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PAPER

Fred & Charlie
A short double biography

Summary: Fred and Charlie are a conglomoration of personalities observed over the years. Here we offer a brief look at what their imagined backgrounds be like.

Fred is around 60 and has been a Freemason for more than twenty years. After taking twelve years to reach the Chair, his pride in good ceremonial and smart bearing (suggesting a sometime military connection), made him a perfect fit for the Lodge Director of Ceremonies. Modest Provincial active rank was soon to follow.

Over time, he became increasingly enthusiastic about the merits of Speculative Freemasonry and had been heard to say that *'in our secular Age if Masonry hadn't existed it would need to be invented!'*

This enthusiasm led to his early election as Preceptor of the Lodge of Instruction.

With his family having flown-the-nest, he found the time and inclination to encourage his Lodge's younger members and would regularly take one or two to visit nearby Lodges and use the journey home to explain and discuss the variations they had seen, thereby sowing the benefit of *visiting*.

Charlie is in his mid-thirties. As a young businessman, recently married with a new son. He was very much the modern man, wanting to share his time and energy with his partner, and so spare time for Charlie was a precious commodity. However, recognising the merits of some occasional all-male company on a civilised boys' night out, he was persuaded to join Freemasonry.

Disillusionment soon set in. The time spent *out of the Temple*, the arcane language of the ritual, the constant references to a Supreme Being, who hadn't exactly played an over-active role in Charlie's life so far, all sowed the first seeds of doubt.

Coming from an egalitarian shirt-sleeved business team, the rank, seniority, and regular salutations bestowed on some members was completely out of kilter with Charlie's modern life-style. The last straw was the remoteness of the Lodge's senior members, who never seemed able to remember his name.

Increasingly Charlie began to miss meetings and drift-away. Luckily, having been persuaded to attend a Lodge of Instruction, he became infected by Fred's enthusiasm and inspired by his knowledge. For Charlie, at long last, he began to understand what Speculative Freemasonry was really about, and wanted to be part of it.

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[**Author's Note.** Fred and Charlie are mere fictional creatures drawn from within my fevered brow. Their relationship, if any, to a known human being is horribly accidental and if inadvertent identification has been alleged then the parallels about monkeys randomly typing Shakespeare come easily to mind.

When trying to discuss many Masonic themes there is rarely a Stygian black or a pure Snow white – there is just a palette of shades of grey (considerably more than fifty, I might add!). In a monochrome one-person-me-write-you-read type of article discussion tends to be wordy and, frankly, often unconvincing. I decided many moons ago that to hold the attention of my Lodge of Instruction I needed to devise a dialogue format.

In Masonic brotherhood sharp opposites aren't appropriate so a complementary pair had to be envisaged. What better way than to make the protagonists two Masons with which my Lodge of instruction could identify – enter stage left a Past Master who doesn't know it all but knows where to find it and, enter stage right, an enthusiastic younger Mason who has an enquiring mind and a thirst for knowledge.

The choice of names – Fred and Charlie – came straight from an article written in another lifetime about the C13 builders of Salisbury Cathedral. **Michael Lee**]

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Recommended use of Papers

Papers offer a simple, direct means of advancement in a particular aspect of Masonic knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways:

- Read at home for private study
- Shared for pre-reading by members of a discussion group
- Read aloud in Lodge or Chapter, or in an LOI/COI/new members forum
    - Followed by 'any questions'
    - As a precursor to a discussion (in which case much more time is needed, possibly more than double that allocated to the paper itself)
    - Supported by audio-visual aids, if necessary

They can be delivered by a single person or split into bite-sized pieces and read by multiple presenters (in which case, the speaker(s) should have read and practiced the delivery of the paper beforehand).

If the paper is to be used to introduce a discussion, the presenter will need to have thought about the material, done a little research, and prepared some open questions to engage with the audience. Kipling's dictum can be of help in preparing open questions, which should begin with one of his 'serving men', as follows: '*I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are, What and Why and When and How and Where and Who*'. Rudyard Kipling

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation unless otherwise specified.

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Fred and Charlie character drawings courtesy of Eddie Wildman.

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