

FREEMASONRY & CLIMATE CHANGE

The sacred decrees of truth, honour, and virtue of our ancient and honourable institution are eternal and unchanging, but the political, economic, social, and spiritual climates in which Freemasonry abides, shift from generation to generation. This paper looks at these climate changes and the impact on UK Freemasonry by taking three snapshots 100 years apart starting in the 1880's.

THE BACKDROP TO THE 1880's

In the 1880s the British Empire was approaching its zenith and over 11.4 million square miles were ruled by Queen Victoria and her government. England's population was rising to around 40 million, but the population of the Empire was estimated at around 400 million people. Self-made entrepreneurs used their new wealth to rise in society, building large houses, educating their children, and employing domestic servants.

The decade commenced with a long hot summer in 1880 followed by heavy October snow and the lowest December temperatures in 50 years. 1883 was eventful too. 23 boats were lost in the North Sea during an exceptional storm following a record-breaking series of the 'top-5' coldest months. In August, Krakatoa, a volcano in Indonesia erupted. 36,000 people were killed mainly by the resulting tsunami; and the ash impacted the global climate for several years. Global air temperatures decreased by 1.2°C

There was a series of murders in the East End of London by the infamous "Jack the Ripper." There were five prominent targeted killings in the first two years of the decade. In 1881's Alexander II of Russia was assassinated and in 1882 Lord Frederick Cavendish, Chief Secretary for Ireland was assassinated in Phoenix Park by the 'Invincibles.'

Novels, which are still popular in the current era, were first published in the decade. They included the adventures of Huckleberry Finn, the adventures of Pinocchio, Treasure Island, the strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde. Arthur Conan Doyle published his first Sherlock Holmes tale. Gustav Mahler published his 2nd Symphony, and Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado made his first appearance.

Small domestic electrical appliances began to appear in this decade; the first two being the electric fan and iron.

Political Climate

There were considerable changes in the UK political climate during the 1880s.

In the 1880 election the Liberal Party won a substantial majority, which they used to pass the Third Reform Act in 1884. This act extended votes to around 60% of the adult male population. The electorate was increased to around 5.5 million and the newly enfranchised took a great interest in politics. The election in the next year was the first after the increase in the electorate and the re-distribution of seats that had been one of the ideals of the Chartism movement. The Liberals won the

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most seats, but the balance of power was held by the Irish Nationalist Party and its associated Unionist MPs. This election saw the first socialist party candidates.

In 1886 the government was defeated over the passing of the Government of Ireland Bill. The Conservative "Whig" wing of the Liberal party together with a small group of Radical Unionists under Joseph Chamberlain broke with the Liberal leader, Prime Minister WE Gladstone and formed the Liberal Unionist party. The election that year proved to be a critical juncture in British party alignment. The shift in strength of the parties brought the Conservative Party to power, ending 40 years of liberal domination and began a generation of Conservative governments.

Economic Climate

Between 1870 and 1900 economic output per head of the United Kingdom rose by 50% to £41 per capita. This resulted in a significant rise in living standards. Britain was reaping the benefits of being the world's first modern industrialised nation. It described itself as "the workshop of the world." Its finished goods were produced so efficiently and cheaply that they could often undersell comparable, locally manufactured goods in almost any other market. Britain was a huge beneficiary of free trade and its productivity and efficiency led to it supplying half the needs in manufacturing goods of nations such as Germany, France, Belgium, and the United States. India was the economic jewel in terms of imports and exports. In the 1880s British exports to the Empire totalled over £50 million and around £20 million of that was earned from India's market alone.

Social Environment

Society was hierarchical, yet there was increasing social and geographical mobility. Despite relative poverty, cruelty and ill-health, new economic opportunities during the 19th century helped boost both life expectancy and quality of life.

A positive social outcome of the industrial revolution was the development of skilled labour which led to the rise of the middle class. The middle class consisted of newly educated experts in industrial technologies along with college-educated professionals like doctors, engineers, and lawyers.

There was a great flowering of civic administration and civic pride during the early and mid-Victorian period in Britain. This was particularly reflected in the architecture and infrastructure of British cities. Magnificent town halls, libraries, concert halls, museums, and, not least, the great civil engineering projects of the time, all inculcated the virtues of civic identity and therefore of instituting civic power.

During the 19th century the percentage of the population that could enjoy free time greatly increased. In addition, the middle-class had a desire to achieve a sense of community and affirm their civic leadership. They had three main choices:

- **Politics** the number of enfranchised men was increasing and consequently there was more interest in local and national politics.
- **Church** the industrial revolution resulted in many people living in cities that had insufficient churches to cater for their religious needs. For example, Stockport had a population

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of nearly 34,000 but church seating for only 2,500. The Victorians built, enlarged, and restored many churches and there were lobbyists advocating a return to a more mediaeval attitude to churchgoing. More than 40 churches were built during the Victorian era in Bolton, Lancs. area alone. Census figures indicate that 63% of the population identified as Christian.



(St Albans Cathedral before and after restoration in 1880)

- **Freemasonry** Freemasonry was one of the ways that the late Victorian middle classes could affirm their respectability and social prestige and acquire a sense of community. Membership increased and Freemasons commissioned, built, and paid for many new buildings to house Masonic Lodges. Many of these buildings were erected in town centres and competed with Town Halls for grandeur.



(Cheltenham & Leamington Spa Masonic Centres)

Spiritual Climate

During the 19th century there was gradual relaxing of the grip of the Church of England on the nation. By the end of the century it was possible for Roman Catholics and Jews to study at Oxford and Cambridge, and for other faiths to worship openly. There was, however, constant pressure to convert all members of the British Empire to the Protestant Christian faith.

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Freemasonry in the 1880s

There is substantial growth in membership and the number of Lodges. Military and old school Lodges are becoming popular. Freemasonry is moving out of pubs into grand Masonic Temples in city centres which are being built as symbols of civic display. For the same reason regalia becomes ostentatious and worn in public during civic processions. George Kenning starts a Masonic regalia business and enjoys substantial growth in demand for elaborate regalia and jewels. He also publishes a weekly Masonic newspaper.

As part of the surge towards respectability, religion in UK Masonic meetings becomes more prevalent. There is the adoption of popular hymns, the prominent role of the chaplain of the Lodge, and the church-like atmosphere in many new Masonic Halls.

Ritual is very important to Victorian Freemasons. The tradition is to learn the ritual orally by memorising through repetition. This skill is taught in schools. Adult Victorians can quote passages from the Bible, and reciting poetry is a prized social skill. The teaching takes place in Lodges of Instruction (LOI) where Freemasons go to learn the words and the actions of the ceremonies; and there is time to explain the significance of the metaphors and symbols. The allegorical violence suggested in the obligations sound quite conventional to the Victorian ear. Both Meetings and LOI's reflect the social etiquette that become prevalent in the Victorian age.

Victorian Masons are at pains to make clear that Freemasonry is not a religion. However, they would struggle in their ceremonies without its teaching. Craft Lodges would not be possible without reference to the Book of Kings, and Chapter ritual includes Bible Readings. Members generally attend church regularly and are familiar with the Bible references used in meetings.

Men had time and money for Masonic interests that are considered a mark of respectability.

THE BACKDROP TO THE 1980's

The 1980's in the UK was a period of substantial change. The decade was characterised by the rise of the City, the fall of the unions, and the return of military confidence. Unemployment was twice as high in the mid-80's than it was in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister.

Key events of the decade include

- The battles for the Falkland Islands in 1982, a 10-week undeclared war between Argentina and the United Kingdom which ended with an Argentinian surrender in June.
- the momentous 1984-5 miners' strike, described as the most bitter industrial dispute in British history with over 11,000 protesters being arrested
- the troubles in Northern Ireland - the hunger strike, the provisional IRA attempt to kill the Prime Minister and her cabinet while staying at a Brighton hotel for the Conservative Party conference. 5 people were killed and 31 were injured. There were also bombs detonated in Newry, Regents Park, London, and other locations in England & Ireland.

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- the Thames Barrier was opened in 1984. It is one of the largest movable flood barriers in the world. There is an upward trend in its use. It was closed four times in the 1980s, 35 times in the 1990s and 75 times in the 2000's.
- the property bubble – after a slump in the early 80's property prices boomed for the rest of the decade
- the 1986 deregulatory Big Bang in the City,
- the Band-Aid fundraising event by mainly British and Irish musicians to raise money for anti-famine efforts in Ethiopia. The effort raised around \$150 million.
- The frenzied birth of modern British dance and drug culture during the second half of the decade.

Political Climate

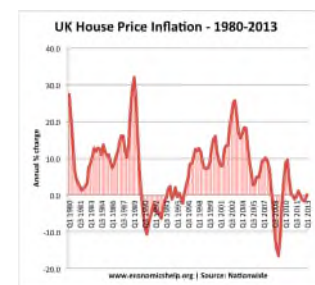
Margaret Thatcher won a landslide victory for the Conservative Party and went on to lead the country until 1990 becoming the longest serving Prime Minister since the 1820s. In 1988 Mrs Thatcher, a trained chemist, became concerned with environmental issues. She placed on the national agenda technical issues such as global warming, ozone depletion, and acid rain.

The Thatcher years in the 1980's will probably be best remembered for the fair climate for free markets and entrepreneurialism. The UK government sold off many of the large utilities. The decade will also be remembered for the reduction of trade union power. The Miners' Strike lasted a full year before the miners drifted back to work without a deal. The victory for the government was marred by concerns about civil liberties and the use of police force.

Economic Climate

The 1980s was a period of economic volatility. There was a deep recession 1981 as the government tried to control inflation. Recession, particularly in manufacturing, caused unemployment to rise to over 3 million. Unemployment at over 12% in 1984 did not fall until the late 1980s when the economy boomed during the "yuppie-years" of rising wages, rising house prices, and a stock market boom.

During the 1980s, house pricing was very volatile. The average cost of a house in 1984 was £37,182 and decreasing, but there was huge house price inflation towards the end of the decade. Overall, house prices tripled in the 1980's



Towards the end of the 1980s, the UK growth rate reached record post-war levels (over 2% quarterly growth – equivalent to 8% 12-month growth). The government believed they had delivered a 'supply-side miracle'. The hope was that the UK could now grow at a faster rate without inflationary pressures. The late 1980's BOOM was followed by a BUST in the next decade.

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Social Environment

The UK was widely middle-class. There was a structured work environment where mainly men were expected to be in their place of work from around 9 AM until after 5 PM. There was little opportunity for workers to leave work in the afternoon.

There was a dramatic change in the way that charitable organizations operated after the establishment of the National Health Service and post-war government welfare. The work of friendly societies had been decreasing throughout the century, but they had all but disappeared by the 1980s. The friendly societies of the previous century provided social opportunities to the working and lower classes and the funds they raised help the less fortunate. Freemasonry never was a friendly society but there is a comparison of the aims and modus operandi. Hence, the decline in Masonic membership in the second half of the 20th century was part of a wider trend.

There is a case to argue that the social changes instigated in the 1960s impacted Freemasonry for a generation. There was a lively youth culture in the 60's where music and fashion commanded the attention of young men. There were new education methods: learning by rote was abandoned, and in comprehensive schools, religious teaching declined. The schoolboys of the 60's were not naturally aspiring ritualists.

The Cold War, which stretched from the 1950s through the 1980s, created an environment where secrecy was equated with conspiracy. This affected the membership of Freemasonry - a society that has secrets. In the 1980s there were suspicions about Freemasons' secrets and their malevolent influence on society. Freemasons who worked in the public sector such as judges, police, and local authority workers were asked to affirm publicly whether or not they were a member of any Masonic Order.

Spiritual Climate

Spirituality and theistic religions started to diverge after World War II; and by the 1980s the UK was a multicultural country. Religious education in schools became more about comparisons of various faiths.

This new climate had an impact on Freemasonry because although it had long been determined that Freemasonry was not a Christian organization, rituals based on stories in the Old Testament of the Bible now had less resonance with members.

Freemasonry in the 1980s

In the 1880s membership of a Masonic Lodge was a source of pride. A century later Freemasonry is still an order focussed on brotherly love, relief, and truth; but the public at large do not appreciate our Masonic principles and are suspicious of our secrets.

The UK climate in the 1980s is not favourable for Freemasonry and membership declines. There is a general suspicion of any organization that holds secrets, and in order to avoid public criticism, most Freemasons never declare their membership. This increases the level of secrecy and causes wildly

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inaccurate concerns in the public at large. In the previous century Freemasons used to march regularly in civic processions but that habit died out after World War I and is unthinkable in the 1980s.

The economic turbulence of the 1980s encourages men to be very attentive to work during the hours of 9 AM to 5 PM. Even the self-employed find it difficult to extricate themselves for Masonic meetings which are generally held in the afternoon. In addition, these men had attended school in the 1960s where learning by rote had been abandoned and discipline relaxed. Consequently, learning ritual and being barked at by an elderly Director of Ceremonies is definitely not cool in the 1980's. Attendance of LOI's declines. Many Lodges permit members to read from ritual books in LOI and some even permit it in open Lodge. There was a decline in the quality of the ritual and the value of Lodge meetings.

Whilst there is a decline in the appeal of the ritual and spiritual aspects of our order, there is a post-war increase in the social and charitable Masonic activities. Ladies nights, which take place over a weekend, become very popular and our banqueting needs become a significant segment of the hospitality industry in some parts of the country.

There was also an increase in the charitable efforts of our order. Each year one of the 47 Provincial Grand Lodges in UGLE is selected to be the centrepiece of UGLE charitable collections and members strive to excel at fundraising for Masonic and non-Masonic charities. In the 1980's there is hardly any awareness of this work outside of Masonic circles.

Many men did not have the time nor the money for Masonic interests that were considered with suspicion by society at large.

THE BACKDROP TO THE 2080'S

Predicting the future is fraught with difficulties. However, taking the focus of 100-year steps, life in the UK has been a series of progressions rather than disparate revolutions. So, our look into the future anticipates a life worth living in the 2080s.

The impact of changes in weather conditions in parts of the world to the south of the UK will have a devastating effect on the lives of the local populations. Sub Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America are major climate hotspots and account for 55% of the world's population. The scarcity of drinking water, crop failure, and rising sea levels will have caused over 150 million people to be displaced in these regions. The effect on these countries of climate change is important but outside the scope of this paper.

The UK is comparatively fortunate. In the 2080s the UK climate is warmer and summer temperatures in the UK frequently top 40°C. Summers are drier but Winters are wetter. The UK weather supports increased agricultural productivity, which is fortunate because the cost of imported food increases considerably because of the adverse climate conditions elsewhere.

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The UK is likely to experience major impacts on coastal surge flooding from sea level rise, and inshore floods from heavy periods of rain. Around 20% of the UK coastline is at risk. By the 2080's the seas are probably around 80-100cms higher than they were in 1984. Around 70% of UK GDP is located within 50 km of the coast and about 78% of the UK's population live within this zone. The impact on the UK population of the rise of water levels will be far from trivial.

Some of London, close to the River Thames will be lost to the water. Even Freemasons Hall in Great Queen Street might be awash during tidal surges or rain events that cause the River Thames to burst its banks. Masonic Temples on high ground in England such as Bradford and Sheffield will be very popular.

A consensus of economists predict that UK GDP continues to grow at 2% through the 21st century, which means that by the 2080's there will be plenty of money to go around.

In summary: the UK is comparatively well-off. The UK climate and its economy, comprising agriculture, industry, finance, and services can support its population

Political Climate

The UK had a Conservative government in the 1880s and another Conservative government in the 1980s. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that anyone could forecast accurately back in 1880's what the political climate in the UK would be like 100 years on. Yet, 100 years after the 1880's we still had a parliament and a civil service; and so, it is reasonable to assume that we will have them in 2084. It is likely that politicians will play even more on our fears and jealousy, using algorithms to determine the best way to communicate with the population.

Some places on the planet will be uninhabitable and this means there will be substantial migration. The UK population will increase because of inward migration, but not as dramatically as other parts of northern Europe, Russia, and China.

The UK population will also increase because people will be living longer as medical procedures improve and new pharmaceuticals help to eliminate common causes of early death.

The size of the UK will decrease as land, mainly in the south and east of the country is lost to the rising sea. This means that there will be problems managing population density because the population will be increasing as the size of the country decreases. Permission to build on agricultural land will be severely restricted because the country will need the land to provide food as it will not be able to rely on imports from countries whose agriculture has been impacted by climate change.

Digital activities will be hugely important to society and therefore will be highly regulated by politicians. Following trends over previous decades, it is likely that by the 2080's privacy will be an outdated concept.

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Economic Climate

The big change between 1884 and 1984 involved the widespread use of electricity and how that impacted transportation, manufacturing, warfare, and our domestic lives.

The big change between the 1980s and the 2080s will be the deployment of robotic process automation and the use of artificial intelligence. Robots, or more accurately apps, will be able to execute almost all blue-collar and white-collar work by 2084. Consequently:

- vehicles – planes, ships, trains, lorries, & cars – will be driven automatically or sometimes remotely. Most driving jobs will cease to exist.
- all the processes involved in retail fulfilment can be automated so there will be no shops, cash registers or bakery counters in the future. Most Retail jobs including distribution will have disappeared by the 2080s.
- almost all jobs in agriculture, manufacturing including design, and construction will be carried out by robots managed by artificial intelligence.
- some surgical procedures, particularly micro-procedures, are already being successfully assisted by automated processes. By the 2080s diagnostics will be performed automatically and most surgical procedures will have been automated. Most nursing tasks will be carried out automatically by robots guided through artificial intelligence. Many jobs in the medical and veterinary professions will just disappear.
- Education will be delivered online and on demand, substantially reducing the number of teachers required. Most teachers will be involved with counselling and encouraging the creative arts.

This means there will be no work for most of the population. It will be normal for adults never to work in the sense understood in the 20th century. As all the work based on mathematics and logic can be automated, the only work available will be for creative people.

This creates huge change for society. Taxation can no longer be based on income derived from daily toil. Instead tax will be raised through outputs that are created by the robots or apps. Furthermore, the amount of tax required will be substantial because the government will have to provide enough money to all citizens for them to have a satisfactory lifestyle. In other words, the government will probably be issuing universal payments to the entire adult population. As a minor detail, the small number of people actually working will be highly paid and taxed at levels which ensure the universal payments to them are retrieved.

The economic dependence on oil and gas of the 20th century will decline sharply during the first half of the 21st century. The fuel on which the economy will depend will be electricity which will be mainly produced using renewable sources and distributed cheaply and reliably to the point of need.

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Social Environment

In the 21st century, loneliness is likely to become a public health issue. With roots in the industrial revolution, increase in loneliness results from the mass migration from agrarian, face-to-face small communities to massive conurbations, and a declining belief in an omnipresent God. By the mid-21st century, there will be even less face-to-face encounters, less travel, and for the most part, no opportunities for socialising at work.

There will be huge focus on the creative arts. This could lead to what has been described as Internet oppression where an elite will provide entertainment to keep the masses distracted and complacent.

Because there will be no work available for most adult men or women, they will seek other activities that may provide a purpose to their lives. There will be an increase in the interests in sport, spiritual activities, politics, and Freemasonry.

- **Sport** there will be considerable interest in watching and participating in sport. The winter sports of the 20th century will largely disappear, but there will be an increase in indoor sports. Games that can be played at higher temperatures, such as cricket and baseball, will prosper. Games at all levels can be broadcast through multi-channelled Internet apps so watching sport, and maybe betting on it, will become a very popular pastime.
- **Politics** the Internet makes it easy for anyone to participate in politics and to promote political ideas. The strain of having additional spare time will encourage some to participate in politics and to micromanage local, national, and international politicians. Holding referenda will be so easy that there will be the temptation to get the public's vote on all types of motions or decisions. By the 2080s, politicians will be delegates rather than representatives and the electorate will be able to update them on their views on a daily basis.
- **Church** the pandemic of 2020 demonstrated to many that "church" is not a building. It is a fellowship of men and women and children who have very similar beliefs and aims. In 2020 the "church" went virtual quickly, effectively, and by and large, effortlessly. By 2080 there will be a huge number of virtual churches whose members are exploring their relationship with the divine and the eternal.
- **Freemasonry** Freemasonry will benefit from the fact that adult men will have a substantial amount of freedom to pursue non-work-related interests. Freemasonry will have a role in helping the lonely; and in developing the thinking of men who want to be part of a community and those who want to foster their spirituality rather than advance a religion. Freemasonry can attract a large number of such men as there will be plenty of them with time on their hands! To achieve these aims, Freemasonry will have to be visible to the population at large, as it was in the 1880s, and pertinent to the 2080s

Spiritual Climate

In the 1880s the UK was regarded as a Christian country and the Church of England was the state religion. In the 1980s the UK was becoming multicultural and had some religious diversity, although

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the Church of England still had its close relationship with the State. By the 2080s, the UK will have migrated to a religiously diverse population. Christianity and Islam will be the most popular religions with Hindus and Buddhists sharing a second tier. The third tier will include dozens of disparate spiritual organisations.

The 20th century view that the need for a spiritual dimension in our lives would disappear as education progressed will undoubtedly be proved false. Throughout the 21st century there will be an increasing climate for creative learning. With the basic needs of life being provided, men and women will have the opportunity to devote time and energy to developing the spiritual dimension in their lives.

Freemasonry in the 2080s

In a complete swing away from the 1980s, the 2080s will be characterised with an adult population whose basic needs are met without the need or indeed the possibility of having to work for it. Adults will struggle to find a purpose in their life. As in the 1880s they will probably choose to engage in politics, religion, charitable work, or maybe sport, in order to establish their own civic position.

Because men will not be distracted by having to go to work, meetings can take place at a time convenient to the majority of Lodge members. Each Lodge will continue to have its own unique style and the practice of creating new Lodges to attract members with special interests, such as motorcycles or judo, are likely to continue and increase.

Lodges of Instruction (LOI) will be a revitalised source of Masonic education. Members have much more time to pursue their Masonic interests and LOI's meet frequently and Preceptors facilitate far-reaching learning about ritual, about the allegorical significance of the ritual, on the long and meritorious history of our Order, and on other Masonic topics. Consequently, the quality of our ritual in our meetings will continually improve through the period and should become better than ever.

Hopefully, social payments to the entire UK adult population will eliminate relative poverty in this country, but there will be huge numbers of climate migrants around the world who will need help. In the UK, the social problems of large conurbations that have been experienced for the last 200 years will still be with us. Freemasons will respond to the need by raising money and collecting resources to disperse aid to Masonic and non-Masonic charities. Freemasons might also respond to the need to combat loneliness by visiting homes and listening, and by encouraging folks to get out of their homes and get involved in social activities.

Some Lodges will have implemented trustworthy technology to improve the membership experience. Issues concerning information security and the Masonic requirement for privacy will have been resolved by the 2080s. By avoiding discussion of politics and religion, Freemasonry will continue to be a safe environment for all men.

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In this climate, Freemasonry is just as successful as it was 200 years previously. There are many men actively seeking to join our order and enjoy the full participation in our ceremonies and other activities.

Men will have time and money for Masonic interests that will be considered a valuable pastime

Finale

For hundreds of years every candidate for Freemasonry has been advised that our Order stands for Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. During Craft ceremonies, a candidate gets to appreciate that not only do we expect Truth, Honour and Virtue of him, but also Courtesy, Charity, Decency, Fidelity, Honesty, Integrity, Loyalty, Reliability, and Tolerance. These are our constant values that remain unchanged through all generations and in all climates.

The ritual and spiritual aspects of Freemasonry are essentially inward looking, and the values associated with them are reflected out into society. The basis of these aspects is eternal and as such only our interpretation of them should change to reflect the current climate. The social and charitable aspects of Freemasonry are outward looking and are much more closely associated with society. The basis of these aspects is temporal and can, and should, change as rapidly as society changes.

Freemasonry has four aspects. Every Mason prioritises these facets according to their appetite. It is unusual for a single Mason to be proficient, or indeed interested, in more than two or three.

Ritual a good Masonic ceremony with precise floor work and eloquent delivery of the words is a joy to behold. For many Masons, the ritual is Freemasonry and they find deep meaning in the ceremonies

Spiritual the battles over whether Freemasonry is a religion were won over 200 years ago. It is not. It fails to qualify as a religion against many criteria. Nevertheless, membership depends upon the belief in a Supreme Being and the ceremonies inculcate principles that are eternal. Some Masons find spiritual solace from our order.

Social the Festive Board and Ladies' Nights are thoroughly enjoyable Masonic traditions. There are many social events where members and families can enjoy time together. Social Masons are fun; and they greatly help our order to coexist within our open society

Charity All Masons are encouraged not simply to provide money to relieve distress, but to care and give time and talent in the service of communities as a whole and not just to our brethren and dependents. The amount of money that Freemasonry donates to charity every year is astounding. The fundraising efforts of some Masons is extraordinary; and they have a significant impact within our organization and to the outside world with no Masonic connections.

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Because the climates in which we live change, the challenge we face as Freemasons is to preserve the unchanging precepts of our order and their associated values whilst migrating the temporal aspects of our order to be accessible to the adult males of the current and future generations.

- **In the 1880s** membership of Freemasonry was regarded as prestigious. Membership was coveted and members admired. To be called a “Passed Master” was an accolade implying one had substantial skill and experience. What happened within a Lodge was unknown to the public, and by and large, they did not care, as our right to privacy was respected. On the other hand, Freemasons frequently paraded in public in ostentatious regalia.

The Victorian social climates of order and discipline, self-confidence and social awareness were reflected in the Masonic order which prospered as the country prospered.

- **In the 1980s** membership of Freemasonry was regarded as suspicious. Membership declined and what happened within a Lodge was beginning to be discussed in public and misunderstood and mistrusted. Our right to privacy was questioned and Freemasons no longer paraded in public.

The social climate of the Thatcher years was inward looking and self-reliant. The country was not at peace with itself nor with other countries, leading to a suspicion of secrets - although secrets abounded in the political arena. Our Masonic order waned in the decade in this climate of uncertainty and suspicion.

- **In the 2080s** membership of Freemasonry will be regarded as scrupulous. Members will again be regarded as honourable and trustworthy. Membership will be desirable, members venerated, and our number will increase substantially. The reasons which will encourage men to join Freemasonry will be similar to those in the 1880s. Men will see that Freemasons enjoy something special that is reflected in their everyday life and they will want to join to access what we have. They will want to stay because they will learn that Freemasonry is a progressive science and the more they contribute the more they will benefit.

100 years on from the 1980's and the changes in the political, economic, and social climates of the 2080s will be as great as the previous 100 years. Relative poverty should be substantially reduced, but the opportunity for work will have been eliminated for the majority of the population. Access to information will be practically unlimited which means that personal privacy is essentially eliminated. Generally, adult men in the UK will have substantial time available to pursue whatever interests attract them; and in this climate, many will choose to contribute to the world of Masonic Ritual and the outward expression of Masonic values.

Freemasonry must be continually prepared to meet the needs of the current climate. It must be open to accept good men from all climes as members and to assist them to become better men; to be part of society, to demonstrate civic responsibility and to radiate Masonic principles out into society. The future of Freemasonry as an increasingly major contributor to society lies before us.

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