



**Internet Lodge 9659**  
**United Grand Lodge of England**  
**Province of East Lancashire**  
<http://internet.lodge.org.uk>

**Short Papers Competition 2007**

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**Paper 54/2007**

**Title**  
**Author**

**Where Eagles Dare**  
**Bro M. Giddy - England**

The one reference to eagles in Craft Masonry occurs in the presentation of the initiate's apron, "More ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle<sup>1</sup>". Surely this cannot be the only impact the eagle has? You could be forgiven for thinking so. But a bird that plays so vital a role in mythology and heraldry must surely play a greater part in Freemasonry.

Consider Freemasonry in London in the eighteenth century. Meeting places were often ale houses and it was four such venues<sup>2</sup> that formed the first grand lodge in 1717. It can be argued that Freemasonry would not have survived without such meeting places as they played a critical role in the development and dissemination of Freemasonry. Examples are Sincerity Lodge, No 89<sup>3</sup> which met at the Spread Eagle Tavern, Tooley Street, London from 1739 to 1817, the Fortitude and Perseverance Lodge<sup>4</sup>, No. 260 founded in 1770 meeting at the Spread Eagle Inn, Epsom, Surrey until 1774, Napthali Lodge<sup>5</sup>, No. 266 meeting at the Spread Eagle, Salford and the Apollo Lodge,<sup>6</sup> which met in the Spread Eagle Inn, Salisbury, from 1807 until 1821<sup>7</sup>.

Eagles appear in many forms and colour on many breast jewels and this diversity is clearly shown in the following examples. The Past Master's Jewel, Borough of Islington Lodge, No 2861, for 1902, has a four quadrant shield<sup>8</sup> and the bottom left quadrant is white enamel with a black eagle superimposed. This representation is repeated on the past master's jewel of the Kitchener Lodge<sup>9</sup>, No. 2998, for 1920. The

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<sup>1</sup> Emulation Ritual, p. 89, "Bro .... By the WM's command, I invest you with the distinguishing badge of a Mason. It is more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honourable than the Garter or any other order in existence, being the badge of innocence and the bond of friendship. I strongly exhort you ever to wear and consider it as such: and further inform you that if you never disgrace that badge it will never disgrace you."

The signa militaria were the Roman military ensigns or standards. The most ancient standard employed by the Romans is said to have been a handful of straw fixed to the top of a spear or pole. This bundle of hay or fern was succeeded by the figures of animals, of which Pline the Elder describes five: the eagle, the wolf, the minotaur, the horse and the boar. In the second consulship of Marius, 104 BC, the four quadrupeds were laid aside as standards, the eagle alone being retained. It was made of silver or bronze, with outstretched wings, but was probably of a small size, since a standard-bearer, the signifer, under Julius Caesar is said, in circumstances of danger, to have wrenched the eagle from its staff and concealed it in the folds of his girdle.

<sup>2</sup> The four ale houses were the Apple Tree Tavern in Charles Street; the Goose & Gridiron Ale-house in St. Paul's Churchyard, Crown Ale House near Drury Street and the Rummer & Grapes Tavern in Channel Row, Westminster. The date was St John the Baptists Day, 24 June 1717 and the Inaugural Festive Board was held at the Goose and Gridiron.

<sup>3</sup> This lodge was associated with the "Moderns."

<sup>4</sup> This lodge met on the Thursday that was nearest the full moon as reported in Boyle's view of London and its Environs, 1799.

<sup>5</sup> The Napthali Lodge was in the Province of Lancashire.

<sup>6</sup> There is still a Spread Eagle inn in Stourhead close to Stourhead House which has a splendid garden designed by Henry Hoare II and was laid out between 1741 and 1780. There are also examples of classical temples, including the Pantheon and the Temple of Apollo. Could this inn could be the original meeting place for the Apollo Lodge? The lodge was consecrated in 1783 so the dates are consistent. More research is necessary for a positive conclusion.

<sup>7</sup> The Phille-Brook Lodge, No 5803, met at the Eagle Hotel, Wanstead during 1941. The lodge held its last meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2004. The Fortitude Lodge, No 64 which was consecrated in 1739 met at the Spread Eagle Hotel in Manchester during 1843-46.

<sup>8</sup> The four quadrant shield is common in many jewels and consists is a lion in the top left, an ox in the top right, a man in the bottom left and an eagle in the bottom right. The colouring of many jewels shows a lion in gold on a blue background, the ox is black on a gold background, the man is enamelled and appears on a gold background and the eagle is gold on a blue background. The cross separating the quadrant is either blue or green. Examples are: Past Master's Jewel of the Lodge of St. John, No. 328, 1905, Past Master's Jewel of the Grand Steward's Lodge for 1888, Founder's Jewels of the Wrekin Lodge, 2883, for 1901 and the Buckingham Master's Lodge, 3305 for 1924.

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that in the past Master's Jewel for 1952 the white background changes to gold.

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consecration jewel of Lodge No 3179 of 1906 repeats this colouration but the eagle is double headed while a black eagle holds a sceptre in its left claw and an orb in its right on the consecration jewel of the Melmesbury Lodge while the past master's jewel of the Clarendon Lodge, No 1769, for 1901, shows two golden crowned eagles<sup>10</sup>. Gold eagles are not uncommon and can be seen on the founder's jewel of the Norfolk Royal Air Force Lodge No. 9584 for 1984<sup>11</sup>. These are a few of the numerous examples of eagles being used on breast jewels from the earliest beginnings of Freemasonry to the present day.<sup>12</sup>

Eagles are also found in other aspects of Freemasonry. A wine glass, celebrating the bi-centenary of the Lion and Lamb Lodge No. 192<sup>13</sup>, 1789 – 1989, has an engraved shield in four quadrants with a spread eagle in the bottom right quadrant. In the flyleaf of "The Spirit of Freemasonry"<sup>14</sup> there is a stamp of a double headed eagle<sup>15</sup>. In England two lodges bear eagle in their name, the White Eagle Lodge No. 4384<sup>16</sup>, and the Eagle Lodge, No. 9472, in the Province of Cornwall<sup>17</sup>.

It is evident that although only referenced once in the ritual the eagle, as an emblem, has impacted Freemasonry in many distinct ways. If you keep an eagle eye open you will undoubtedly observe "where eagles dare" to appear in craft masonry.

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<sup>10</sup> The golden Eagles are supporting a white enamelled shield with a red cross and a scroll bearing the inscription Fimex loticula cruce.

<sup>11</sup> The gold eagle is superimposed on a red background enclosed in a triangle. Above the triangle is the All Seeing Eye.

<sup>12</sup> The eagles are not always represented complete birds. The past Master's Jewel of the Cecil Lodge, No 449, has a triangle bearing the heads of three eagles in white. This design is repeated in the Consecrating Officer's Jewel for the Gaddesden Lodge, No 3398 for 1909.

<sup>13</sup> The design is repeated in many jewels and can be seen on the Founder's Jewel of the Combined Services Lodge, No 8300, 1984 and the Founder's Jewel of Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> The Spirit of Masonry, William Hutchinson, Richard Spencer, London, 1853.

<sup>15</sup> Below the eagle is the motto "In Deo Fides."

<sup>16</sup> This lodge is under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan grand Lodge of London.

<sup>17</sup> There are a number of lodges throughout the world having eagle in their name. Eagle Rock Lodge, No. 19. Idaho, USA consecrated in 1886, Eagle Lodge, No. 19, Hillsbrough, North Carolina, consecrated in 1791, Roman Eagle Lodge, No. 550, Aberdeen, North Carolina, consecrated in 1986, Lodge Eagle. No. 334, Hyderabad, India consecrated in 2002.

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