in London had a branch and a hostel called Queen Mary's on Campden Hill, west London. King's had a tradition of providing education for women – in 1885 a Ladies' Department was inaugurated, the function of which was to give its students a taste of liberal education. Eventually the department became King's College for Women and was formally incorporated into the University of London in 1910.³¹⁶

The Warden of Queen Mary's Hostel saw one of the notices circulated and suggested that they might be able to take students for the scheme if it got underway. Subsequently the Grand Master and Mrs. Mackenzie visited the College and were very satisfied with the situation and accommodation. The students there paid eighty five guineas a year – sixty guineas for board, lodging and 'their share of the Warden's attention and care' and twenty five guineas for the Social and Domestic Science Course provided. The committee proposed that the Order should charge their students eighty five guineas, paying sixty guineas to the College and

³¹⁵ Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, 14/6/1916 (Synopsis of the Sub-Committee's Report).

³¹⁶ King's College London Archives Services - Summary Guide: King's College for Women, <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/iss/archives/collect/10ki30-1.html> (accessed 4/1/2007).

with the other twenty five guineas going towards the cost of a special course of lectures and coaching.³¹⁷

An informal meeting of the whole Order was called to discuss the matter and carried an almost unanimous vote to support the scheme, provided it was started up on a sound financial basis. The Board of General Purposes in June passed a resolution by a majority vote to recommend favourable consideration by Grand Lodge of the Work Scheme. The Scheme would be administered by an outside Educational Committee, aided by two or three Grand Lodge officers. Grand Lodge duly adopted the proposal. Mackenzie also reported that she had been invited to Oxford to discuss the project with the heads of several colleges, 'who welcomed the idea and seemed particularly attracted by the suggestion that a Committee of Ladies living in London would take a personal interest in the students'.³¹⁸

A prospectus booklet was printed, *EDUCATION AS NATIONAL SERVICE: New Training Scheme for Teachers and Social Workers, to include a London Hostel*. The preamble explained that:

There is today a widespread feeling that education and other allied forms of Social work call seriously for reconsideration and reconstruction. ... there is now an opening, such as has never existed before, for educated women who are ready to devote themselves to this kind of National Service, whether by teaching in experimental

³¹⁷ Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, 14/6/1916 (Synopsis of the Sub-Committee's Report).

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

schools and classes, by serving on Local Educational Committees ... by working in Settlements, or by undertaking pioneer or research work in education and social economy.

The activities described by the prospectus comprised lectures on subjects including psychology, ethics, social philosophy, economics and civics [citizenship]; discussions with experts in social and educational work; practical training in teaching, lecturing, and social work; the study of modern methods of teaching, including music, drawing and craftwork, physical exercises and eurythmics; and visits of observation to such special schools and institutions, settlements, clubs, and so on 'as are being conducted on the most modern principles'. Students were to be responsible for planning their own timetables. The course was to last three terms and residence would be provided in the Hostel at Campden Hill. To qualify for admission, students had to be twenty one or over and be either graduates or have a relevant qualification. No-one was required to take an examination but students could work for certain teaching certificates if they wished. Applications should be made to Mrs. Mackenzie, the Hon. Dean, and the document was signed on behalf of the Committee by Marion L. Halsey, Edmond Holmes, Millicent Mackenzie, Beatrice de Normann and Violet Douglas Pennant. The scheme would start in October 1916.³¹⁹

Grand Lodge empowered Marion Halsey to act, and to use the name of the Order in the conduct of this Work, and directed the appointment of a Business Committee

³¹⁹The booklet is included in Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 12/7/1916; M. Mackenzie, 'The Halsey Training College', p. 399.

to deal with the receipt and disbursement of funds.³²⁰ The minutes of the Quarterly Communication of the following January record that 'Grand Lodge received with pleasure and with congratulations to the Brethren concerned, the information through the Grand Secretary's Report of the successful first term session of the "Work Scheme" '.³²¹ In March, Mackenzie reported on developments with the 'Work Scheme' and gave a positive account of the progress made saying that, in view of the new legislative programme affecting educational work [the framing of the 1918 Education Act], she was keeping in touch with the Minister of Education, and expected good results from the interest he had shown.³²²

In October of the same year the Grand Secretary reported to Grand Lodge that the work scheme had made a profit in its first year of £51.19.9d. [over £2,000 in terms of today's prices]. Mackenzie said that it gave her the greatest pleasure to tell Grand Lodge that:

from every point of view progress was being made...a good deal has been accomplished towards helping forward the new educational ideas. The Lectures had proved to be an attractive feature...From all parts of the country came flattering references in regard to the work, and a knowledge of our work as Freemasons was also spreading.³²³

The Grand Master added that she was still looking forward to the time when securing a 'House' for ourselves there would be a more complete linking-up of the

³²⁰ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 12/7/1916.

³²¹ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 7/2/1917.

³²² Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 28/3/1917.

³²³ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 31/10/1917.

Order and the Training Scheme, in that such a building would be able to accommodate both the headquarters of the HFAM and the Training College hostel.

A year later, the Grand Master reported that:

the Board of Education now requires the help of our College for the training of teachers, also that a centre had now been set up at Kenton, where there was a large garden and farm for the purpose of instructing students in rural continuation teaching. These developments marked a very pleasing advance in our work.³²⁴

The 1917-1918 session returned a profit of £53.11.11, and donations of £200 had been applied to specific work in the East End of London. It was made clear to Grand Lodge that, apart from some voluntary donations, the Order had not contributed at all financially. At the inception of the scheme the Grand Master had wanted it linked to the Order 'in the hope that when the Fraternity grew larger it would be able to take a definite interest in what was already proving to be a very successful sphere of work'. Without the financial support of Marion Halsey, the Order would have lost the chance of this association.³²⁵

The Halsey Training College was incorporated in the Guild of Education as National Service, and a letter from Thomas Harwood, Secretary of the Guild of Education as National Service to Grand Secretary Peter Slingsby in 1920 reveals that the headquarters of the Guild was at 11 Tavistock Square W.C.1, which was also the headquarters of the Theosophical Educational Trust between 1919 and 1921, the

³²⁴ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 30/10/1918.

³²⁵ Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 29/1/1919.

Theosophical Fraternity in Education and the Montessori Society of London.³²⁶

Branch addresses for the Guild of Education as National Service are given in Harwood's letter as 89 Barking Road, Canning Town E. and Kenton House, Kenton near Harrow.³²⁷

A copy of the prospectus of the Guild for 1920-21 is in the Patrick Geddes archive at Strathclyde University. It has the title *Guild of Education as National Service, with which is incorporated Halsey Training College (Recognized by the Board of Education)*. Vice-Presidents are given as Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, M.P., the Right Hon. Sir William Mather and the Hon. Mrs. Spender Clay [Hon. Pauline Astor]. The Executive Committee is chaired by Mrs. Reginald Halsey, and consists (naming their parent organisation) of Percy Alden, Victor Branford (Sociological Society), Miss M.D. Cresswell, Capt. and Mrs. R.D. Ensor [Beatrice de Normann], Miss Escott (Head Mistress, Clapham High School), Miss Margaret Frodsham (Principal of the College), W.R. Hughes, Miss A. Litten (HFAM), Mrs M. Mackenzie (Hon. Dean of the College), Miss Nickalls (Representative of the Head Mistresses' Association), Miss B. Rennie, R.H. Tawney (London School of Economics) and Mrs. Vir Jones.³²⁸

The general purpose of the Guild is given as: 'The Guild was founded in 1916 with the main object of promoting National Education in its best forms and on ideal

³²⁶ *Kelly's Post Office London Directory 1920*, Vol. 1, p. 628; British Phone Books 1880-1984, London Surnames A-Z, 1922, <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/Browse/> (accessed 10/10/2010)

³²⁷ Letter dated 9/2/1920, acknowledging receipt of a donation from HFAM to the General Fund of the Guild, in the Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, 31/3/1920; *Kelly's Harrow Directory*, (London, 1922), p. 211.

³²⁸ Composition of the Executive Committee and following details are from the *Prospectus 1920-21*, University of Strathclyde, Geddes Archive, T-GED/2/341.

lines. The supply of suitably trained workers was quite early deemed the most urgent and imperative necessity: Halsey Training College was the outcome of that idea'. The College provided a year's course of training for men and women in urban and rural education, especially day continuation work. Special courses were arranged for intending social workers, such as welfare and club workers. The course was designed to meet both general and individual needs and to satisfy Board of Education requirements. It included: history of educational and social developments; social and industrial conditions; administration in Education; psychology, ethics and civics; scientific method; and practical schemes for the education of adolescents. The prospectus declared that: 'Endeavour is made, partly by tutorial work, to meet the individual needs of each student according to previous education and experience. This is the more possible as the Board of Education accepts a thesis by each student in lieu of an examination at the end of the course'.

Lecturers are listed as the Dean and the Principal, Mrs. Fraser Davies (formerly Lecturer at Bingley Training College), W.R. Hughes (Chairman of West Ham Education Committee) and Percy Alden (formerly Warden of Mansfield House Settlement). The Prospectus stresses the provision for suitably educated ex-servicemen, who were eligible for major grants. The Board of Education gave day student grants of forty pounds for men and thirty five pounds for women. Students who completed the course were eligible for the Board of Education Teacher's Certificate, subject to satisfying the Board's Inspectors in general work and a thesis.

The College Certificate was also awarded, indicating the nature of the work done and the student's special aptitudes.

The back page of the Prospectus carries a series of testimonials:

Men and women who have trained at the Halsey Training College have already obtained posts with salaries varying up to £350 per annum.

Some are teachers in the new Day Continuation Schools under Local Education Authorities at Birmingham and Eastbourne, and at Messrs. Crosse and Blackwell's School under the L.C.C.; also in Messrs.

Debenham's new Day Continuation School. Other students of the College are at present teaching in Elementary Schools; two obtained posts as Heads of Rural Elementary Schools; and five have posts in Secondary Schools. Two students have undertaken responsible posts as Club Workers among adolescents in East End districts.

The Theosophical journal *Herald of the Star*, edited by Krishnamurti, regularly carried articles on educational matters and new practice. In 1919 there appeared an article entitled: 'The Halsey Training College-An Experiment'.³²⁹ This not only touches on matters to be subsequently explored here, such as theosophical ideas in education, post-war reconstruction and the day continuation classes established under the Education Act of 1918, but expands on the motivation of the founders:

³²⁹ Mackenzie, 'The Halsey Training College', pp. 397-400. The author's surname is the same as the originator of the scheme – this may be either a coincidence or the wrong first name may have been used.

A reform in training colleges was needed, and the Halsey Training College grew out of that need The Halsey Training College is an experiment, for its curriculum is laid on the basis, not of the orthodox training colleges, but of the beliefs and ideals of its founders. It endeavours to find men and women who are willing to prepare themselves to take part in the educational work of the nation, and it offers such men and women training which will fit them for duties in schools conducted on the principles of providing an atmosphere of freedom for the pupils, and of giving opportunity for an early development of individual responsibility. To take the metaphor used above, the Halsey Training College endeavours to turn out its graduates master-masons of their craft, the craft of training and building up the body, the mind, and the spirit of their own and younger generations.

The metaphor of the master mason was the obvious one in the circumstances.

The two branches of the College are described. The urban branch at Mansfield House, 89 Barking Road, Canning Town E16 worked with several Settlements and clubs in the neighbourhood, and students had teaching facilities not only in these but in the WEA and in schools of various grades in West Ham. Training in teaching Civics included local government and municipal work, also in West Ham. The Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 show that this branch was incorporated into the scheme in 1918. The Immediate Past Master of the Lodge, Marion Halsey, in describing the progress made with the scheme, told the members:

The Training Scheme had decided to take over for eighteen months certain, with the possibility of a further extension, the Residence known as Mansfield House, Canning Town East, this being the residence of the Canning Town Settlement, and other school buildings. This was being done, firstly, for the purpose of starting an experimental Continuation School in Canning Town, and secondly, to enable the students under the Training Scheme to combine their training in Social Work with some first-hand experience of life in a very poor working-class district... [the experiment] had the warm approval of Mr Fisher President of the Board of Education. The work would begin in the first weeks of the new Year.³³⁰

The Rural branch, which prepared students for work as organisers and superintendents of Rural Continuation Centres, was based at Kenton House, near Harrow.

It is adjacent to a large market-garden farm of some eighty acres, the owner of which co-operates in the training scheme and provides facilities for students to experiment and work. Here they practise intensive and clean culture in market-gardening, farm work, poultry-keeping, beekeeping, handicrafts; they study the Theory of Education with special reference to the psychology of the adolescent, Ethics, Civics, Hygiene; past and present experiments in Rural Education in this and in other countries; social, economic, and industrial conditions, with

³³⁰ Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 13/12/1917.

special reference to rural problems; methods of organisation and conduct of classes with practical work and discussion. Facilities will also be provided for the study of Physical Exercises, Voice Production, Folk Games and Dances, Drawing.³³¹

The Halsey Training College was granted official recognition by the Board of Education in September 1918 after two full sessions. The article on the College in the theosophical journal *Herald of the Star* (most probably by Mackenzie herself – see Note 324) recorded enthusiastically that ‘its important pioneering spade-work is being watched by that body and by the Ministries of Agriculture and Pensions with approving interest’.³³² These words show that the College was a serious educational project with a chance of making a real impact on the future of teaching. Duly qualified students were eligible for the Board of Education Teacher’s Certificate on the completion of a full year’s course of training, subject to satisfying the Board’s Inspectors in general work and completing a thesis.³³³

Such was the auspicious beginning of a bold and innovative scheme, which must have reflected well and publicly on its parent organisation. However, there are no references to the Guild of Education as National Service or to the Halsey Training College – direct or indirect – after 1922. What was the background to the enterprise and what happened?

³³¹ Mackenzie, ‘The Halsey Training College’, p. 400.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 400.

³³³ *Ibid.*; *Guild of Education as National Service*, 1920 prospectus.

The Theosophical Approach to Education

Blavatsky outlined the theosophists' views on education in *The Key to Theosophy* and their approach to the education of children was formalised in two main works – *Education as Service*, written by the new World Teacher Krishnamurti in 1912 with a preface by Annie Besant, and Besant's own *Education in the Light of Theosophy*. According to Theosophist and Co-Mason Lady Emily Lutyens, it was commonly known that *Education as Service* was mainly the work of George Arundale, who formulated some of these educational methods as Principal of the Central Hindu College at Benares.³³⁴ In recent times, Kevin Brehony has written extensively on the educational activities of the Theosophists.³³⁵ Unpublished papers on the New Education Fellowship are in the Archives of the Institute of Education, London.

As Besant put it: 'The fundamental teachings of Theosophy so alter our views of the child, that a very revolution is wrought by them in the relations of the child and his elders'.³³⁶ A belief in reincarnation meant that the child was not a blank canvas to receive impressions but an immortal individual, and it was the purpose of education to bring out the experiences of many lives and the latent tendencies brought over from the past. The child therefore had to be studied to identify strengths and weaknesses, to find out the aim and purpose of the Ego in this new stage of his pilgrimage.

³³⁴ Lutyens, *Candles in the Sun*, p. 28.

³³⁵ For sources on the theosophical approach to education, see Note 305.

³³⁶ Besant, *Education in the Light of Theosophy*, p. 1.

The capacities of the child, the line they fit him to pursue, these must guide his education. In all, the child's interest must be paramount; the true teacher exists to serve. The school must be a centre of good and joyous influences, radiating from it to the neighbourhood. Studies and games must all be turned to the building of character, to the making of the good citizen, the lover of his country.³³⁷

Distinguishing characteristics of a theosophical education included the absence of all forms of competition - lack of examinations, or, if they were held to comply with outside requirements, the non-publication of exam results, and no prizes - no homework, no compulsory lessons and the pupils were to discipline themselves, with no punishments. Teaching should be by love and never by coercion or force – the child who is punished by violence is not only physically hurt and frightened but morally injured. The brotherhood of the school should be a microcosm of universal brotherhood.

The body should be healthy for the best spiritual development, with simple and nourishing food that does not stimulate – no meat, onions or coarse foodstuffs – and adequate physical exercise. Children should be brought up in attractive and peaceful surroundings: 'Purity and beauty are essential for the right development of both body and mind'. The first seven years:

should be given to the building up of a healthy physical body, the formation of good habits, and the instilling of the religious and moral

³³⁷ Besant's Introduction to J. Krishnamurti, *Education as Service*, <http://www.fullbooks.com/Education-as-Service.html> (accessed 30/10/2007).

ideals which are to rule the life; these years are the most receptive, and impressions made during them are indelible. The second seven years should be given to the training of body and mind, to the acquiring of the general knowledge which every educator and well-bred person should possess, as a foundation for subsequent study.³³⁸

Theosophists had been active in education for some years. Annie Besant herself had been involved since she was elected onto the London School Board in 1888. In 1913 she set up the Theosophical Educational Trust in India. Its first school was at Benares, founded by Besant, George Arundale and some of the members of the old Central Hindu College. Another at Cawnpore and a third school in France were soon established, all working according to theosophical ideas. At the Christmas Annual Convention of the TS at Adyar in December 1912, George Arundale gave a lecture on *Education as Service*. Inspired by this, Miss Ada Hope Russell Rea and some friends drafted a letter to the General Secretary of the TS in England, soliciting funds for the establishment of a 'definitely and openly' theosophical school in England. St. Christopher School at Letchworth Garden City, the fourth under the auspices of the Theosophical Educational Trust, opened in 1915. The history of this school, written by T.S. member Reginald Snell in 1975, gives useful (if unattributed) insights into theosophical ideas of education.³³⁹

In the meantime, a conference on *Next Steps in Educational Progress* was held at the University of London in 1914, opened by Besant and attended by members of

³³⁸ Besant, *Education in the Light of Theosophy*, p. 5.

³³⁹ R. Snell, *St. Christopher School 1915 – 1975*, (Letchworth, 1975), p. 13.

the T.S., the Theosophical Educational Trust, the Fabian Educational Group, the Moral Education League, the National Union of Teachers, Women's Industrial Council and other interested groups. The papers given were published by Leslie Haden Guest, prominent Theosophist, lawyer and member of the London County Council. In the same year Edmond Holmes and others in the New Ideals in Education group (founded by Holmes, Beatrice de Normann, Belle Rennie, Sir William Mather and like-minded educationalists) organized the group's first conference in conjunction with the Montessori Society. Holmes had visited and worked with Maria Montessori, who had joined the T.S. in 1899, at her schools in Rome in 1912.³⁴⁰

It was at the next New Ideals conference in 1915 that the Theosophist Beatrice de Normann and others founded the Theosophical Fraternity in Education. It was described as 'an international fellowship of teachers interested in the new ideals in education necessary for the new age'.³⁴¹ Theosophists were looking towards a new age in the evolution of mankind, the emergence of the Sixth Root Race (northern Europeans were the present Teutonic sub-race of the Fifth or Aryan Root Race), and a new type of education would be necessary to train and prepare the young to reach this higher stage.³⁴² De Normann argued that 'as the new wine cannot be put into old bottles there is a great need for destruction and re-

³⁴⁰ Chris Shute, *Edmond Holmes and the tragedy of education* (Nottingham, 1998); Peter Gordon, 'Holmes, Edmond Gore Alexander (1850–1936)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46694>, accessed 5 Sept 2010]

³⁴¹ *Journal of Education*, Vol. 39 (March, 1917), p. 179.

³⁴² K. Brehony, ' "A Dedicated Spiritual Movement": Theosophists and Education 1875-1939', *Faiths and Education: XIX International Standing Conference for the History of Education at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 3-6 September 1997*, p. 19: <http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/staff/Kevin%20J.Brehony/docs/theosophy.pdf> (accessed 1/11/2007).

construction'. The Great War was 'the birth throee of the New Age', and out of the destruction of war new forms would emerge, fit for the new spirit, in religion, politics, sociology, and education.³⁴³

Theosophical involvement in education continued into the 1920s. In 1921 Beatrice de Normann (by then Beatrice Ensor) founded yet another group, the New Education Fellowship. It was a small group of progressive educationists and liberal thinkers involved with the Theosophical Society and the Theosophical Educational Trust, which held a series of international conferences, commencing with one at Calais in 1921. This organisation grew into a national and then international organisation, with local sections in many countries worldwide, and was re-named the World Education Fellowship in 1966. Although the Fellowship embraced a wide range of individual philosophies, the central focus has always been on child-centred education, social reform through education, democracy, world citizenship, international understanding and the promulgation of world peace. Many famous thinkers and educationists have been involved with the Fellowship and it has forged close links with academic institutions, including the Institute of Education, University of London, and with international organisations, especially UNESCO. An English Section of the Fellowship was founded in 1927 and included amongst its prominent members Sir Michael Sadler, Sir Percy Nunn, Sir Fred Clarke, R.H. Tawney and J.A. Lauwerys.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ B. de Normann, 'The Theosophical Educational Trust in Great Britain and Ireland, Ltd.', *The Vahan* (educational supplement) April 1917, p. 1-2, quoted in J. Dixon, *Divine Feminine*, p. 142.

³⁴⁴ Institute of Education archives: New Education Fellowship Diary 1920-1952.

Rudolf Steiner, an early adherent to Theosophy, split from that movement in 1912 and founded a variant called Anthroposophy, which was based on the precepts of Christianity and natural science as opposed to the Eastern orientation of Theosophy. One of the developments of his movement was a child-centred, holistic and interdisciplinary philosophy of education, culminating in 1919 in the opening of the first school run on these principles at the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart. 'Waldorf education' later spread world-wide. Millicent Mackenzie knew Steiner and his work and organized a conference at Mansfield College, Oxford in 1922, presided over by H.A.L. Fisher, at which he spoke on educational principles and their application, published as *The Spiritual Ground of Education*.³⁴⁵

Consultants to the College Scheme

The records which describe the setting-up of the Work Scheme mention a number of people who were consulted or interviewed prior to its inception. A small committee is listed on the advance prospectus, and an Executive Committee appears on the 1920 prospectus. The names of those involved show two things – that the HFAM had the standing to be able to approach important figures in the field, and the degree of theosophical involvement in the scheme.

³⁴⁵ R. Steiner, *The Spiritual Ground of Education. 9 Lectures, Manchester College, Oxford, 1922* (rev. ed., Great Barrington, MA, 2004) and Introduction by C. Bamford, pp. vi-x; P. Bruce Uhrmacher, 'Uncommon Schooling: A Historical Look at Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophy, and Waldorf Education', *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Winter 1995), p. 383.

Edmond Holmes³⁴⁶

An HMI for thirty years, Edmond Holmes was appointed Chief Inspector of Elementary Schools in 1905, resigning in protest against the prevailing educational methods and curriculum policy in 1911. He condemned the system he himself had helped to set up:

In nine schools out of ten, on nine days out of ten, in nine lessons out of ten, the teacher is engaged in laying thin films of information on the surface of the child's mind and then after a brief interval he is skimming these off in order to satisfy himself that they have been duly laid.³⁴⁷

Holmes became an advocate of the child-centred approach, giving free reign to the imagination as a means of self-expression, and a follower of the Montessori method of nursery education. He was also a poet and wrote on philosophy and religion. He had become interested in Theosophy in his youth and, inspired by the writings of H.P. Blavatsky, became president of G.R.S. Mead's Quest Society in 1921 (see below). Holmes was also a member of the Committee listed on the 1916 pre-prospectus.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Peter Gordon, 'Holmes, Edmond Gore Alexander (1850–1936)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46694>, accessed 5 Sept 2010]; C. Shute, *Edmond Holmes and the 'Tragedy of education'* (Nottingham, 1998).

³⁴⁷ E. Holmes, *What is and What Might Be* (London, 1911), p. 56.

³⁴⁸ *The Creed of the Buddha* is his best-known work of poetry (1908). Other works include *The Creed of Christ* (1905) and *Philosophy without Metaphysics* (1930).

G.R.S. Mead

G.R.S. Mead joined the Theosophical Society in 1884 whilst reading classics at Cambridge and determined to devote his life to that cause. In 1889 he became private secretary to H.P. Blavatsky and after her death in 1891 edited some of her works, including the revised edition of *The Secret Doctrine*. He was appointed General Secretary of the European Section of the T.S. in 1890, and edited the *Theosophical Review* from 1898 to 1909. One of the most important members of the T.S., he resigned from it in 1909 in protest after Annie Besant brought Charles Leadbeater back into the Society in spite of his allegedly paedophile activities.³⁴⁹ As the Editor of the *Theosophical Review* Mead had tried to give space to all who wanted to 'promote investigation and comparative study of religion, philosophy and science, on the basis of experience'³⁵⁰ In 1909 with A.E. Waite, occultist and fellow member of the Golden Dawn, he founded the Quest Society and its associated journal to give serious academic consideration to occult and esoteric subjects. Mead's wife Laura was also a Theosophist. She was a Co-Mason, belonging to the Premier Lodge (formerly Lodge Human Duty No. 6), and was affiliated into Lodge Harmony No. 4 of the HFAM in January 1917.³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Leadbeater's re-instatement by Besant was in the face of fierce opposition, and may have been one of the reasons behind Dr Cobb's decision to leave the Co-Masons.

³⁵⁰ G.R.S. Mead and A.E. Waite, *The Quest Society: constitutions, rules and regulations*, 1909, p.3.

³⁵¹ R. A. Gilbert, 'Mead, George Robert Stow (1863–1933)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53879>, accessed 5 Sept 2010]; *Slingsby Register* records Mrs. Laura Mead's affiliation as on 18/1/1917 (after these discussions).

Beatrice de Normann

Beatrice de Normann, so active in theosophical education, was one of the committee on the advance prospectus, and, as Mrs. Ensor, was, together with her husband Robert, a member of the Executive Committee on the 1920 prospectus. Born in Marseilles, where she grew up, de Normann trained as a domestic science teacher at Cardiff and taught this subject at a Training College in Sheffield before becoming an inspector for girls' and women's education for Glamorgan County Council. In 1908 she joined the T.S. and her theosophical leanings influenced all her future activities. She became a Co-Mason, a member of Human Duty Lodge No. 6.³⁵² During the First World War she worked as an Inspector for South West England, based at Bath. She belonged to the New Ideals in Education group and it was at the annual conference of this organisation in 1915 that she helped found the Theosophical Fraternity in Education, described as 'a dedicated spiritual movement'. Ensor later said:

[she] realised how much Theosophy could change one's approach to the education of a child especially reincarnation, in which consciousness can manifest on the physical plane. I therefore thought of trying to get teachers who were Theosophists into contact through the magazine *The New Era* [from Jan. 1920] and the international conferences.³⁵³

The purpose of the journal was to communicate the ideas and practice of the 'new schools'.

³⁵² *The International Freemason* (Autumn 1972), p. 15.

³⁵³ W.E.F. Ensor to W. Lawson 26/1/1971, quoted in K. Brehony, 'A new education for a new era: the contribution of the conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the disciplinary field of education 1921-1938', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 40, Nos. 5-6, (October 2004), pp. 737; R. Snell, *St. Christopher School 1915 – 1975*, p. 37.

In 1916 de Normann became general organiser of the Theosophical Educational Trust, founded in India by Annie Besant three years earlier. She married Captain Robert Ensor, whom she met through the T.S., in 1917. They lived in Letchworth Garden City, where they both worked at the theosophical school set up there, St Christopher's. Beatrice was Organising Director of the school complex and her husband was Business Manager and Secretary to the Theosophical Educational Trust. Directors' meetings for the Trust were held at the headquarters in London, 11 Tavistock Square. Muriel, Countess de la Warr – who was a member of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 of HFAM – was a Director of the Trust, attended every meeting, and provided financial and other support, including giving them a herd of her prize cows.³⁵⁴

Belle Rennie

The last name with a theosophical link mentioned on the Halsey Training College prospectus is Miss Belle Rennie. Miss Rennie was 'an extraordinary Edwardian lady without academic qualifications but full of enthusiasm, intelligence, ingenuity, commitment and determination'. She did not belong to the T.S. (as far as is known) but dabbled in mysticism and believed in reincarnation. To her, 'Education was a profoundly religious process in which the child's creative powers required to be liberated and strengthened'.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ R. Snell, *St. Christopher School 1915 – 1975*, pp. 37, 50, 53, 74.

³⁵⁵ *Gipsy Hill Training College News Letter*, 1958, p. 3, cited in M. Gibson, *A History of Kingston University*, <http://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/factsandfigures/ourhistory/documents/history-of-kingston-text.pdf> (accessed 10/8/2007); *The Times*, Obituary, 5/4/1966.

Her keen but amateur interest in the education of young children coincided with the period of intense interest taken by educationalists and Theosophists in the new methods of child-centred education. Miss Rennie visited the Montessori Institute in Italy and was instrumental in introducing these educational ideas into England, although she thought that they should continue throughout elementary schooling and beyond. She saw the Dalton Plan in operation in America – giving pupils carefully structured assignments of work covering a broad curriculum – and, as Secretary of the Dalton Association, promoted its use here. Her work had a wide effect in emphasising the individual study of the pupil.

Perhaps her greatest achievement was the founding of Gipsy Hill Teacher Training College in 1917, which she kept going almost single-handedly until 1920, when she became Chair of Governors. The need for a training college for teachers in the 'new' child-centred methods such as Montessori arose from the New Ideals conferences, but it was Belle Rennie who made it a reality. The courses were specifically for the teaching of children between two and seven. The college had a unique assessment system which required students to produce child studies and to apply their subject knowledge during teaching practice instead of sitting formal subject and educational theory examinations. This was at first not accepted by the Board of Education, which refused to recognise the college's qualification, but surrendered to continual pressure from it in 1923. Both Gipsy Hill and the Halsey Training College followed theosophical principles in rejecting an examination system. Gipsy Hill emphasised the importance of practical teaching by requiring almost continuous student attendance at its demonstration schools. The

community's religious life endowed both staff and students with a powerful sense of mission and self-esteem. As a member of a self-governing community, every student had to take responsibility for her own work – a practice which was already being followed at the Halsey Training College, which opened a year before Gipsy Hill.³⁵⁶

Mrs. Mackenzie held preliminary discussions in April 1916 with, in addition to the Theosophists Edmond Holmes and Mr. and Mrs. Mead, a Dr. Scott of the Board of Education and Miss Tuke, Principal of Bedford College in London. Dame Margaret (Meta) Tuke, a highly influential educationalist and college head, was a passionate advocate of higher education for women. A Newnham student and later member of the governing body, she became head of Bedford College in the University of London in 1907. An active member of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, she was interested in causes concerning unmarried women and women who needed to earn a living.³⁵⁷

It was a common tactic amongst pressure groups to recruit titled and/or highly distinguished names onto organising committees, usually as vice-presidents, to give respectability and publicity of the right kind to the venture.³⁵⁸ The same method

³⁵⁶ Margaret Bryant, 'Rennie, Isabella Southern (1875–1966)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48580>, accessed 5 Sept 2010]; M. Gibson, *History of Kingston University*, pp. 18-20, 26: *Gipsy Hill Training College News Letter*, 1958, p. 3.

³⁵⁷ Sophie Badham, 'Tuke, Dame Margaret Janson (1862–1947)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48469>, accessed 5 Sept 2010].

³⁵⁸ See, for example, Dr. Cobb's Divorce Law Reform Union, with the Countess of Arran, the Countess of Carlisle, Thomas Hardy and Gilbert Murray among the Vice-Presidents and the Marriage Law

was used by the Halsey Training College – the 1916 Committee included Violet Douglas Pennant in this role and the 1920 Committee had as Vice-Presidents Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, Sir William Mather and the Hon. Mrs. Spender Clay (the Hon. Pauline Astor).

Violet Douglas Pennant

Violet Douglas Pennant, a Conservative Party member on the London County Council, developed a reputation as someone with liberal views on social reform. She was a Governor of the University College of South Wales and it was probably here that Douglas Pennant came into contact with Millicent Mackenzie, who was Professor of Education there from 1910 to 1915, in charge of the training of teachers. Douglas Pennant was active in philanthropy and local government, working as a volunteer with disabled children and the unemployed poor of London. Her cousin Frank, 5th Baron Penrhyn, married Maud Eleanora Hardy in 1892 and Maud Douglas Pennant became a member of Lodge of Unity No. 3 of the HFAM.³⁵⁹ Violet Douglas Pennant therefore had two links with the HFAM – through acquaintance with Millicent Mackenzie and through her cousin's wife, who was a member of the Order.

Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck and Pauline Spender-Clay

Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck MP was a member of the British Committee of the International Association of Labour Legislation, which drew up a report on the

Reform League, with J.M. Keynes, A.P. Herbert, Lady Violet Bonham Carter, H.G. Wells and Lady Asquith.

³⁵⁹ http://www.thepeerage.com/surname_index/Penrhyn (accessed 12/8/2007); *Slingsby Register*.

regulation of child labour in the United Kingdom in relation to the Employment of Children Act of 1903 and which sought to protect children from unsuitable and dangerous occupations. He was therefore an influential figure, concerned with the welfare of children, and a useful 'name' to have as a Vice-President.³⁶⁰ Similarly, the Hon. Mrs. Spender Clay (Pauline Astor) was the eldest daughter of the American financier William Waldorf Astor and a J.P. for Surrey from 1920. Her sister-in-law Nancy Astor became the first woman Member of Parliament in 1919. Marion Halsey probably knew her in Society circles.³⁶¹

Sir William Mather

The third Vice-President, Sir William Mather, was a Manchester industrialist, entrepreneur, humanitarian and politician. He was head of the Mather & Platt Salford Ironworks Engineering Company. Very much an honorary member of the Halsey Training College Committee – he was 78 in 1916 and died in 1920 – his humanitarian attitude towards the welfare of workers and his interest in education in the workplace were relevant to the work of the College. In 1873 he started the Salford Iron Works evening science school for his staff. He was a member of the Royal Commission on Technical Education in 1881, as the commissioner reporting on the USA and Canada.³⁶²

³⁵⁸ British Library of Political and Economic Science: Archive GB 0097, Child Labour Committee, c.1885-1914 (<http://www.aim25.ac.uk>) (accessed 12/9/2007).

³⁶¹ <http://www.thepeerage.com/surname/index/Astor>;
http://www.huntington.org/ArtDiv/Sargent_AstorPict.html (accessed 1/9/2007).

³⁶² Geoffrey Tweedale, 'Mather, Sir William (1838–1920)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007
 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45649>, accessed 5 Sept 2010]

Apart from technical education, his interest in the training of nursery school teachers also made him a sympathetic supporter in the eyes of the committee. His money enabled him to set up the Mather Training College for nursery school teachers in Manchester and the Mather Nursery School. He became associated with the Froebel movement through a friend, Julia Salis Schwabe, widow of another Manchester industrialist.³⁶³ He attended the New Ideals in Education conference at Stratford-on-Avon in 1915 and was one of a group which suggested that a college for the training of teachers should be founded to reflect their views on nursery-infant education. Mather's relevance was therefore as a member of the theosophical New Ideals, who knew Belle Rennie, and was interested in child-centred education and teacher training.

Percy Alden

The members of the Executive Committee of 1920 outside the HFAM were all recruited because of their particular interests and spheres of influence. Percy Alden had studied at Mansfield, the Congregationalist theological college at Oxford. Mansfield House University settlement was founded in 1889 at Canning Town, West Ham, to the east of London and was intended to give students of Mansfield College Oxford first hand experience of living and working with working-class people. The Mansfield Settlement was one of several university settlements established on the model of Toynbee Hall, which opened in Whitechapel in 1884. The settlement movement was based on the idea that it was necessary to have a proper

³⁶³ <http://www.froebel.org.uk> (accessed 20/8/2007).

understanding of the actual needs of the poor, through living in their midst, before they could be helped.³⁶⁴

Mansfield House extended its work to include the Canning Town Women's Settlement, also founded by F.W. Newland, in 1892. It provided health and welfare services to women and children, including a Dispensary and a Hospital. It provided other services such as adult education classes and advice for young mothers, and a branch of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, which was primarily an employment agency. Canning Town Women's Settlement operated on the money raised by its members - wealthy middle class ladies - who paid subscriptions and held fundraising events such as garden parties.³⁶⁵

In 1891 Percy Alden was appointed the first Warden of the Mansfield House settlement, where he stayed for ten years, being recognised as one of the pioneers of the settlement movement. His particular contribution was to involve the settlement in the municipal politics of West Ham, believing that it was necessary to do so in order to improve the social conditions of those who lived there. He was a

³⁶⁴ A criticism levelled at the male settlement workers was that they never stayed long enough to do lasting good. Even in 1911, Percy Ashley pointed out that women were more able to give this long-term commitment (Percy Ashley, 'University Settlements in Great Britain', *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1911), p. 181). Vicinus gives a survey of women's settlement work, although she does not mention the Canning Town Women's Settlement, which was one of the first and most important: M. Vicinus, *Independent Women*, Ch. 6, 'Settlement Houses: A Community Ideal for the Poor', p. 211; Mansfield House University Settlement: 'West Ham: Philanthropic institutions', *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 6* (1973), pp. 141-44. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=42763> (accessed 13/5/2007).

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 'West Ham: Philanthropic institutions'; http://www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/pdf_docs/a_brief_history_of_aston_mansfield2.pdf, pp. 6-10 (accessed 10/6/2007).

member and later deputy Mayor of West Ham Borough Council. As a member of the School Board, he developed provision for children with special needs.³⁶⁶

It was at Mansfield House, Barking Road, Canning Town that the Guild of Education as National Service – the Halsey Training College – had their urban East End branch. As well as being a member of the committee, Percy Alden is listed as one of the lecturers, probably in civics, given his interests and background which included local government and municipal work in West Ham. Described as a born organiser, his varied activities in the field of education included opening some of the first evening classes, organising lobbying for the Public Libraries Act whilst an M.P. and encouraging University extension courses.

Victor Branford

Victor Branford served on the Executive Committee of the Halsey Training College (otherwise known as the Guild of Education as National Service) as a representative of the Sociological Society. He was a student of Patrick Geddes at Edinburgh and then, as a businessman, used his money to help support Geddes' Outlook Tower activities in the social sciences and environmental studies. He founded the Sociological Society in 1903.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ M. C. Curthoys and Tim Wales, 'Alden, Sir Percy (1865–1944)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39606>, accessed 18 Aug 2007]; Percy Ashley, 'University Settlements in Great Britain', p. 194.

³⁶⁷ David Evans, 'Le Play House and the Regional Survey Movement in British Sociology 1920-1955', M.Phil. Thesis, City of Birmingham Polytechnic, 1986: *The Early 20th Century*. <http://www.dfte.co.uk/ios/early20.htm> (accessed 15/9/2007).

It is possible that Branford was recruited through Millicent Mackenzie. She and particularly her husband, the neo-Hegelian philosopher J.S. Mackenzie, who was President, were active in the Moral Education League, which sought to persuade training colleges to make better provision for courses in moral instruction for teachers. As the Civic Education League it had offices at Le Play House in Westminster, the headquarters of the Sociological Society and, from 1920, of the Regional Association (Regional Survey). Regional survey – the in-depth geographical, historical and economic study of a particular area – was a recognised educational technique at the time and students at the Halsey Training College had lectures on the technique of regional survey.³⁶⁸

Miss Margaret Frodsham

The Principal of the Halsey Training College was Miss Margaret Frodsham, B.Sc. She had been the Headmistress of St. Saviour's and St. Olave's Grammar School for Girls in London SE1 in 1903, and is described as late Head Mistress, College School, Cardiff and Lecturer in Education at the Training College for Domestic Teachers, Cardiff. College School was the demonstration school attached to the Women's Day Training Department and the Secondary Training Department for Women, both of which were headed by Professor Mackenzie during her time there. Professor Mackenzie left Cardiff in 1915 and the following year recruited for the Halsey Training College. Miss Frodsham was initiated into Lodge Harmony No. 4 of the

³⁶⁸ Board of Education, *Humanism in the Continuation School*. Education Pamphlets No. 43, H.M.S.O., 1921 [Prepared by Mr. J. Dover Wilson]; M. Mackenzie, 'The Halsey Training College', p. 399.

HFAM on 7 December 1917 and stayed in the Order for most of her life, only resigning in April 1946.³⁶⁹

Kate Jones

Mrs. Vir Jones (Kate), wife of the first Principal of University College Cardiff John Viriamu Jones, was another experienced Cardiff ally brought in by Millicent Mackenzie to serve on the Executive Committee. She was president of Cardiff Welsh Liberal Assembly between 1898 and 1900 and a leading figure in Welsh Liberalism.³⁷⁰ The involvement of University College in the training of teachers had been advocated since 1885 by Viriamu Jones. Very little importance had been given to secondary education because most children left school at 12. In 1891 a resolution was passed that a training department for Intermediate [secondary] teachers should be established at University College, as the need for some form of professional preparation for the teachers in secondary schools was likely to increase. Day training departments were foreseen as providing a broader and liberal type of training. Kate Jones was on the committee appointed by University College to oversee the establishment of a training scheme for teachers of cookery, including providing practical teaching experience in local elementary schools.³⁷¹ She was therefore well placed to advise on the management of the Halsey Training

³⁶⁹ W. Gareth Evans, *Education and Female Emancipation: the Welsh Experience 1847-1914*, (Cardiff, 1990), p.240; *Slingsby Register*.

³⁷⁰ U. Masson, 'Hand in hand with the women, forward we will go': Welsh Nationalism and Feminism in the 1890s', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2003), p. 371 and Note 68, p. 384.

³⁷¹ W. Gareth Evans, *Education and Female Emancipation*, pp. 234, 235, 236.

College. Her involvement was such that she was initiated into Lodge Harmony No. 4 on 6 February 1920 but resigned relatively soon after in November 1921.³⁷²

W. R. Hughes

W.R. Hughes appears on the 1920 Executive Committee and also as a lecturer, where he is described as Chairman, West Ham Education Committee. West Ham – outside the boundaries of the London County Council – was one of the strongest supporters of day continuation schools. The Halsey Training College was set up to train teachers for just these schools, and the urban branch of the College was situated within this borough, where the students also did their teaching practice in schools of different grades. It was one of the eight LEAs to submit a scheme for day continuation schools during 1920 and apply for an ‘appointed day’ on which the schools would open. The West Ham scheme consisted of five temporary day continuation institutes, which opened in 1921, pending the building of two new secondary schools and four central schools. It was planned to raise the school-leaving age for all children in West Ham to 15 by 1926. However, compulsory attendance proved so unpopular that the scheme was abandoned in the same year. Two of the institutes were closed and the others continued on a voluntary basis. The proposed secondary and central schools were not built, nor was the school-leaving age raised at that time.³⁷³

³⁷² Minutes of Board of General Purposes of HFAM, March 1920; *Slingsby Register*.

³⁷³ W.R. Powell, ed., ‘West Ham: Education’, *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 6* (1973), pp. 144–57. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=42764> (accessed 7/4/2007); M. Mackenzie, ‘The Halsey Training College’, p. 400; B. Doherty, ‘Compulsory Day Continuation Education’, p. 50, 51.

R.H. Tawney

R.H. Tawney represented the London School of Economics on the Executive Committee of the Halsey Training College, and brought to it his considerable experience in the field of secondary education. One-time President of the WEA, he was a member of the Ministry of Reconstruction's Adult Education Committee. Its final report in July 1919 stressed the demand for non-vocational education for adults and its importance for self-expression and personal development within the community. As a member of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on Education from 1918 Tawney played a major role in framing education policy and legislation. In 1922 he wrote the policy document *Secondary Education for All*. Although he was a friend of H.A.L. Fisher, he rejected the concept of part-time continuation schools, which he thought 'a makeshift' and instead favoured raising the school leaving age.³⁷⁴

Developments in Education and Fisher's Proposals

In 1916 and 1917 the theosophical interest in progressive educational methods coincided with proposed new legislation in the field of education, aspects of which formed the core reason for setting up the Halsey College scheme.

Educational reform had been widely discussed since the turn of the century. As Sherington has demonstrated in his comprehensive paper, the elements that were to become the main provisions of the 1918 Education Act were in place by 1909,

³⁷⁴ H.A.L. Fisher, *An Unfinished Autobiography* (Oxford, 1940), p. 10.

much of it as part of the general concern for social reform before the War.³⁷⁵ The landslide Liberal election victory in 1906 enabled the government to introduce a series of welfare measures, such as the Education (School Meals) Act of 1906, compulsory medical inspections (1907) and the Children and Young Persons Act (1908). These measures opened the way to reforming legislation in the provision and nature of education and by 1912 the Liberals were ready to deal with this. For the 'New Liberals' the improved welfare and education of working class young people was regarded both as a social obligation and a national asset, as it was thought that improvement in the English educational system would offset more radical demands for social change and be a necessary condition for meeting the national challenge from Germany.

A national education policy was prioritised in the King's Speech of 1913. A draft bill was drawn up, with the intention of introducing it during 1914. This bill raised the school-leaving age from 12 to 14, provided for continuation (day release) classes up to age 16, re-organised local education authority powers, and gave the Board of Education powers of inspection and registration, with more control over secular instruction in denominational schools. However, war intervened and the legislation was temporarily shelved.

³⁷⁵ The following summary of educational legislation is based on the work of G.E. Sherington, 'The 1918 Education Act'; D.W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment'; D.W. Dean, 'H.A.L. Fisher, Reconstruction and the Development of the 1918 Education Act'; and B. Doherty, 'Compulsory Day Continuation Education' (see Note 304).

So the professional climate of opinion in 1916 – when the Work Scheme was prepared and the Halsey Training College set up – was one of expectancy, of an over-idealistic desire for reconstruction driving into law and into practice educational plans which were already in existence. A shortage of skilled manpower caused by mobilisation led to a Board of Education Committee (the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to Employment after the War) - the Lewis Committee – in 1916. It recommended a long-term policy of raising the school-leaving age to fourteen together with a compulsory eight hours per week of part-time continuation classes for all aged fourteen to eighteen.

Also in 1916, the appointment of H.A.L. Fisher as head of the Board of Education gave further impetus to change. A modern historian from New College, Oxford, he was an admired and hard-working teacher and a fluent writer. A natural administrator, in 1912 he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, one of the new civic universities. In December 1916 he was invited by Lloyd George – whom he knew socially – to join the newly-established coalition government as president of the Board of Education. A. Ryan, in his entry on Fisher in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) sums up some of the gifts which led to the appointment: ‘The energy and diplomatic skill which had impressed the citizens of Sheffield were now devoted to mastering the school system of England and Wales ... He brought to the task the right temperament and the right political inclinations’.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁶ A. Ryan, ‘Fisher, Herbert Albert Laurens (1865–1940)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33141, accessed 18 Aug 2007.

Fisher had been strongly influenced in his views on education by T.H. Green, and now sought to put those views into practice. In a speech reported in the Times Educational Supplement he later said:

I believe education itself is a great liberating power and the more education a young person has, the more power he has, the richer his range of sympathy, the larger his knowledge, the firmer his tact in affairs. Consequently when I am forcing young people to have more education than they now have, I believe I am increasing their liberty.³⁷⁷

Fisher's Education Act, drafted in 1917, largely embodied the proposals of the 1913 Bill. Local authorities had to provide medical and physical education, state grants were established for institutions and students and a single school certificate examination replaced the multitude of separate examinations previously used. There was also provision for nursery and special needs education. An important feature of the act was that it made central government financially responsible for the majority of education. There was a major addition to the earlier proposals, in that the two recommendations of the Lewis Committee – to establish a universal school-leaving age of 14 and to provide eight hours of compulsory continued education for 14 to 18 year olds – were incorporated into the act. Important also in the context of this thesis, one of Fisher's goals was to secure good salaries for teachers and a consequent rise in their social standing.

³⁷⁷ *Times Educational Supplement*, 14/2/1918, quoted in D.W. Dean, 'H.A.L. Fisher', p. 261.

For most children – and certainly for all working-class children – schooling finished at fourteen with the end of elementary (primary) education. It was the extension of this by means of part-time day continuation classes that concerned Fisher and his officials at the Board of Education, and it was the training of teachers to provide such classes that prompted the establishment of the ‘experimental’ Halsey Training College.

Continuation Classes

It is necessary here to consider the concept and nature of day continuation classes, as these were not only important in the 1918 Education Act but were the *raison d’être* of the Halsey Training College.³⁷⁸ They were part-time day release lessons for children who had left elementary school and were now in employment. There were also evening continuation classes, but these were not felt to be the best way of educating tired children who had been at work all day - as had the teachers. Continuation classes could be either voluntary (many of these schools were run by commercial companies for their workers) or, as the 1918 Act tried to impose, compulsory.³⁷⁹

In the literature on continuation classes there is very little said explicitly about the curriculum, with the recent exception of Harry Judge’s paper on H.A.L. Fisher in 2006.³⁸⁰ Fisher himself was a historian. He told a deputation from the

³⁷⁸ M. Mackenzie, ‘The Halsey Training College’, p. 397.

³⁷⁹ The 1920 Prospectus cites Debenhams and Crosse and Blackwell (Halsey Training College Prospectus 1920: Strathclyde University, Geddes Archive, T-GED/2/341).

³⁸⁰ H. Judge, ‘H.A.L. Fisher: Scholar and Minister’, *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (February 2006), p. 5-21.

Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. in 1921 'I entirely agree with the view ... that it would be very undesirable that the education of boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16 should be too exclusively technical' and he believed that 'the general intelligence of the boy or girl at that age should be developed on wide, broad, liberal lines'.³⁸¹ Judge specifically refers to the class material:

The purposes of these projected Continuation Schools have often been misunderstood. They were not to be vocational in emphasis (since such training was to be mainly reserved to the workplace and provided by the employer), but designed with a broader 'education' as the major objective. The stress was to be upon responsible citizenship and general culture.³⁸²

Judge draws attention to a booklet published by the Board of Education in 1921 entitled *Humanism in the Continuation Schools*.³⁸³ This was written by (not 'influenced by' as Judge states) the Shakespearean scholar John Dover Wilson, at that time on Fisher's staff at the Board. It is a hypothetical course plan for the two hours per week available for continuation classes, and was a personal view of what could be achieved. The author stresses that the exploration of all other subjects must arise from the starting point of the student's daily occupation in order to be anchored in reality and the present – proceeding from the known to the unknown – and only then broaden out into a national and international context. He explicitly

³⁸¹ The National Archives, ED 46/156, 10 February 1921, cited in D.W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', p. 41.

³⁸² H. Judge, 'H.A.L. Fisher', p. 10.

³⁸³ Board of Education, *Humanism in the Continuation School*. Education Pamphlets No.43, H.M.S.O., 1921 [Prepared by Mr. J. Dover Wilson].

states: 'Our first duty to the continuation students is to give them an intelligent understanding of their environment, and to prepare them for their responsibilities as workmen and citizens in the world of today. Our second duty - to train the imagination - is no less important...'.³⁸⁴

Wilson gives a four-year framework, although at the time it was only proposed to run continuation courses for the two years, from the ages of fourteen to sixteen.³⁸⁵ Year one would be social and industrial history, with a local bias to attract the younger children. Year two encompassed the economic geography of the world, from the starting-point of local industry. In the future, a year three might deal with the chief European peoples and the way they live and year four would deal with modern political and social problems.

Fisher himself was in favour of compulsory day continuation education. In 1916 he wrote in the *Times Educational Supplement* that the greatest defect in the existing educational system was the lack of these classes, which, it was hoped, would have the outcome of giving 'every citizen, male or female, some scheme of moral, intellectual and technical discipline till the eighteenth year'.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³⁸⁵ Initially, the Bill provided for continuation education from 14 to 18. The age was reduced to 16 as a concession to opposition from industrial employers during the Committee stage in 1918.

³⁸⁶ *The Times Educational Supplement*, 19/7/1916, p. 426, quoted in G.E. Sherington, 'The 1918 Education Act', p. 75.

Reconstruction

A further factor to consider when examining the genesis of the Halsey Training College is that of post-War reconstruction and the climate of opinion prevailing at that time. The Ministry of Reconstruction was set up by Lloyd George in 1917. Its terms of reference covered administrative reform, the role of women in society, employment, industrial relations and housing. The National Archives'

Demobilisation in Britain, 1918-20 sums it up succinctly - it was 'charged with overseeing the task of rebuilding "the national life on a better and more durable foundation" once the Great War was over'.³⁸⁷ Many thought that education reform was fundamental to rebuilding the national life. *The Times* praised the Education Act of 1918 as destined to 'influence for good the lives of countless men and women in the unknown future, and to play no inconsiderable part in the rebuilding of all that has been shattered in England during the past four years of violence and upheaval',³⁸⁸ whilst the author of the article on the Halsey Training College in the *Herald of the Star* asked:

What have we to do with Reconstruction, we who are educationalist?

We believe, with the Ministry of Reconstruction, that Education 'is not only intimately bound up with social and industrial reconstruction, but is in a sense the most important and enduring side of postwar policy'.

The future happiness and prosperity of a country depend upon the

³⁸⁷ The National Archives: Exhibitions: First World War: Spotlights on History: 'Demobilization in Britain 1918-1920': <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/spotlighTS/demobilisation.htm> (accessed 2/9/2010).

³⁸⁸ *The Times*, 10/8/1918, p. 7, quoted in G.E. Sherington, 'The 1918 Education Act', p. 77.

extent to which the innate abilities of the people are developed and made use of.³⁸⁹

The war itself affected thinking in several ways. It highlighted in particular the shortage of skilled manpower and an interest in the expansion of practical and vocational education. David H. Parker, in a thoughtful survey of the relationship between the First World War and the vocational aspects of education, maintains that:

The wartime governments ... were constantly concerned to maintain national morale, and Lloyd George in particular increasingly sought greater wartime efforts from all through the promise of greater peacetime benefits for all. Talk of "Reconstruction" and wide-ranging social reforms abounded as one military offensive after another failed to fulfil its objectives.³⁹⁰

There were demands for national efficiency to counteract German military and economic strength. In 1918 Lloyd George asserted:

The most formidable institutions we had to fight in Germany were not the arsenals of Krupp, or the yards in which they turned out submarines, but the schools of Germany. They were our most formidable competitors in business and our most terrible opponents in war. An educated man is a better worker, a more formidable warrior,

³⁸⁹ Mackenzie, 'The Halsey Training College', p. 397.

³⁹⁰ D.H. Parker, "'The Talent at its Command': The First World War and the Vocational Aspect of Education, 1914-1939", *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Autumn 1995), p. 238.

and a better citizen. That was only half comprehended before the war.³⁹¹

Fisher himself, when introducing his Bill in Parliament on 10 August 1917, asserted: '[The Bill] is prompted by deficiencies which have been revealed by the War'.³⁹²

However, the war sharpened criticism of existing institutions and practices and generated a more dramatic and radical desire for wide-ranging reform than would have been tolerated in peacetime. Military matters distracted both government and voters from too close a perusal of what was going on in other areas. Sidney Webb wrote to Fisher shortly after his appointment: 'You will have a great opportunity to prepare a plan for Educational Reconstruction because while public opinion expects reconstruction and is vaguely prepared for any amount of it, the Heads of Government will be too busy to interfere in the formation of the plan'.³⁹³ Fisher knew the benefits of acting quickly: 'I was sensible from the first that while the War lasted reforms could be obtained and advance could be made which would be impossible to realise in the critical atmosphere of peace'.³⁹⁴

Fisher also knew, however, that the problem was to balance taking the opportunity presented with a due consideration of what was being done. He told his Department: 'If it were not for the fact that we want to take advantage of the hour we should like time for more deliberation, but it would be a thousand pities to let

³⁹¹ *The Times*, 13/9/1918, quoted in H. Judge, 'H.A.L. Fisher', p. 9.

³⁹² H.A.L. Fisher, *Education Reform Speeches* (Oxford, 1918), p. 29, 30.

³⁹³ Sidney Webb to Fisher, December 1916: MS. Fisher, Box 3, cited in D.W. Dean, 'H.A.L. Fisher, Reconstruction and the Development of the 1918 Education Act', p. 271.

³⁹⁴ H.A.L. Fisher, *An Unfinished Autobiography*, p. 103.

the occasion pass without striking a blow'. At the same meeting he told his civil servants that he regarded a system of day continuation classes as of prime importance.³⁹⁵

On the other hand, some felt that the educational reforms, and in particular the proposals on continuation classes, did not go far enough. The Reconstruction Committee in May 1917 thought that the Bill was too moderate:

A continuation system giving instruction only for 8 hours a day [*sic* – a week?] is inadequate and uneconomical. A majority on the Committee recommended that “within a period of 5 years the universal school leaving age should be raised from 14 to 15, and that half-time attendance at continuation schools should be made compulsory up to the age of 18”.³⁹⁶

The 1918 Education Bill

Fisher's Education Act as drafted included clauses from the aborted 1913 Bill and it included the recommendations of the Lewis Committee to raise the universal school-leaving age to 14, making it mandatory for children between 14 and 18 who were not in full-time education (there was an option of staying on until 16) to attend part-time continuation schools for eight hours a week for forty weeks per

³⁹⁵ The National Archives, ED 24/1422 (9/1/1917) cited in D.W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', p. 38.

³⁹⁶ Memo by the Reconstruction Committee, June 1917: The National Archives, CAB 24/13/1304, cited in D.W. Dean, 'H.A.L. Fisher, Reconstruction and the Development of the 1918 Education Act', p. 266.

year (320 hours p.a.). LEAs could increase the number of hours above this statutory limit if they wished to.

Opposition to the Act started even whilst it was still going through Parliament. This was principally from industrial interests, particularly the mill owners and the cotton trade, where juvenile labour was extensively used. If the employers had to release children for compulsory continuation education, this would disrupt the mill working and cause adults – both hirers and hired - to lose pay. The opposition threatened to block the passage of the Act, and in response Fisher made concessions.

The bill had its second reading in March 1918. By then, and during the committee stage, objections – which centred on compulsory continuation schools and virtually ignored other provisions of the Act such as state grants and teachers' superannuation – had become co-ordinated and vocal. Conservative and Labour MPs in Lancashire joined forces and threatened to block the Government's bill in Parliament. The outcome of proposal and counter-proposal was that the introduction of continuation classes for 16 to 18 year olds was postponed for the first seven years of the Act. Two other concessions were made at this stage – provision for LEAs to increase the hours of continuation classes over the statutory minimum of 320 was removed and the hours could even be legally reduced to 280.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷G.E. Sherington, 'The 1918 Education Act', p. 76-7.

Other objections came from parents, who deplored the loss of their children's earnings from the family income, especially for the sake of lessons which had no direct relevance (that they could see) to the child's employment. As Thoms admits, 'Fisher's belief that "the general intelligence of the boy or girl at that age should be developed on wide, broad, liberal lines" was unlikely to have wide appeal among working-class parents'.³⁹⁸

In the Act which became law in 1918, the provision for LEAs to increase the number of continuation hours above 320 was removed. Worse, during an initial period of seven years from the passing of the Act, a LEA could actually reduce the number of hours from 320 to 280. During the same period, 16 to 18 year olds were to be excluded from the operation of the Act.³⁹⁹ It must be remembered, however, that the 'new legislative programme affecting educational work' mentioned by Millicent Mackenzie in January 1917 was at that time still in an early draft stage (Fisher was appointed to the Board in December 1916), with great hopes for the success of continuation schools. Mackenzie, as a former Professor of Education, would have been very well situated to hear of potential developments and to plan accordingly.

The modified bill received Royal Assent on 8 August 1918. By December 1920 compulsory continuation schools were in operation in only two areas of the country. The delay was caused by legislative technicalities over the date regarded as marking the end of the war and a lack of advanced structured planning. It was

³⁹⁸ D.W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', p. 41; See Dover Wilson for sample curriculum: Board of Education: *Humanism in the Continuation School*.

³⁹⁹ *Hansard* (Commons), 5th ser., 106 (5 June 1918), p. 1644-6, cited in G.E. Sherington, 'The 1918 Education Act', p. 77.

not until October 1919 that Fisher named 1 April 1920 as the day on which the continuation clauses would come into operation.⁴⁰⁰ On top of this, there was no overall plan for providing the extra teachers, buildings and equipment necessary for the new schools, and a remarkable lack of urgency in remedying the situation. As an example, a Board Committee estimated in August 1918 that 16,000 teachers would be needed over the first seven years of the Act but it was not until April 1919 that a circular was issued to LEAs telling them to make plans for teacher training 'as a form of social service' and to establish continuation schools on a voluntary basis so as to encourage entrants into the teaching profession.⁴⁰¹ In contrast, the Halsey Training College had been operating since 1916.

The Board itself refused to take an active role in setting up training schemes. The LEAs themselves were reluctant to do so, given the uncertainty over the future of the measures, and so a vicious circle developed. The two-year delay between the passing of the Act and the first operational continuation schools meant that the opportunity of recruiting teachers from amongst ex-servicemen was largely lost. This was not the case, however, with the Halsey Training College, which ran a special course for ex-Army men in rural work at the Kenton branch:

This is a very important side of the work, for the provision of such a course and the giving of grants help towards the solution of the grave problem of what is to be done with partially-disabled ex-soldiers or

⁴⁰⁰ G.E. Sherington, 'The 1918 Education Act', p. 82, 80.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

demobilised men who feel that they cannot again return to lives of drudgery indoors.⁴⁰²

There was a great deal of opposition to the cost of the measures introduced in the Act. From 1919 the financial state of the country was in decline, the post-war boom was collapsing, prices were falling and unemployment was rising. In January 1920 Austen Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, called 'the serious attention of the Cabinet to the immense growth of expenditure on education since the Act of 1918 and to the huge liabilities in prospect'. Fisher defended the costs on the grounds of inflation and the increases in teachers' salaries. In November 1920 the Finance Committee of the Cabinet directly attributed much of the increase in education estimates particularly to the continuation schools, thus effectively sounding their death-knell. Almost immediately an embargo was placed on any 'schemes involving expenditure not yet in operation' - no extra commitment of ratepayers' and taxpayers' money could be undertaken without reference to the Cabinet Committee on Public Expenditure.⁴⁰³

Fisher was a member of a minority group in Lloyd George's Coalition Government, and his Act was therefore open to political blackmail from party interests. This was particularly the case with the Irish Unionists and the Labour Party, who put pressure on him to suspend the clauses of the Act which cost the most money – the continuation classes. LEAs who had already received an 'appointed day' to start

⁴⁰² Mackenzie: 'The Halsey Training College', p. 400.

⁴⁰³ The National Archives, CAB 24/97, 27 January 1920, cited in D.W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', p. 44; B. Doherty, 'Compulsory Day Continuation Education', p. 50.

their continuation schooling would be allowed to proceed, but, significantly, local authorities could now opt out of their obligations under the Act if they wished. To give this latitude to LEAs was fatal: they already had many competing demands on their resources and so had to prioritise – here was an opportunity to shelve some obligations.⁴⁰⁴

By the end of 1920 the fate of compulsory day continuation education was all but sealed. Before the research of the 1970s it was usually maintained that the end of the compulsory day continuation schools was brought about solely by the ‘Geddes axe’ – the Reports of the Committee on National Expenditure, chaired by Sir Eric Geddes, of early 1922. This committee proposed swingeing cuts in the expenditure of all areas of government, particularly education, and the costly day continuation schools were a casualty. However, in at least one opinion Fisher had miscalculated the cost of the 1918 Act as three million a year instead of thirty million.⁴⁰⁵

Part of the responsibility for the failure of the continuation schools lay with the Board of Education. The Board gave no strong direction in the implementation of the Act, and in particular had no overall plan for the introduction of compulsory continuation classes. Most LEAs, left to their own problems, did nothing about the scheme by default – only eight authorities in the whole country submitted proposals. Those that did so introduced their schemes on an ad hoc basis – there would have been a far greater chance of success if all LEAs had been required to

⁴⁰⁴ B. Doherty, ‘Compulsory Day Continuation Education’, p. 47.

⁴⁰⁵ Henry Higgs, ‘The Geddes Report and the Budget’, *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 126 (June 1922), p. 256; Harry Judge, ‘H.A.L. Fisher’, p. 18; T. Jones, (ed. K. Middlemas), *Whitehall Diaries, Vols. I, II*, (London, 1969), p. 192, cited in Judge, *ibid.*, p. 16.

prepare and introduce schemes at the same time. It is also uncertain whether, in a case where an authority procrastinated over compelling children to attend school, the Board actually had the power to coerce them.⁴⁰⁶

The Decrease of Theosophical Involvement

The failure of the compulsory day continuation school experiment was the primary reason for the demise of the Halsey Training College. There was, however, another reason, linked to theosophy as much as to education.

The HFAM had been set up by Dr Cobb in 1908 partly so that he and the other Founders could practise Freemasonry whilst distancing themselves from the theosophical elements found in Co-Masonry. In 1912 Dr Cobb left the new Order, specifically because he felt that these same 'sinister tendencies' were still present. In 1917, six of the female Co-Masonic, and therefore theosophical, founders were still members of the HFAM, including Millicent Mackenzie.⁴⁰⁷ Her philosopher husband John was certainly a member of the TS during his lifetime and the probability is that Millicent continued her own membership during this period when she was in contact with the theosophical educationalists.⁴⁰⁸ Some of the people whom she consulted and some of those recruited onto the Executive Committee of the Guild were prominent members of the TS and several others were on the periphery.

⁴⁰⁶ D.W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', p. 48-9.

⁴⁰⁷ According to the statistical surveys included in Chapter Three, and from the evidence of *Slingsby's Register*, the following female Founder Members were still members of HFAM in 1917: F.J. Hawkins, G.E.M. Saunders, M. Mackenzie, Alicia Weeks, Kate Lyons, Annie Miranda Stokes.

⁴⁰⁸ Information from the Theosophical Society membership register.

The fact that Theosophy was very much involved in the inception and governance of the Halsey Training College demonstrates the continuing importance of Theosophy in the Order. It also implies that the current Grand Master, Marion Halsey, was sympathetic to its presence there - otherwise the overtly theosophical educational scheme would not have been countenanced, let alone been promoted and supported financially by her. She may well have been a theosophist herself, but too conscious of her diplomatic role as Grand Master to acknowledge this openly. She was a member of the *Stella Matutina*, an offshoot of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, according to a fellow initiate.⁴⁰⁹ The books Halsey gave to the headquarters library of the HFAM illustrate her interests – for example, the Kabbalah, the tarot, Plotinus, esoteric astrology, Annie Besant's *The Three Paths and Dharma*. She had given papers to Lodge Golden Rule No. 1 on esoteric subjects, such as 'The pilgrimage of the Soul through the Three Degrees'.⁴¹⁰ Her known interests suggest her sympathies.

The Training College continued with the same theosophical supporters until 1922, bringing forward the date of documented links between the HFAM and theosophy at least to that time, a full ten years after Cobb's departure.

The registered address and central lecture facility for both branches of the Halsey Training College was, from its founding in 1916, at 11 Tavistock Square in Bloomsbury - the premises of the Theosophical Educational Trust. Snell, in his

⁴⁰⁹ 'Inquire Within', *The Way of the Serpent*, (London, 1936), pp. 197-8.

⁴¹⁰ Order of Women Freemasons Library catalogue; Minutes of Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, 21/12/1911.

history of the theosophical St Christopher School at Letchworth, records Directors' meetings of the Trust as held in London until the summer of 1922, when quarterly meetings began to be held at Letchworth. By Spring 1924 the Trust had abandoned its premises in Tavistock Square and the official headquarters shifted to Beatrice Ensor's house in Sollershott, Letchworth.⁴¹¹

It seems that, if the Theosophical Educational Trust was reducing its activities at 11 Tavistock Square from 1922, the Guild of Education as National Service could therefore have lost its administrative headquarters and lecture rooms there at the same time. This was possibly a contributory factor in the decision to close down the Guild, coinciding as it did with the demise of the day continuation schools. In 1925, when Beatrice Ensor left St Christopher School at Letchworth to found a new theosophical school *Frensham Heights*, she also left the TET, which began to lose its vigour, most of its funding, and went into voluntary liquidation five years later.⁴¹²

Conclusions

No records of the Guild of Education as National Service or the Halsey Training College can be found after 1922. The contention here is that it closed down, either at the end of the session in summer 1922, or possibly the following year, and that the reasons for this are educational, political and theosophical.

⁴¹¹ R. Snell, *St. Christopher School*, pp. 50, 52, 89.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

The Halsey Training College was an important and original initiative in secondary education. It was apparently the only scheme put forward in advance for the training of the teachers who would be needed to make the continuation schools viable. This crucial part of the 1918 Education Act sought to expand the provision of secondary education for the sake not only of the children but of the future strength of the nation. The principles of the College were in line with the general desire for reconstruction after the war and education reform was fundamental to rebuilding the national life. The College also used new trends in professional training such as an emphasis on teaching practice, and based its curriculum on the theosophical theory of education and child-centred learning.

The foundation of the Halsey Training College was an ambitious project undertaken by a handful of people. There were only two members of HFAM on the founding Committee of 1916: Marion Lindsay Halsey (Grand Master, financial backer and Chair of the Committee) and Millicent Mackenzie (educationalist and originator of the scheme), with the addition of Adelaide Litten (Grand Treasurer of the Order) to the Executive Committee of 1920. It was by means of the contacts available to Millicent Mackenzie and Marion Halsey in particular that such an innovative scheme, proposed by such a small organisation, came into being and gained recognition in the teaching world. Mackenzie was able to draw upon her contacts as a former Professor of Education in two ways. Firstly, they kept her up-to-date in her knowledge of the current educational trends. Secondly, they assisted in obtaining both influential supporters such as Sir William Mather, Percy Alden, W.H. Hughes, R.H. Tawney and Victor Branford, and also in recruiting staff and advisors

from her department at Cardiff whilst she was Professor of Education.

Furthermore, Mackenzie's theosophical contacts brought in important figures from the developing school of progressive, child-centred teaching methods such as Edmond Holmes, Beatrice de Normann and Belle Rennie.

If the scheme could not have been set up without the expertise and contacts of Millicent Mackenzie, equally it needed the money and the society networking of Marion Halsey. She may have been responsible for the involvement of Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck and the Hon. Pauline Astor (Mrs. Spender Clay) as Vice-Presidents of the scheme. The members of both executive committees illustrate just how powerful were the contacts and the networking of these ladies in the Honourable Fraternity.

The Order was proud of its achievement. In her letter accompanying the petition for recognition to UGLE in 1920, Marion Halsey referred to the 'piece of pioneer educational work' undertaken by the Order, in the hope that recognition by the men would increase the sphere of influence of HFAM and assure the success of the educational scheme.⁴¹³

The educational activities of the HFAM naturally spread the knowledge of women's Freemasonry. The work it was undertaking to advance women in society became known in the public sphere, in high places, and to those in and around government.

⁴¹³ A. Pilcher-Dayton, *The Open Door*, Appendix I, No. ii, Letter from Marion Lindsay Halsey accompanying the Petition, p. 228.

Its importance at the time is illustrated by the tribute paid by the American Ambassador in 1920. A Thanksgiving Day Dinner of the American Society in London was held for British women 'who are distinguished in various spheres of activity and many of whom had held posts of importance during the war' and as *The Times* reported, Mrs. Reginald Halsey, cited as the Founder of the Halsey Training College, was amongst the invited guests.⁴¹⁴

Had everything worked out as hoped and continuation schools established throughout the country, the Halsey Training College would have had a considerable impact on the future development of secondary school teacher training. It was stressed all along by its originators that the College was an experimental undertaking. It was set up specifically to train graduates and qualified teachers in day continuation school teaching, although training in social and welfare work was also included. In doing so, it might be said that the College founders were taking a gamble on the promises held out by draft educational legislation, but in 1916, when the first students were taken, there was not only no indication of the almost universal condemnation of day continuation schools that was to come, but a feeling amongst progressive educationalists that they were entering onto a new era.⁴¹⁵

It has been shown that gradually the odds regarding the success of the scheme changed from hope to despair -the industrial, political and parental opposition to continuation schools; the indifference of over-stretched LEAs and the lack of

⁴¹⁴ *The Times*, 26/11/1920, p. 9, col. D.

⁴¹⁵ Mackenzie: 'The Halsey Training College', p. 397.

resources; the want of any formal implementation plan for the Act together with the confusion brought about by changes and concessions in its clauses; the growing preference of educationalists for raising the full-time school-leaving age rather than developing compulsory part-time day-release classes – all these trends were apparent by 1920. The severity of the economic recession after the war and the cutbacks of 1922 constituted the final blow. Continuation education was, at that time, doomed and the future of the Halsey Training College with it. But these factors which led to its demise were outside the control of the pioneering group which set up the College. If there was any inherent reason for the failure of the scheme it was only that an 'all or nothing' gamble was taken on the successful reception and development of continuation schools.

The Guild of Education as National Service (Halsey Training College) was a feminist initiative because it was a project by women for women. It addressed the welfare of women and children and it was set up literally as a way of serving the future of the nation, by instituting the training of women teachers for a new type of education and contributing to the reconstruction of the country; of serving women, by providing training in the professions of both teaching and social work; and of serving the younger generation of secondary school children, by facilitating for them a wider and more balanced education in addition to their strictly vocational needs. In spite of its brief life, the credit and good publicity reflected on the Order as a whole and led to the recognition of the HFAM as a significant force in society.

Chapter Five

The Bureau of Service

*'Charity is the duty of everyone but it is the imperative obligation of the true Mason'*⁴¹⁶

Charity, as one of the three fundamental tenets of Freemasonry, had been practised since the inception of the Order. Lodge Minutes record that right from the earliest meetings collections were taken for a fund initially called 'The Widow's Trunk' (terminology that was taken from Co-Masonry) and then the Benevolent Fund. Half of the money collected in Lodge was sent to the Order's Benevolent Fund, established in 1911.⁴¹⁷ *The Gavel* was not published between 1912 and 1929 and so for that period we do not have this useful source of information on the Order's activities.

The Minutes of individual Lodges give some examples of *ad hoc* charitable activity. In 1914 Lodge Emulation No. 2 collected food and clothing for distribution amongst the needy parishioners of its Worshipful Master, the Rev. Frederick Gilby.⁴¹⁸ In the same Lodge, in 1925, Grand Master Marion Halsey referred to 'the question of possible outside work for the Order'. She had visited a Children's Home in the very poor slum of nearby Notting Dale, a Home run by one almost blind old lady and one

⁴¹⁶ Address by Grand Master Adelaide Litten, given on the Anniversary of the Consecration of the Temple at Headquarters, concerning the Order Charity: *The Gavel*, Vol. 7, No. 33 (Feb. 1936), p. 915.

⁴¹⁷ Lodge Golden Rule No. 1, Statement of Accounts 23/4/1919 to 30/4/1920, attached to the Minutes, 20/5/1920; *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (July 1910), p. 12; HFAF Grand Lodge Minutes, 27/1/1911.

⁴¹⁸ Minutes of Lodge Emulation No. 2, 21/12/1914.

helper. In winter nearly 1,000 children sought shelter there, but they needed better premises, food and facilities. The Grand Master had asked for a Balance Sheet and list of subscribers, to decide whether and how far the Order could help. In the meantime 'A good large parcel of toys for the children had been dispatched that day by way of a little help'. Although the Lodge supported such help, there is no further mention of the Home in the Lodge Minutes.⁴¹⁹

This chapter is concerned with a charitable initiative involving the Order as a whole. It covers the period 1928-1935 and demonstrates a completely different approach and structure to that found in the work of the Halsey Training College. The Bureau of Service which was set up in 1928 encompassed a range of different charitable causes – most of them by voluntary providers, but one statutory.

To put the work described here into context, it is necessary to briefly sketch the changes in feminism which developed between the two World Wars. Before 1918 the feminist movement had focussed almost solely on gaining the vote, but after partial suffrage was granted in that year feminism split up into different factions, derived from different analyses of the cause of women's oppression. 'The fundamental issue was whether feminism should be based on sexual difference or the elimination of gender distinctions'.⁴²⁰ 'New' feminists concentrated on reforms related to women specifically, especially motherhood, whilst equality feminists sought equal opportunities for men and women, including pay. The division extended to Union level and so there was no clear and unopposed political voice

⁴¹⁹ Minutes of Lodge Emulation No. 2, 20/7/1925.

⁴²⁰ Harold L. Smith, ed., *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, (Amhurst, Mass., 1990), p. 1.

representing or organising women. In addition, there was a strong cultural backlash resulting from the First World War, which pushed women back into the more conservative roles which they had occupied before the War, both in the home and the workplace.⁴²¹ Two decades ago the view of historians was that proactive feminism all but disappeared between the two Wars: 'By the end of the 1920s, feminism as a distinct political and social movement no longer existed'.⁴²² It is only comparatively recently that writers have begun to explore how interwar feminism expressed itself on a more personal, detailed and individual level.⁴²³

A study of the work of the Bureau of Service adds to understanding of the way women supported feminist issues during the interwar period by showing a women-only organisation that practised a range of philanthropic strategies, from volunteer support for a state enterprise and training for citizenship to the more traditional expression of philanthropy by women which was rooted in the nineteenth century.

Philanthropy and its provision over three centuries in Britain has been extensively chronicled by David Owen; more specifically, Frank Prochaska, Anne Summers and Brian Harrison have written on the charitable activity of women in the nineteenth century and twentieth centuries with respect to its motivation, methods and institutions; its success in giving women experience, responsibility and self-respect

⁴²¹ Smith, *British Feminism*, pp. 47-48; Susan K. Kent, 'The politics of sexual difference: World War I and the demise of British feminism', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 27 (July 1988), p. 232-253.

⁴²² Kent, 'The politics of sexual difference', p. 232.

⁴²³ See for example Samantha Clements, 'Feminism, Citizenship and Social Activity' (discussed below), and Maggie Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: the Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (London 1997).

and its limitations without the political power of the vote.⁴²⁴ At the beginning of the twentieth century the role of women in philanthropy was still determined by the dictates of the Poor Law: their contribution to welfare was largely based on the old Charity Organisation Society method of personal visiting, with the consequent provision of sympathy and advice to help improve the character of the individual and food and supplies to improve their circumstances. Michael J. Moore has suggested that the Liberal social reform legislation of 1906-1914 was the starting point for the inter-war partnership of voluntary and state agencies known as the 'new philanthropy', exemplified by Elizabeth Macadam in 1934, when the shift from changing the poor to changing poverty necessitated state intervention.⁴²⁵ More recently Jane Lewis has written extensively on the gendered aspects of the development of social provision in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ David Owen, *English Philanthropy, 1660-1960* (Harvard and Oxford, 1965), Part 3, 'Private Philanthropy and Public Responsibility, 1860s-1914'; and reviewed by Brian Harrison, 'Philanthropy and the Victorians', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 9 (June 1966), pp. 353-374; Anne Summers, 'A Home from Home – Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century', in Sandra Burman, ed., *Fit Work for Women* (London, 1979), pp. 33-63; Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1980); Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford, 1982); Frank Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London, 1988).

⁴²⁵ M.J. Moore, 'Social Service and Social Legislation in Edwardian England: The Beginning of a New Role for Philanthropy', *Albion*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Spring 1971), pp. 33-43; Elizabeth Macadam, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London, 1934).

⁴²⁶ Lewis, Jane, 'Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes', *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1992), pp. 159-173; Jane Lewis, 'Gender, the Family and Women's Agency in the Building of States: The British Case', *Social History* Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan. 1994), pp. 37-55; Jane Lewis, 'The Boundary Between Voluntary and Statutory Social Service in the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Historical Journal*, vol. 39, no. 1 (March 1996), pp. 155-177.

In spite of the deteriorating economic situation and mass unemployment the inter-war period saw the creation of a large number of national charities.⁴²⁷ However, the HFAM with which we are concerned here was not set up as a charitable organisation, but an organisation practising charity amongst other activities; it was not a relief movement but a movement for which Relief was a guiding principle. It is difficult therefore to make direct comparisons between it and organisations which were set up specifically to administer charity in some form. The national women's movements of the Women's Institutes (1915) and the Townswomens' Guilds (1929), with their wide-ranging activities which also include philanthropy, provide closer although by no means exact comparisons.

Little research has been done on small-scale individual charitable initiatives operating during this time, mainly because of the lack or inadequacy of documentation. Samantha Clements, in her thesis *Feminism, citizenship and social activity: The role and importance of local women's organisations, Nottingham 1918-1969* has studied the records of local branches of national organisations in that area, in an attempt to flesh out the national picture with local information. She found that on a local level small-scale voluntary activity and campaigns, combined with the associated same-sex social intercourse empowered many women who would not otherwise have had this opportunity.⁴²⁸ On a yet more detailed level, this study of the records of the HFAM shows how feminist initiatives flourished in an

⁴²⁷ For example, Save the Children Fund (1919), Royal British Legion (1921), Wellcome Foundation (1924), Youth Hostels Association (1929): F. Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse*, pp. 76-7.

⁴²⁸ Samantha Clements, 'Feminism, citizenship and social activity: The role and importance of local women's organisations, Nottingham 1918-1969'. Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, January 2008.

organisation which was not overtly feminist. It is suggested that this was typical of the oblique ways in which feminist causes were maintained and supported during the interwar period.

The records of the charitable activities of the HFAM during the period 1928 to 1935 are almost exclusively found in the periodical of the Order, *The Gavel*, with some corroboration from sources associated with the recipients. The HFAM, after the loss of the first two very strong Grand Masters with their network of connections, radically changed its structure and become a much more widely-based society. This chapter will show that, in seeking to express its own charitable mission in terms of practical service, it began to openly interact with outside agencies, although it still clung to the philanthropic causes supported by the aristocracy.

The Bureau of Service

Marion Halsey died in December 1927, depriving the Order of a strong personality who had dominated its affairs for fifteen years. Two of the three possible candidates as Halsey's successor withdrew, leaving just Adelaide Litten, Grand Treasurer. Litten was very reluctant to take on such an onerous position and refused to leave the office of Treasurer until she had overseen the end of the financial year, so that she was not enthroned as Grand Master until October 1928.

She commented that:

I was approached on the matter but, for many reasons, I at first refused to entertain it in any way. Finally, the pressure brought to bear upon me became very acute ... It therefore appeared to me, after the most

serious consideration, that my obvious duty was to sacrifice my personal inclinations and consent to serve the Order in the way it was deemed I could do so best.⁴²⁹

So there was a somewhat reluctant new Grand Master, who appeared to have none of the charisma of her predecessors. She was also of a different class to Marion Halsey – the eldest of four daughters and a son, her father was a German-born, middle-class cigar merchant. He died in 1909, leaving Adelaide as the head of the family. Like her sisters, she was employed as a secretary for the whole of her working life.⁴³⁰

The term 'secretary' covered a wide range of work. Mary Mostyn Bird (a member of the Lodge of Unity No. 3) wrote in 1911 a survey of the different ways of earning a living which were open to women. She describes the various forms of secretarial work available - shorthand, typewriting, filing, card-indexing, telephonist - which had become increasingly popular: '... in the morning, at nightfall ... women pour in and out of every block of office buildings in numbers that rival the men'.⁴³¹ The mass-production of the typewriter by Remington from the 1870s onwards and the teaching of Pitman's shorthand led to the employment of many more women in offices. Copy typists and filing clerks were the lowest ranks; above them shorthand typists, who would type up from dictation and who were paid more. A private

⁴²⁹ Address of the Grand Master, attached to Minutes of Grand Lodge of HFAM, March 1935.

⁴³⁰ 1901 Census, RG13, 26, f.147, p.2, schedule 15 (www.census.pro.gov.uk, 3/3/2009); Free BMD Death Index 1832-1983 database online: London, Middlesex, Holborn District, 4th quarter 1909, vol.1b, p.337 (accessed 3/3/2009); Minutes of Lodge Emulation No. 2, 17/7/1916.

⁴³¹ Mary Mostyn Bird, *Woman at Work: a study of the different ways of earning a living open to women* (London, 1911), p. 130.

secretary was a coveted position, often requiring business training and languages. The duties usually involved organising the office and the boss's diary or the boss himself – a modern PA.⁴³² The 1901 census page showing the Litten family lists Adelaide as a secretary and two of her sisters as stenographers (shorthand writers).⁴³³

Before her Enthronement, in July 1928, a questionnaire and covering letter were sent out to all 404 members of the ten Lodges that comprised the HFAM at that time, with the purpose of gathering opinions as to setting up a charitable scheme and the form that scheme should take. The aim was to 'fulfil the expressed desire of so many to transmute the ideals of Freemasonry into some practical form of service'.⁴³⁴ Out of the 132 responses, the most support was for six areas of voluntary work: the making of articles for Queen Mary's Needlework Guild; help for the Girls' Borstal Institution at Aylesbury; work with deprived children; hospitality to students from overseas and the Dominions; the provision of Hospital or Convalescent Home Letters; and Girl Guide examining. Individual members also offered their time and their own skills or expertise, ranging from advice on taxation matters to reading to blind people and painting and decorating.

In December 1929 the Joint Honorary Secretaries were able to report:

The reception given to the first Report of the Bureau of Service sent out in October has been most gratifying. So many written and verbal

⁴³² Margaret Ward, *Female Occupations: Women's Employment 1850-1950* (Newbury, Berks., 2008), pp. 232, 256.

⁴³³ 1901 Census, RG13, 26, f.147, p.2, schedule 15 (www.census.pro.gov.uk, 3/3/2009).

⁴³⁴ *The Gavel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1929), p. 10. *The Gavel* resumed publication with this issue, having ceased in 1912 when Dr. Cobb resigned from the Order. A contemporary account of the questionnaire and covering letter is therefore not available.

expressions of approval, congratulation and sympathetic interest have been received as to give those beginners in the work a tremendous spur to greater effort. We are encouraged by the knowledge that the services we are rendering, though at the moment on a somewhat restricted scale, have been recognized as well worth while. Many appreciative letters have been received from the Authorities of various Organisations whom we have assisted since the Bureau of Service came into existence.⁴³⁵

By April 1930 activities had formalised into six sections, based on the most popular suggestions, each with a Section Organiser. The work of the Bureau was to be democratically defined by the wishes of the membership, ascertained by postal voting and comments. In addition to the areas listed above, there was a Section for Employment and Voluntary Work. There was a committee of ten and two Joint Honorary Secretaries, Blanche Ireland and E.M. Suggate, both of whom had joined the Order from the women's services. It is noticeable that, even at this early stage, the Secretaries had to appeal for the return of questionnaires - obtaining a response soon came to be realised as one of the drawbacks of a more democratic approach.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ *The Gavel*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Dec. 1929), p. 29.

⁴³⁶ *The Gavel*, vol. 1, no. 4 (April 1930), pp. 76-7.

The Sections of the Bureau of Service

The Girl's Borstal

The section which received the most support, was that involving work with H.M. Borstal Institution for Girls at Aylesbury, Bucks., probably because of the single-minded lobbying of its Governor, Lilian Barker. We know that Lilian Barker was a member of HFAM at this time but unfortunately there are no records as to when she joined or to which Lodge she belonged. Her secretary Marjorie Pink was initiated into the travelling Lodge Mercury No. 11 in 1929 and Marjorie's sister Hilda into Lodge Harmony No. 4 in 1926. It is most likely that Lilian belonged to Lodge Harmony No. 4, as this Lodge contained many members who had met through war work. Bro. Hilda Pink was the Section Organiser for the Borstal Institution in the Bureau of Service from 1929 to 1931.⁴³⁷

Lilian Barker (1874-1955) was a remarkable woman who dedicated her life to the training and rehabilitation of the underprivileged.⁴³⁸ Work with classes of delinquent girls shaped her methods of instruction, making the boring interesting by the practical application of a subject, such as mathematics through measuring or shopping, and occupying the girls' time with schemes having a relevant and

⁴³⁷ *Slingsby Register; The Gavel*, vol. 1, no. 4 (April 1930), p. 76. Not only did Florence Leach and all the QMAAC officers transfer to this Lodge, but members also included Lucy O'Hea (Lady Markham), Florence Leveridge (WVR and Land Army), Doris Grace Jones, Elizabeth Bellars and Dorothy Taylor (WAAC): *The Gavel*, vol. 44, No. 158 (November 1977), p. 32-33.

⁴³⁸ The biographical information on Lilian Barker is taken from the account of her life by her niece, Elizabeth Gore: *The Better Fight: the Story of Dame Lilian Barker* (London, 1965).

satisfying result, such as making their own dresses and shoes.⁴³⁹ These same methods she was to use to good effect throughout her career.

As early as 1909 we find, in taking her class of girls for a month's stay in the country, when it was noted that 'Lily had a great capacity for involving friends and acquaintances in projects she had taken up, and on this occasion a wealthy acquaintance had offered her country mansion to Lily for the month of August'.⁴⁴⁰ She became lifelong friends with influential figures such as Queen Mary, Lady Astor, Lady Amptill, Home Secretary Arthur Henderson and M.P. Will Crookes – but she also used them, shamelessly, for whatever they could do for 'her girls'. During the war, the success of nursing and cookery classes held at Bedford College led to Lily being asked by Lady Londonderry to organise the cookery section of the newly-formed Women's Legion, in which Florence Burleigh Leach was also involved.⁴⁴¹

In 1916 Lily was appointed (the first) Lady Superintendent of Woolwich Arsenal, where she was responsible for the recruitment and welfare of over 20,000 girls and women. Lily was awarded the C.B.E. in 1917 but her work was recognised also by visits of the royal family to the Arsenal and Lily became lifelong friends with Queen Mary. After the War, from 1920 to 1923, Lily was mainly involved with the Central Committee for Women's Training and Employment, the aim of which was 'to provide training for women whose opportunities for employment or training had been interrupted by the war'. The Chair was Lady Crewe, and the committee

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 24, 43, 44.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.45.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.63.

consisted of Violet Markham, Gertrude Tuckwell, Marion Phillips, Mrs. Tennant, Lady Asquith, Mrs Austen Chamberlain, Lady Cynthia Colville and Margaret Bondfield. Mary Macarthur was the Secretary and Lilian Barker was the Executive Officer. Again, Lilian was in a situation where she was working on equal terms with influential and titled people, with whom she was also comfortable socially at gatherings such as Lady Astor's salons.⁴⁴²

In 1923 Lilian Barker was asked to be Governor of the Girls' Borstal at Aylesbury. Something not known to or not mentioned by Elizabeth Gore in her biography, and which gives a further indication of the reasons for the appointment, is an article written in 1917 by Anne Bates, an American visitor here to review English penal institutions. Bates was an Honorary Special Agent of the National Committee on Prisons, New York City. An appendix to her report consists of a detailed scheme proposed by Lilian Barker for a Reformatory for Girls and Young Women. This is dated 1916 and Barker was then still at the Woolwich Arsenal.⁴⁴³

Barker's work at Aylesbury between 1923 and 1935 totally transformed the function of the borstal, making its regime curative not punitive. Up to then, the borstal had been run much the same as a prison, with poor results. At Aylesbury Lily followed her usual pattern. She not only humanised the regime, providing classes on anything and everything to fill the time usefully and with interest, but really liked the girls and wanted to help them. They made their own, more

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89; 95; 106.

⁴⁴³ Anne Bates, 'Some Aspects of English Penal Institutions', *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology*, vol. 8, no. 3 (Sept. 1917), pp. 397-405.

attractive clothing, gardens were created and stocked with plants, cells were re-decorated and furnished comfortably, meals were improved and association time increased, with organised games.⁴⁴⁴

Her influential friends were roped in to provide funds for projects such as a swimming pool and, just as important, to visit as individual mentors for the girls.

One of the girls reported:

Then one day she said to me, 'Now I'm going to send in a very special friend of mine to see you, I think you'll like her. She'll be your own visitor for the rest of the time you're here, and your friend for always if you want her to be'. This visitor was a real 'lady', refined and cultured, rather like my own mother had been ...⁴⁴⁵

Lilian Barker placed great importance on after-care arrangements for the girls and set up the Aylesbury After-Care Association. She did not hesitate to make use of influential acquaintances to place her girls in Selfridges, J. Lyons, or with the Rowntree family in York, and some went as sales girls, some as Nippies, some to work in the chocolate factories. Lily still had her contacts with the Temperance Hospital, and some girls went there to train as nurses, or to work as wardmaids.⁴⁴⁶

There was no state structure for after-care arrangements and, as the following report in *The Gavel* illustrates, Barker also used her contacts in the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry for this purpose:

⁴⁴⁴ Harold Scott, 'Barker, Dame Lilian Charlotte (1874-1955)', rev. D. Thom, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30590>, accessed 22/8/2007]

⁴⁴⁵ E. Gore, *The Better Fight*, p. 155.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 191-2.

A number of Brethren have expressed their willingness to assist with the supervision of a girl from the Institution under the After Care system, and this has been arranged direct by the Authorities at the Borstal Institution who, up to now, have used five of our helpers for this purpose.⁴⁴⁷

We have here an example of an area where private and voluntary work supplemented the state provision for young offenders. Elizabeth Macadam herself, in her seminal *The New Philanthropy* of 1934, cites after-care as one of the main instances of private-public co-operation.⁴⁴⁸

From the initial survey of members in July 1928 onwards, varied activities in support of the Borstal were the most high-profile events:

The Section relating to H. M. Borstal Institution has been most successful. The M. W. The Grand Master and several Members of the Committee visited the Handicraft Exhibition held at the Institution in December last (1928). Three Lectures have been given, and four others have offered help in this direction. Six Concerts have been held, and three or four more Members have consented to give others ... Also, through Masonic introduction, Cigarettes, Easter Eggs, Flowers for the Chapel, Books for their Library, Coloured Posters, etc., have been sent to the Institution. An Exhibition of the Handicrafts done at the Institution will be arranged at 27, Pembridge Gardens, on November

⁴⁴⁷ *The Gavel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1929), p. 9.

⁴⁴⁸ E. Macadam, *The New Philanthropy*, p. 28.

18th and 19th, to give an opportunity to those Brethren who expressed their willingness to help to purchase Christmas gifts.⁴⁴⁹

The Honorary Secretaries encouraged the members – ‘Assistance in this work is so well worth doing, and so encouraging to those who devote their time to building good citizens from material so mishandled from the start’.⁴⁵⁰

In 1930, a sale of handicraft work was held at HFAM headquarters, 27 Pembridge Gardens. The Director acknowledged the help given:

Apart from the financial help which this day’s sale gives to us, it also provides an entirely new channel for making our work known and gaining fresh friends. The greatest help of all, however, is the feeling of understanding and sympathy which literally radiates from some of my fellow Brethren, and which gives me courage and further impetus to carry on here.⁴⁵¹

Requests were made through the Bureau of Service announcements in *The Gavel* for:

Brethren who can offer entertainment either by a Talk or Lecture to the Girls or a Concert. Though the distance is a little far for some of us, those who have visited the Institution all agree that it is a most

⁴⁴⁹ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct. 1929), pp. 9-10.

⁴⁵⁰ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Dec. 1929), p. 29.

⁴⁵¹ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (Feb. 1931), p. 183.

interesting experience and the enthusiastic reception that is given makes the journey well worth while.⁴⁵²

How much of Lilian Barker's allegiance to the Order was due to Freemasonry itself and how much she saw the HFAM as yet another opportunity for gaining support and funding from influential sources is open to question. Nevertheless, the Borstal Institution was one of the main projects undertaken by the Bureau of Service and one of the most strongly supported. Lilian left the Borstal in 1935 to become the first woman assistant commissioner of prisons, where she introduced a similar humanitarian regime. She was made a D.B.E. in 1944.⁴⁵³

Queen Mary's Needlework Guild

Out of the 132 responses to the Bureau's survey in 1928, eighty Brethren expressed interest in helping Queen Mary's Needlework Guild by making clothes. The London Guild was established by Lady Wolverton in 1882 after having been asked to provide garments for a London orphanage. The Duchess of Teck became patron, and on her death, the Duchess of York, later Queen Mary, took over. She formed her own group and in 1914 the charity was renamed Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, with a base at Friary Court, St. James' Palace. Its function was to act as a central collecting depot for items of clothing made by groups of ladies all over the

⁴⁵² *The Gavel*, vol. 2, no. 9 (April 1931), p. 211.

⁴⁵³ Harold Scott, 'Barker, Dame Lilian Charlotte', [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30590>, accessed 22/8/2007].

country. It then began to supply troops with clothing during the First World War, with branches established throughout the Empire.⁴⁵⁴

In October 1929 an exhibition of garments was held at 27 Pembridge Gardens:

For the benefit of those who were unable to attend we want to say what a good show was made. 252 articles were exhibited and about £6 in cash will be sent. The Hon. Miss Bruce, the representative of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, attended the opening and was most encouraging.⁴⁵⁵

The Section Organiser for the Guild in the Bureau of Service was Dorothea Irving. Formerly known as the actress Dorothea Baird, she was the wife of actor H.B. Irving and daughter-in-law of Sir Henry Irving (also a Mason). She was best known for creating the role of Trilby. She retired from the stage in 1913 and after the death of her husband in 1919 devoted herself to charitable causes until her death in 1933. Her obituary in *The Gavel* described her gifts: 'Her natural and technical qualifications carried her rapidly upwards in the Craft; the beauty of her voice, the restrained but powerful and intensive diction, the carriage and gesture all combined to make her rendering of our wonderful ritual a delight'.⁴⁵⁶ Irving organised the working of the volunteers in the section and the collection and display of garments – '... under her enthusiasm and inspiration the members produced 1,000 garments in a year'.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct. 1929), p. 10; qmcg.org.uk. (accessed 22/8/2007).

⁴⁵⁵ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Dec. 1929), p. 29.

⁴⁵⁶ *The Gavel*, Vol. 5, No. 22 (October 1933), p. 579.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Another exhibition was held in October 1930, when *The Gavel* reported:

The Hon. Jean Bruce has written 'Please accept my most grateful thanks. How hard you must all have worked to have nearly doubled your last year's effort! I will see to it that Her Majesty realises what splendid work the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry has done on behalf of the Guild, and I shall take pleasure in showing the Queen your contributions'.

The work sent in included eight outfits for boys and girls from fourteen to sixteen years of age which were greatly admired and there were many warm shirts and undergarments for men and boys. We were grateful to receive a large consignment of these from our Brethren in Sunderland and Newcastle. We should again like to thank one of the Brethren for her kindness in having so many beautiful garments made up for the Brethren by her scholars.⁴⁵⁸

The following year the Grand Master agreed to become the Vice-President of the Needlework Section, and it was hoped that this would encourage more helpers to join, as proved to be the case. Specific instructions about the type of clothes needed were given:

Her Majesty was so delighted with the outfits for boys and girls (from 14 to 16 years) sent up last year that we hope that many more Lodges will form groups and collect them. We would also like to mention generally

⁴⁵⁸ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (Dec. 1930), p. 155.

that warm clothing is needed most, as it is distributed in the winter and there is very little demand for thin cotton or silk garments. Also we cannot have too many men's strong wincey shirts. At the Central Exhibition last year there were very few shirts and our large contribution was much appreciated.⁴⁵⁹

Hospitality

Twenty six members of the Bureau of Service offered hospitality to students from overseas and the Dominions, and many students were entertained through Lady Frances Ryder's Organisation at South Africa House – the Dominion Services' and Students' Hospitality Scheme.

Lady Frances Ryder was the daughter of the 5th Earl of Harrowby. Her hospitality scheme followed in the steps of such organisations as the Victoria League. This was an independent, non-political organisation formed at the beginning of the twentieth century in the wake of the South African War to promote 'a closer union between the different parts of what was then the British Empire by the interchange of information and hospitality and by co-operation in any practical scheme tending to foster friendly understanding and good fellowship within the Empire'. Founded by women, the driving forces were Violet Markham, Edith Lyttelton and Violet Cecil. The initial meeting was hosted by Alice, the sister of Prime Minister Arthur Balfour, and the first Committee was all-female and headed by Margaret, Countess of Jersey. It has been described, in a thoughtful article by Eliza Riedi, as 'the only

⁴⁵⁹ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (April 1931), p. 211; Vol. 2, No. 10 (June 1931), p. 239.

predominantly female imperial propaganda society'. During World War One the focus of the Victoria League turned to hospitality for servicemen and from 1927 the League had been involved with student hospitality and welfare.⁴⁶⁰

It was hoped to expand the Bureau's Hospitality Section to include the Order's own members at home:

Our Hospitality Section has occasionally Concert Tickets for disposal and would be glad if Masters of Lodges would get in touch with us with a view to suggesting methods of disposal of them.

Though we are in touch with Lady Frances Ryder's Association for hospitality to students and strangers in this Country, we feel we exist for the benefit of our own members as well, and will welcome any suggestions as to where we might be of use by way of personal introductions, and to stimulate friendly interest. In this connection we may add, we should appreciate hearing from Brethren who can offer entertainment in any way in this work.⁴⁶¹

The Hospitality Section started to struggle quite early on, by 1930:

Our Hospitality Section, which we are anxious to develop for the benefit of our own Members of the Order, has not been very active since July.

We hope very much that Masters of Lodges will get in touch with the

⁴⁶⁰ E. Riedi, 'Women, Gender and the Promotion of Empire: the Victoria League, 1901-1914', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, (2002), p. 572; *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct 1929), p. 9; <http://www.victorialeague.co.uk> (accessed 2/4/2009).

⁴⁶¹ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (June 1930), p. 104.

Section Organiser early in October so that we can start early in the Winter Season.

There are no further reports from this Section after 1930.⁴⁶²

Poppy Day

Although it is not mentioned as one of the main sections of the work of the Bureau of Service, the Report in December 1930 briefly mentions that: 'We have again provided helpers for clerical work in connection with Earl Haig's Fund for Poppy Day...'⁴⁶³

Dorothy, Countess Haig, joined the HFAM through Lodge Mercury No. 11 in 1928, resigning in 1937.⁴⁶⁴ Her husband, Field Marshal Douglas Haig, 1st Earl Haig, was one of the more controversial commanders of British troops in France during the First World War, where enormous casualties were sustained for little tactical advance. Haig was himself a Freemason under UGLE, having been initiated while he was a student at Oxford. After the war he devoted his life to the welfare of ex-servicemen, setting up the Haig Fund which gave financial assistance to ex-soldiers and the Royal British Legion. The main source of funding for these charities was (and is) sales of poppies during the annual Poppy Appeal.

The Royal British Legion started a Poppy Factory in Surrey employing men disabled by war and which made the poppies for England, Ireland and Wales. In 1926

⁴⁶² *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (Oct. 1930), p. 129.

⁴⁶³ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (Dec. 1930), p. 156.

⁴⁶⁴ *Slingsby Register*.

Dorothy Haig founded Lady Haig's Poppy Factory in Edinburgh, with disabled ex-servicemen, to make poppies and wreaths for the Earl Haig Fund in Scotland. The factory started in 1926 and was at its largest in 1934 when it employed 117 men, with a waiting list of 338. It was more of a self-help movement than a charity, with the employees being paid by results. Lady Haig took a great personal interest in the factory and the appeal, even to the extent of walking along Princes Street, Edinburgh, with a sandwich board advertising a sale of work. She resigned from the HFAM in 1937 and died in 1939.⁴⁶⁵

Hospital Letters

The Hospital Letters Section of the Bureau of Service seems to have a relatively short life, as it is last mentioned in 1931.⁴⁶⁶ A Hospital or Convalescent Home Letter was a letter held by a subscriber to one of the voluntary hospitals or homes, allowing admission to it for treatment by the bearer, in return for their donation. Such letters were frequently transferred to others to allow them treatment in one of the voluntary hospitals for which they would not otherwise have been eligible.

Brian Abel-Smith's mammoth survey *The Hospitals 1800-1948* (1964) has been followed and updated more recently by the work of Stephen Cherry on voluntary hospital funding and Martin Gorsky and John Mohan on voluntary hospitals and the deficiencies of the system in the inter-war period.⁴⁶⁷ From the mid-nineteenth

⁴⁶⁵ Details from: www.ladyhaigpoppyfactory.org.uk/history (accessed 4/10/2007).

⁴⁶⁶ *The Gavel*, Vol. 3, No. 11, (Oct. 1931), p. 265.

⁴⁶⁷ Brian Abel-Smith, *The Hospitals 1800-1914: a Study in Social Administration in England and Wales*, (London 1964); Steven Cherry, 'Beyond National Health Insurance. The Voluntary Hospitals and Hospital Contributory Schemes: A Regional Study', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 5, No. 3

century, hospitals were divided into voluntary institutions and those administered by the Poor Law authorities. Voluntary hospitals, taken to mean self-governing institutions funded principally by philanthropy and in which treatment was provided free, were usually built with money raised by subscription or beneficence. Admission was by a letter of recommendation or subscription. This practice later ceased and financial status was ascertained by the doctor or Almoner during the admission process. Those who could afford to pay something toward their treatment did so. In Britain these hospitals were also centres of teaching and research, with medical schools allied to large general hospitals such as St. Bartholomew's, St. Thomas's and Guy's.⁴⁶⁸

The voluntary hospitals were mainly for the treatment of the short-stay patient suffering acute illness. Between 1921 and 1938 there was great expansion in the voluntary sector, and an increase in beds from 56,000 to 87,000. By the 1930s they provided about one in three of the beds available nationally. However, a large number of prospective patients were excluded from treatment within them, including babies and children under six, 'Vagabonds, Tramps, Incurable patients, Pregnant Women, Mentally sick (classified as Insane), Patients with Infectious Diseases, and those with Chronic Conditions'.⁴⁶⁹

(1992), pp. 455-482; Steven Cherry, 'Before the National Health Service: Financing the Voluntary Hospitals, 1900-1939', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1997), pp. 305-326; Martin Gorsky and John Mohan, 'London's Voluntary Hospitals in the Interwar Period: Growth, Transformation, or Crisis?', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (June 2001), pp. 247-275; Martin Gorsky, 'Hospital Governance and Community Involvement in Britain: Evidence from Before the National Health Service', *History and Policy*, www.historyandpolicy.org/archive (Feb. 2006), (accessed 6/10/2007).

⁴⁶⁸ Martin Gorsky and John Mohan, 'London's Voluntary Hospitals', p. 248.

⁴⁶⁹ Steven Cherry, 'The Hospitals and Population Growth Part 2', *Population Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 92 (1980), p. 251.

Poor Law hospitals were for the treatment of the poor and destitute, irrespective of need. Public hospital administration was later restructured when the Local Government Act of 1929 terminated the Poor Law and brought its institutions under the control of the councils, which were also permitted to open municipal general hospitals to care for non-pauperized acute and maternity patients.⁴⁷⁰

The funding of voluntary hospitals was one of the most popular manifestations of philanthropy, combining the cachet of governance with an active social scene.

Giving was pledged in the form of an annual subscription, lists of subscribers being published, often in the institution's annual report.⁴⁷¹ Other sources included donations and legacies: voluntary gifts were the largest single item in funding until 1934, when they were overtaken by patient income, but annual pledged subscriptions, the original lynchpin of voluntary hospital funding, had become marginal.⁴⁷²

In a period when the financial and political power of the old landed aristocracy had severely declined, a position on a hospital board could represent one way for a title to perform a meaningful – and prestigious – role in society. The nobility and the wealthy played their part also in the organisation and the support of functions in aid of the voluntary hospital, notably charity balls which formed a central part of the social scene, particularly in London.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ M. Gorsky and J. Mohan, 'London's Voluntary Hospitals', p. 248.

⁴⁷¹ Geoffrey Rivett, 'The Development of the London Hospital System, 1823 – 1982', *Voluntary Hospitals*, http://www.nhshistory.net/voluntary_hospitals.htm (accessed 8/9/2010).

⁴⁷² M. Gorsky and J. Mohan, 'London's Voluntary Hospitals', pp. 258-9.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 260-261.

In the context of the Bureau of Service, Hospital and Convalescent Home Letters, donated to the Bureau by a subscriber to the institution, were a way of accessing treatment in a voluntary hospital or home. During this period the provision of pay beds increased dramatically but these were means-tested and therefore undesirable or unattainable by many. In addition, the growth of contributory schemes such as the Hospital Savings Association changed the nature of voluntary hospital funding. Gathered mainly through payroll deduction, and to a lesser extent through household collection, a rate of between 1d. and 4d. per week entitled the contributors to free treatment. Schemes typically offered additional benefits such as access to convalescent homes, nursing services and ambulance fleets.⁴⁷⁴

However, many schemes set income limits to exclude the middle class and so would have been largely irrelevant to the HFAM, from which class by then it largely derived its membership. The Hospital Letters scheme therefore helped the very real need of those in the 'poverty trap' of the time. As Cherry notes 'Another feature of the interwar years was the inadequacy of hospital provision for the middle classes, dissatisfied with private nursing homes, unable to pay full fees, or not considered to be suitable members for contributory schemes or charitable cases'.⁴⁷⁵

Another factor to be taken into consideration is the lack of provision for women's health needs at this time. Maternal mortality rates increased between 1923 and 1933; few women had the benefit of health insurance; and, as Pugh states in his assessment of 'new' and 'welfare' feminism: 'In practice many women received no

⁴⁷⁴ M. Gorsky, 'Hospital Governance'.

⁴⁷⁵ S. Cherry, 'Before the NHS', p. 319, and Note 88.

professional medical treatment even for gynaecological problems'.⁴⁷⁶ The Women's Health Committee Enquiry set up in 1933 found that only 31% of women sampled admitted to good health, with another 31% in a poor condition at the other end of the scale. The Hospital Letters Section of the Bureau of Service is an example of women helping each other in a very real area of need.

The following paragraph relating to one of the contributory schemes was included in the December 1930 report of the Bureau of Service – an exception to the rule: '*British Provident Association, for Hospital and Additional Services*. It has been suggested that there may be Brethren to whom information regarding the British Provident Association for Hospital and Additional Services would be of interest. The chief point is that there is no income limit for subscribers to the Association.'⁴⁷⁷

Letters for various institutions are either specifically requested in the Section reports in *The Gavel*, or were donated. These include hospitals for specific areas of disease, such as the London Chest Hospital; organisations supplying appliances such as crutches (Royal Surgical Aid Society); and convalescent homes, such as St. Mary's Convalescent Home for Children, Broadstairs.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Great Britain 1914-1959* (Basingstoke and London, 1992), p. 251.

⁴⁷⁷ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (Dec. 1930), p. 155.

⁴⁷⁸ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 3, (Feb. 1930), p. 54; Vol. 1, No. 5, (June 1930), p. 104; Vol. 2, No. 6, (Oct. 1930), p. 128; Vol. 2, No. 10, (June 1931), p. 238.

Girl Guide Examining

In the response to the Bureau's initial questionnaire, the surprisingly high number of 14 out of 132 replies (11%) wanted the Order to support Girl Guide examining. This suggests that the importance attached by members to this form of citizen training was far greater than the brief reference to it as a branch of the Bureau of Service (and the lack of follow-up reports) indicates. It is considered here because the emphasis on training for citizenship was in tune with the times – Caitriona Beaumont and Samantha Clements consider that in the interwar years citizenship was a more palatable term to many women than feminism; and also that by differentiating between feminism and citizen rights training organisations were able to appeal to a much broader spectrum of women.⁴⁷⁹ The work of the Bureau of Service began in the same year that all women finally received the vote, and active citizenship was one way of acknowledging the responsibility of the franchise.

Tammy Proctor has analysed the Guide movement in interwar Britain and relates it to the 'new feminism' movement. The confusion over gender roles following the war prompted a return by some feminists to the concept of both separate spheres and to the principle of complementarity.⁴⁸⁰ After WW1 the HFAM had indeed returned to their own separate sphere, as after 1920 men were no longer admitted as Candidates, but within the framework of their activities they, like the Guides,

⁴⁷⁹ Samantha Clements, 'Feminism, citizenship and social activity: The role and importance of local women's organisations, Nottingham 1918-1969'. Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, January 2008; Caitriona Beaumont, 'Citizens not Feminists: the Boundary Negotiated between Citizenship and Feminism by Mainstream Women's Organisations in England, 1928-39', *Women's History Review*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2000), p. 415.

⁴⁸⁰ Proctor, Tammy M., 'On My Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain', *Trans. American Philosophical Soc.*, N.S. Vol. 92, No. 2 (2002), pp. 1-180.

provided a space for women and girls to associate safely and to practise independence without prejudicing their family lives. Both organisations placed great emphasis on the service ethic and one's responsibility to society – the citizenship training of the Guides emphasised the traditional gendered concerns of domestic duties and mothering skills and addressed the welfare of the disadvantaged and of women and children, causes which the Bureau of Service also supported in tune with the 'new feminism' of the time.

The Guides promoted badge work as a way of making girls useful citizens. Badges necessary to rise in the movement included Cook, Needlewoman, Child Nurse and Sick Nurse, all seen as good home skills. The Domestic Service badge taught Guides usefulness in their own and others' homes and to some extent tried to answer the problem of the decline in the number of women who were willing to undertake domestic work.⁴⁸¹

Set up in 1910, the Guide movement was restructured following the First World War on the hierarchical model of the Scouts Association and under the direction of Baden-Powell's young wife Olave.⁴⁸² The HFAM and the Guides had common elements – they were militaristic in their structure, with ranks and a hierarchy, uniforms and discipline. The HFAM had Lodges and the Guides had Companies. Both were under the control of a senior level of authority; the ranks, which if they did not mirror each other, still both possessed grades of responsibility and status which had to be acknowledged; with uniforms, the evening dress and white gown

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 108.

of the lady Mason were just as distinctive as the clothing of the Guide and both had their individual badges of rank. Proctor queries whether the Guides' uniform was in fact a leveller at all as the cost of different versions of uniform items reinforced rather than eradicated class distinctions⁴⁸³ – in the same way, with Freemasons, their apron and collar denoting rank are the dominant and most obvious part of the 'uniform' and whilst there is a saying 'we are all the same, all collars are blue', the shade of blue denoting seniority is of paramount importance to the wearer and the 'uniform' is divisive rather than cohesive. The proficiency badges on a Guide's sleeve are paralleled by the jewels of rank adorning the chest of the Freemason. A further striking similarity between the two organisations was the use of secret signs and rituals as a special insider language only for the initiated.⁴⁸⁴ Whilst with the Guides this was intended as a form of fun, although a deliberately unifying strategy, to a Freemason signs and secrets are fundamental to their beliefs and activities. There is a clear parallel between the Guide promise (I promise on my honour to ...) and the Obligations taken by a Candidate in each of the three degrees of Craft Freemasonry.

The Deptford Fund

The Deptford Fund was another of the causes supported by the Bureau of Service. The title was an umbrella term for many of the charitable activities which took place in that area of south-east London. The fund based its fight against poverty and its effects around the creation of clubs: boys, girls, grandmothers, grandfathers

⁴⁸³ Tammy M. Proctor, '(Uni)forming Youth: Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in Britain, 1908-39', *History Workshop Journal*, No. 45 (Spring, 1998), p. 102.

⁴⁸⁴ Tammy M. Proctor, 'On My Honour', pp. 127-8.

and, later, unemployed men's clubs. Services developed from children's dinners to poor man's lawyers, boot and shoe making workshops, glee clubs, concerts, Bible classes and Girl Guides and sea cadets.

It was launched in 1894 to counteract 'the appalling religious, moral and social conditions that prevailed in Deptford'.⁴⁸⁵ Deptford, just upstream of Greenwich on the Thames, was the site of Henry VIII's shipyards and the training ground of Peter the Great. Most of the later iniquity associated with the area stemmed from the presence of the Foreign Cattle Market, reception point for cattle and carcasses coming in by ship from Argentina and the 'Gut Girls', whose job was to gut the carcasses, and who were free spirits, working with bare arms and necks, in the company of men.⁴⁸⁶

In *The Gavel* of April 1930 the Joint Honorary Secretaries of the Bureau of Service announced:

Most of the brethren will remember an appeal made in one of the Lodges in November last for help with clerical work for the Deptford Children's Hospital, and they have now asked us for help in two other directions. This is the sort of thing that makes our Bureau grow. We received a most grateful letter of thanks from the Chairman of the Deptford Fund-Lt.-Col. Wm. Wayland, J.P., who expressed his appreciation of the 'help which the Women Masons of the Honourable

⁴⁸⁵ John Turner, *The Albany: A Deptford Ark* (2003), p. 7:

<http://www.artofregeneration.org/deptfordstories/graphics/The%20Deptford%20Ark.pdf> (accessed 25/9/2007)

⁴⁸⁶ John Turner, *The Albany*, p. 8.

Fraternity of Ancient Masons' had given him and his Committee. Also some of our Brethren are helping in a concert for the same Association.⁴⁸⁷

Right from the beginning the Deptford Fund was a vehicle for upper and middle-class charity to the poor. As with the Settlements, the poor were to be given what the wealthy thought they needed. Viscount Templeton 'and other interested individuals formulated a fund outside Deptford for the relief of those inside'.⁴⁸⁸ The fund had offices in Buckingham Palace Road and Viscount Templeton was elected chairman. A permanent building was required in Deptford and so in 1899 the Albany Institute was opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales and its patron was the Duchess of Albany, Queen Victoria's daughter-in-law. Later Princess Alice, daughter of Queen Victoria, took over as President.

The aim [of the Deptford Fund] was the raising and improving of the poorer part of Deptford, religiously, intellectually, morally and socially. The underlying assumption was that the urban poor had degenerated morally because they had been cut off from their moral betters by poverty. Regardless of what the clubs actually offered, merely by being in the presence or within the warmth of the bounty of the aristocratic and well-to-do personages, who were patrons and volunteer helpers, their chins were lifted up above the mire. The aim was so unquestionably on the side of the angels that self-determination was

⁴⁸⁷ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 4, (April 1930), p. 77.

⁴⁸⁸ John Turner, *The Albany*, p. 7

out of the question. The boys and girls got what was good for them and never mind what they might want.⁴⁸⁹

The Bureau of Service Section report in *The Gavel* of June 1930 gives further details, in its request for specific assistance:

Black stockings were asked for the poor Girl Guides belonging to the Albany Institute, Deptford, and grateful letters of thanks have been received from the Captain of the Guide Company, and the Secretary to the Institute.

The Albany Institute is very much in need of helpers and the Secretary informs us that the following assistance would be of enormous benefit to them *i.e.*

1. A volunteer to visit absent Club Members either in their home or in hospital. A periodical list of the Members to be visited would be supplied.
2. An infant School Mistress runs a Babies' Band for Children from the age of 3 to 7 who learn to sing and play simple instruments. A helper is required who would play the piano, keep the register and look up absentees.
3. The Grandfathers' Club which consists of men from 60 to 90 years of age meet on Mondays and Thursdays from 1-30 to 4-30. They meet to talk, play cards, dominoes and billiards, but want a Helper to organise.

⁴⁸⁹ John Turner, *The Albany*, p. 10.

4. The Girls' Club:- Juniors 8 to 14 years, Senior 14 to 20 years. About 100 in each Club, meet on Tuesday and Thursday from 5-30 to 9-30 p.m. and although there is a permanent Leader, she would be glad of an assistant.

The Albany Institute is in a very poor district and the Secretary had been so very grateful for the little help that we have already given, that we are prompted to ask our Brethren for yet more assistance.

If the work enumerated appeals to any Brother, we will gladly put her in touch with the Institute.⁴⁹⁰

Parties, such as those at Christmas, and outings were regular club activities.

Correspondence relating to the Grandfathers' Club includes arrangements for one such party, at which the local Rotary Club presented a Concert Party. Ninety three grandfathers were expected and the food ordered included four turkeys, 7½ lbs. of ham, 106 ½-pints of beer and stout and 30 lbs. of potatoes. An outing to Southend involved hiring two 32-seater coaches, and arrangements for a High Tea at a restaurant on the Promenade – 'As this is the old men's one day at the sea, and we should like them to see as much of it as possible, I should like you to specify in your quote if you have a 1st or 2nd floor room overlooking the sea'.⁴⁹¹

Also under its aegis was the Babies' Hospital (referred to above as the Deptford Childrens' Hospital), which was established in 1913 to provide care for sick babies

⁴⁹⁰ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (June 1930), p. 105-6.

⁴⁹¹ Deptford Fund archive, C/1 (A71/31)/265: Letter of 6/1/1937, Secretary to Mr Alcock (Sec., Rotary Club); standard letter of 5/7/1937, Secretary to various restaurants at Southend.

who were not eligible for treatment elsewhere – the voluntary hospitals of the time would not admit children under the age of six. The Babies' Hospital was originally located at 34-36 Albury Street in Deptford. However, due to the need for more space, plus the unfortunate collapse of the roof, the hospital moved to 25 Breakspears Road, Brockley in 1933 and later to Leicester in 1940.⁴⁹² Work with children was particularly attractive to members of the Bureau of Service: 'Work with Children or for any Children's cause appeals particularly to us as a body of women, and the Committee is hoping, in the near future, to develop a Section of work on these lines.'⁴⁹³

The Deptford Fund expressed their thanks to the HFAM both formally and informally. The Annual Report for 1930 states: '...special thanks are due to individual friends besides members of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry Guild of Service, QMAAC, the Old Comrades Association and Toc H.' This was acknowledged in *The Gavel*:

We acknowledge receipt of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Deptford Fund and Albany Institute. It is gratifying to find ourselves mentioned therein with an expression of thanks for what seemed to us a very limited amount of help, and are very happy to be associated even in a small measure with the good work done there. We

⁴⁹² www.thealbany.org.uk/history/ballsnbabies (accessed 25/9/2007); [http://www.olddeptfordhistory.com/A possible link to 34 Albury St & Lord Nelson?](http://www.olddeptfordhistory.com/A%20possible%20link%20to%2034%20Albury%20St%20&%20Lord%20Nelson%20?) (accessed 8/9/2010).

⁴⁹³ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 1930), p. 78.

shall be glad to hear from any who can spare time for work in this part of London.⁴⁹⁴

Further references to the HFAM were made in the Annual Reports from 1931 to 1939. That of 1933 is typical: 'We never ask in vain from the HFAM, the QMAAC, Old Comrades Association and Toc H – I hope they realise how much their help means to us.'⁴⁹⁵

There were also individual letters of thanks. In December 1930 Miss Bertrand, the Acting Secretary and general factotum of the Deptford Fund, wrote to Blanche Ireland, one of the Joint Honorary Secretaries of the Bureau of Service:

Will you please let all the Members of the Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry know how very much the help they have given us through this very busy time has been appreciated.

What I have been more grateful for is the kind and understanding way they have so willingly fitted into any bit of work, however dull and monotonous.

They have been a very, very real help, and everyone connected with this Institute would like them to know how much they have been valued.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁴ Deptford Fund C/1 (A71/31)/ 56a-110a: *Deptford Fund and Albany Institute Annual Report 1930*, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁵ Deptford Fund C/1 (A71/31)/ 56a-110a: *Deptford Fund and Albany Institute Annual Report 1933*, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁶ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (Feb. 1931), p. 183.

The Order's Own Charity and the Demise of the Bureau of Service

It was felt by some that the work of the Bureau should be extended and needed to be organised differently. In February 1931 a special meeting of members of the Order interested in the Bureau was called to consider the enlargement of its scope and to ascertain the views of the Brethren as to the setting up of a definite charitable scheme as an integral part of the Order.

Suggestions received from the Brethren fell into four sections, within which there were variations: 'Assisting our own Masons', 'Assisting Women generally' (not necessarily Masons), Children and 'Sundry Suggestions'. An overwhelming majority voted for a charity confined to members of the Order and also pledged their support by a system of subscription over a period of years. The conclusion of the meeting was that the Committee of the Bureau of Service should circulate details of the alternatives in the category 'Assisting Masons' (Retirement Home, monetary allowances, room in convalescent home, holiday home), together with the Samaritan Fund, and a decision should be taken based on the findings of a referendum.⁴⁹⁷ Of the 480 replies received, 68% were in favour of a Samaritan Fund as the first charity, with almost 57% for a retirement home as the second charity.⁴⁹⁸

The Gavel of February 1932 records that certain sections of the Bureau were to be discontinued because they promised no development. 'The times are difficult today

⁴⁹⁷ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (April 1931), p. 213-214.

⁴⁹⁸ *The Gavel*, Vol. 3, No. 11 (Oct. 1931), p. 269.

for launching a new venture though it was never expected that we should see any concrete result for a few years ...'.⁴⁹⁹ There was only one brief report from the Girl Guide Examining Section, in 1929, the last mention of the Hospitality Section was in 1930, and that of the Employment and Hospital Letters Sections in 1932.⁵⁰⁰

At Grand Lodge in January 1933 a resolution that had been passed by the Committee of the Bureau and accepted by the Board of General Purposes was confirmed: 'The Bureau of Service shall cease to function'. Certain sectional work was to be carried on.⁵⁰¹ At the tenth anniversary celebration of the consecration of the Grand Temple in January 1935 the Grand Master informed those present:

...it has been decided that at this meeting a special collection should be made with a view of its forming the nucleus of a Fund that we earnestly hope may grow in such a healthy and lusty manner that one day, in the not too-distant future, it may be possible for us to create an Order Charity.

At the conclusion of the Grand Master's address, collecting bags were passed round and the result of the collection was £24.5s. This was the inauguration of the Order Charity Fund, named in 1941 the Adelaide Litten Trust Fund, after the then Past Grand Master.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁹ *The Gavel*, Vol. 3, No. 13 (Feb. 1932), p. 335.

⁵⁰⁰ *Guides: The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (N.S.), p. 10; *Hospitality: The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (Dec. 1930), p. 154; *Hospital Letters: Vol. 4, No. 16* (Oct. 1932), p. 427; *Employment: ibid.*, p. 429.

⁵⁰¹ *The Gavel*, Vol. 3, No. 13 (Feb 1932), p. 335; vol. 4, no. 19 (April 1933), p. 499.

⁵⁰² *The Gavel*, Vol. 6, No. 29 (April 1935), p. 786; *The Gavel*, vol. 12, no. 60 (June 1941), p. 1624.

In fact, some of the work continued. Collections for Queen Mary's Needlework Guild carried on until the end of 1948, when Mary Gordon Muirhead Hope took over from Lucy Bertram O'Hea as Grand Master.⁵⁰³

Conclusions

The Bureau of Service was founded to manifest 'the express desire of so many to transmute the ideals of Freemasonry into some practical form of service'⁵⁰⁴ It did so by supporting a number of different causes, by far the majority of which were concerned with the welfare of women and children. For the first time it gave help to the members of the Order themselves as well as to outside causes. These were new tactics and showed the members of the Order taking part in a new type of feminism - partly because of a new leader with a new style, and partly because - as recent research is increasingly showing - much of the feminist activity between the two World Wars was on a small-scale and individual level.⁵⁰⁵

The sections of the Bureau's work reflected changes in society and in the nature of feminism. Some of the causes adopted by the Bureau followed the traditional pattern of maternalistic, upper class philanthropy. The making and collection of clothes for Queen Mary's Needlework Guild continued the practice of sewing and knitting items for the needy which had been the sphere of women for centuries. The work of the Deptford Fund was another example of aristocratic-led

⁵⁰³ *The Gavel*, Vol. 20, No. 84 (Jan. 1949), p. 9.

⁵⁰⁴ *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Oct. 1929), p. 10.

⁵⁰⁵ See p. 237 and Note 428.

philanthropy. By the 1930s the aristocracy, having lost their traditional power based on land values, had been forced to adopt a different role, one aspect of which was their patronage as high-profile figures of charitable causes. The Hospitality Section of the Bureau of Service had its antecedents in the imperialist aims of fostering links between different parts of the Empire, although as membership of the Order spread outside London the Bureau tried to refocus onto offering hospitality to their own members coming to the capital.

New and specifically feminist issues were addressed in the Hospital Letters and Employment Sections of the Bureau. In suggesting that access to hospital treatment was a cause worth supporting, the members of the HFAM recognised the inadequacy of medical care for women and the lack of provision for those who could not afford to pay for their treatment. The Employment Section, although rarely mentioned, was obviously chosen by the members to meet a need. At the time unemployed women were given little option but to go into domestic service, which was badly paid, of low status and uninsured. This section received some enquiries from both employers and employees, but had little success and soon closed.⁵⁰⁶

The work of the HFAM with H.M. Borstal for Girls at Aylesbury is an example of a voluntary society supplementing the work of a state agency – the ‘new

⁵⁰⁶First mention of Section Organiser - V.W.Bro. M.J. Walker, but no further details, *The Gavel*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 1930), p. 76; ‘This Section is not getting as much work as it would like just now ...’, *The Gavel*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (June 1930), p. 103; ‘we are sorry to report that we have not been successful in filling the vacancies’ *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (October 1930), p. 128; Section Organiser listed only, *The Gavel*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (December 1930), p. 154.

philanthropy' of the emerging welfare state. The women Freemasons not only visited, entertained, provided luxuries and raised funds by sales of work but took part in the after-care arrangements for the girls and women, for which there was no state provision.⁵⁰⁷

The concern for making good citizens, and the importance of the concept of citizenship training as the acceptable face of feminism, is also shown by the number of offers (10% of the total replies) to undertake Girl Guide badge examining. It was obviously strongly felt that the badges which could be achieved were of real value in training and teaching the rising generation of girls not only in domestic virtues but in the ways in which they could be of use to society as a whole.

The women who worked in the Bureau of Service were representative of many in the interwar period who would not have defined themselves as feminist – indeed the term came into opprobrium during the years following the War – and wished for no associational link with an overtly feminist organisation. Nevertheless, much of what they did directly improved the lives of women and children, and, equally importantly, for those without other affiliations their social work combined with their Masonic activities improved and empowered their own lives by giving them a space to be themselves away from their normal domestic environment. More detailed research needs to be done to see if women generally held multiple affiliations. However, as Clements has suggested, to belong to a women-only

⁵⁰⁷ After-care was one of the causes singled out by Macadam as a model of state/voluntary partnership: E. Macadam, *The New Philanthropy*, p. 28; *The Gavel*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Oct. 1929), p. 9.

organisation was empowerment itself, and women's organisations had a key role as social networks for those who did not have paid work outside the home – 'a mild assertion of women's right to public space'.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁸ Samantha Clements, 'Feminism, citizenship and social activity', pp. 45,148.

Chapter Six

The Honourable Fraternity of Antient Masonry and the Women's Movement: Reflections

This study has sought to place a women's Masonic organisation into the wider context of social and cultural developments of the period and to show how the efforts of the women belonging to this Order contributed to and furthered the feminist initiatives of the time. In this way, it has sought to bring the investigation of Freemasonry out of the esoteric by-ways to which it has frequently been consigned and into the mainstream historical research of the period. Freemasonry has even now seldom been considered in this context for the information it can contribute to the wider study of society, mainly because of its closed nature and the lack of documentary evidence available. Methodologically, the detailed analysis of membership records has rarely been undertaken for male Freemasonry and never before for the membership of a British Women's Order. The value of such an approach in recreating the networks with which an Order such as HFAM was connected provides an important methodological indication for future studies of this kind.

Feminism in this thesis is defined as any activity which contributes to the improvement of the situation of women and of women's lives. This is a very broad definition. Although it follows that of Banks': 'any groups that have tried to change

the position of women, or the ideas about women', it takes issue with her contention that this is 'a criticism of the position of women in relation to men and a desire to change that position' because although this is certainly true in the case of the feminism of women Freemasons in the suffrage era, in the feminist activity of the later Bureau of Service this position *vis à vis* men was not automatically acknowledged and accepted or even intellectually understood by the women themselves at the time.⁵⁰⁹ The desire to change the position of women in relation to men is one definition of equal rights feminism: but this thesis is mainly concerned with complementarity in feminism, and accepting the difference between women and men.

Changes in feminism

Each case study reflects the feminism of its time. The type of feminist work undertaken and the strategies used depended as much on the current political and economic conditions as on the circumstances of the organisation; it was not only to do with unions and national initiatives but with individual women and how they adapted. Each study is an example of a response to a specific need, and therefore illustrates the changing profile of feminism in the early twentieth century in Britain.

The support for suffrage mainly took the form of public activity – speaking and demonstrating – together with the provision of a spiritual underpinning to the cause. The Freemasons who spoke, worked and fought for the equal right of

⁵⁰⁹ Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: a study of feminism as a social movement* (Oxford, 1986), p. 3; Olive Banks, Banks, *Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists, vol. 1, 1800-1930* (Brighton, 1985), p. vii.

women to vote were bold in attitude, as evidenced for example by the actions of Annie Cobden Sanderson which led to her imprisonment, and the endorsement by the cleric Dr Cobb of militant acts on the part of the women. They thought and acted in big terms, looked through a wide lens – to improve the situation of the human race by the political power of the vote, to restore women’s rights as one half of humanity and during the War to serve the brotherhood of man by relief work.

The foundation and work of the Halsey Training College had in part the same broad outlook. It was concerned with the welfare of the nation by an investment in the education of children for the future and it was very much involved in post-war reconstruction. However it also had more specific feminist aims in the training and therefore the status of women teachers and social workers. With the training college project, Halsey continued to work in the manner to which she was accustomed. For many years aristocratic women had achieved their aims by informal co-operation with men rather than confrontation, thus overcoming the notion of separate spheres in favour of the complementarity of the sexes. This meant that as early as 1916, when the idea was first mooted, the objectives and methods used within the Order changed from equality feminism to the ‘new feminism’, which accepted women’s special sphere and concentrated their efforts instead on the improvement of their status and conditions – ‘what women need to fulfil the potentialities of their own natures’.⁵¹⁰ This pre-empted the changes in

⁵¹⁰ Eleanor Rathbone, *Milestones: Presidential Addresses at the Annual Council Meetings of the NUSEC* (Liverpool, 1929), p. 29, quoted in Harold L. Smith, ed., *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, (1990), p. 56.

feminism in the next two decades. Although the Halsey Training College was designed primarily to train women, male advisors, male teaching staff and some male students (ex-servicemen) were all important to the scheme.

In contrast, the feminist work of the Bureau of Service between 1928 and 1935 was concerned with a diverse group of very specific causes – the lens changed from wide-angle to close-up. The efforts of these ladies to improve women's lives formed only one aspect of the activities of an organisation which was not overtly feminist at all – a situation which is paralleled in the Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds – and which formed part of what could be described as the 'invisible' or underground feminism of the time. In common with the Woman's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds the Masonic forum of the HFAM, by then a single-sex organisation, empowered women by giving them a space away from the domesticity of home. In this case it combined the spiritual instruction and consolation of Freemasonry with social and charitable activities, a combination which is still the strength of the movement today.

The Bureau of Service illustrates some of the ways in which feminism survived between the wars. It was on a very individual, almost an underground level, in that it did not call itself feminist but at the same time furthered the causes of women and children. This challenges the assumption formerly held by some historians that feminism died out after the First World War.⁵¹¹ It also shows in the philanthropic causes that it supported how even a small organisation could participate in the

⁵¹¹ See p. 235.

developing alliance of the state and the private sectors in the provision of welfare. By its association with a state organisation – the Borstal – HFAM members were asserting themselves in the public sphere. Whether wife, mother, widow or spinster, this was without any threat to the social status which was the source of their identity. The input of the voluntary sector in the public/private relationship continued to be important because of the values and commitment which it demonstrated. On the other hand, several of the causes supported related back to the Victorian tradition of philanthropy with its caring, mothering and evangelical roles, such as the Deptford Fund, so that the Bureau was a mixture of the old and the new in the provision of relief.

The importance that members attributed to citizenship training is shown by the number of those suggesting Girl Guide examining as a worthwhile cause. The moderate and constitutionalist grouping of suffrage societies, the NUWSS, had in 1919 been renamed the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC). Although this union was subsequently divided by the ideological split which gave rise to equality feminism and new feminism, after 1928 when almost all women were able to vote, there was a definite need, recognised here, for girls and women to be taught their civic responsibilities and how they should use their vote to the best advantage of themselves and others.

On the demise of the Bureau of Service the relief and welfare efforts of the HFAM contracted inwards even further, in that they were principally designed to look after their own members rather than outside causes. Eventually these crystallized

into the formation of a Trust Fund, which was used to dispense grants to members in case of hardship, and in the establishment of two residential homes for retired members. Outside causes have occasionally been adopted, such as the Meals-on-Wheels Scheme during the Second World War and more recently a Centenary Appeal for cancer research.

Aristocratic philanthropy

The significance of aristocratic philanthropy is found here interwoven with feminism. It has been seen that there was a relatively high number of titled ladies in the HFAM, at least up to 1925. One of the attitudes ascribed to the aristocracy was a sense of duty in philanthropic activities and the provision of welfare; a duty of care in return for their privilege and power. For the affluent upper-middle-classes, charity was a way to fulfil their citizenship obligations. Charity is one of the three fundamental tenets of Freemasonry and its practice in HFAM was both formal and informal, large-scale and small.

The upper class friendship networks which originated with the political hostesses of the nineteenth century formed an essential base for many subsequent associations, such as the imperialist Victoria League. These women between them had political skills, local government and committee experience, and were used to working in friendly co-operation with men. It was the feminist, religious and political links facilitated by networks that advanced the suffrage cause. The same informal connections between these aristocratic women are evident in the recruitment of themselves and their friends into Freemasonry. Later, in the planning and

organisation of the Halsey Training College, their abilities and links helped to make the whole scheme viable. This was the aristocracy doing what they did best – adapt – and continuing their philanthropic work in a new forum, where their organisational skills and contacts could still be used effectively.

In the Bureau of Service, by contrast, we find that the absence of aristocratic direction was a disadvantage in its overall implementation and the scheme soon foundered for lack of a sense of purpose. Several of the causes supported clung to the aristocratic links of the past – the Deptford Fund, the Borstal, the Hospitality scheme and the Poppy Fund all had royal or noble patronage and perpetuated the upper class visiting tradition – whilst the tried and tested methods of fund-raising such as bazaars and concerts continued from nineteenth century philanthropy. However, these were relatively ineffectual without charismatic leadership.

Organisational Changes

The nature of the feminist activity also reveals a change in the underlying ethos of the organisation, showing that over time whilst it apparently became more democratic it in fact became more conservative. While a scheme such as the Halsey Training College was extremely innovative, it was rooted in an organisation which was, by definition, autocratic, hierarchical and hidebound by tradition, thereby creating a tension which could only be overcome by strength of personality. The charismatic Halsey controlled the Order for many years and by her wealth and aristocratic networking was able to dictate its policy, mastermind its schemes and give it a high profile.

Adelaide Litten did not have these qualities and when the type of leadership changed, so did the Order. The membership began to expand rapidly, both in terms of geographical distribution and social class, and by open advertisement rather than networking. Middle class members were encouraged by the feminist Grand Master to express themselves. This more democratic approach, which sought to involve the whole of the membership in decision-making, led to the introduction of different strategies in their feminist and charitable activities. Multiple causes were supported in the Bureau of Service, including interaction with state agencies, a concern particularly for healthcare and employment, and emphasis on citizenship. It is ironic that this approach, which probably went the closest in allowing individual women to express in practice the Masonic precepts of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, was in real terms the least successful in what it achieved. The change from a single project with a single leader and direction to a less disciplined if more democratic governance was a disaster.

Gender tensions

The gender issues which followed the First World War undoubtedly had a fundamental effect on the HFAM. It is impossible not to feel that the rejection of the petition for recognition made to the male fraternity in 1920 was influenced not only by their traditions but by a backlash of antipathy towards the women. This rejection influenced the development of the women's Order down to the present day, in that they felt that a low profile was essential to protect any possible application for recognition in the future.

However, this study also shows that a charismatic individual could transcend these gender issues – Marion Halsey herself was comfortable in dealing with the men’s Order, although she was in the invidious position of being not only the head of the women’s organisation but also of being closely related by marriage to a senior figure in UGLE. It was only when Adelaide Litten was in charge – an unmarried, working woman without the stability and assurance of an aristocratic background – that the gender antagonism crystallized and the HFAM finally rejected any male participation to become a single-sex organisation. This at least resolved the gender tensions, but, until comparatively recently, it had the effect on the women of isolation and introspection and was to the detriment of both sides.

The study has described hitherto unknown connections between the women’s movement and Freemasonry, as expressed in the work of the HFAM. In assessing the development of the feminist movement, in order to get a full picture it is necessary to look not only at the national societies and the polarised factions of equality and welfare feminism but also at the many small, non-feminist organisations which flourished at a local level between the wars. The HFAM is one of these and by an examination of its activities we can see how these small groups were able to contribute to improving the welfare of women and children. The cumulative effect of tiny initiatives was as important as national efforts. Citizenship is shown here to be a more palatable concept than feminism to many women at this time, one which the domesticated woman could endorse. Finally, the fact that

the women members of HFAM had chosen Freemasonry and its related affairs as their own leisure activity was in itself empowerment.

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