

Some time ago at the Essex Records Office [1], the Will of Thomas Midhaste, of St. Osyth, Essex, (Operative) Freemason and dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 1616, came to light. It is written in Secretary Hand on one side of a sheet of paper measuring 15 3/4 inches(275mm) x 10 3/4inches( 400mm) wide. It was transcribed by Eve McLaughlin [2]. Searches and additional information relating to Thomas and St. Osyth were provided by Miss P. Hendy [3].

Although the English word 'Freemason' was used from early times in official documents, the use of the word 'freemason' to describe his occupation, make this Will one of the earliest private and personal documents to use the word and it is on this that the importance, or otherwise, of this document rests.

*"In the name of god Amen, I Thomas Midhaste of St Oseth in the countie of Essex freemason ,being of good minde and remembrance, god be thanked therefore but sick in bodye do make and ordaine this my last will and testament the 26th daye of Aprill the 14th year of King James king of England, Frances and Ireland and the 49th of Scotland , revoking and calling back all previous wills whatsoever heretofore made. First I yealde and beqethe my soule to Almightye god my creator and to Jhesus Christ his sonne my only redeemer and saviour by and through whose death blood(s)heding I do hope and trust to be saved and my body to be buried in the p(ar)ishe churchyard of St Oseth aforesaid. to Joane my wife the howse or tenement in North Street in my owne tenure and occupation with all and every th'app(ur)t(enance)s there unto now belonging, late Henrie Bassetes, provided that should it happen that my wife be now with childe then my wille is that my said child or children yet unborne shall have my sd howse after the decease of the said joane to my child/ren yet unborne and their heirs lawful of the body begotten. If she is not with child, then the howse etc shall remayne to Marie Hunte daughter of Edward Hunte and her heirs lawfullybegotten for ever.*

*To John Midhaste my brother 5s of good and lawful money of England to be paid him when he shall lawfully demand it. To John Wodde my apprentice all my working tools to be delivered to him in one moneth of my decease and to the said john Wodde my suit of ap(ar)ell now uppon my back to be delivered in one moneth ...*

*Item all the rest of my goods and chattells unbequethed my debts beinge paid and my funeralls discharged I give and bequethe unto Joane my wife, whom I make and ordaine my executrix for the p(er)formance of this my last will and testament. In witness whereof I have set my hand and seal date the day and year above written*

*his m (?mark)  
Thos Midhaste  
& seal*

*witnesses not legible on copy "*

Unfortunately, no trace of Thomas, or any of the others named in the Will, can be found in the records at St. Osyth or in the obvious places searched on the Internet. Indeed, the booklet on St. Osyth, produced by 'English Heritage' [4], makes the discouraging point that "The town appears to be poorly documented as little local medieval source material appears to have survived the suppression of St. Osyth Abbey." They go on to say "... The main sources available are the court rolls etc. of the manor of St. Osyth which survive from 1669 onward." Maps are limited to three estate maps of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. ....Abridged.

**Full article available on your web site.**

**Bro. Alec Hall**

**Acknowledgements and references.**

- [1] Source document: ERO Ref:D/ABW 26/267
- [2] Transcribed by Eve McLaughlin. Genealogist and author of book on 17<sup>th</sup> Century writing.
- [3] Information from Miss.P. Hendy, Local History Recorder for St. Osyth.
- [4] Historic Towns of Essex ~ St. Osyth ~ English Heritage. Essex County Council.
- [5] "The Earliest use of the word 'Freemason'. Paper by Andrew Prescott, Sheffield University.

# Southchurch Masonic Study Circle



**President:: W.Bro. Cliff Wyatt**

**Secretary :W.Bro. Pierre Waddoups**

Grove Cottage,  
194, Southborne Grove,  
Westcliff on Sea . SS0 0AA  
Tel : : 01702 340062  
E-mail:pwaddoups7798@yahoo.co.uk

**Treasurer: W. Bro. Tony Lister**

7, Ormonde Gardens,  
Leigh on Sea, SG9 3RG  
Tel : 01702 558625

You are cordially invited to the **Regular** meeting of the Southchurch Masonic Study Circle to be held at the:-

**Saxon Hall, Aviation Way, Southend on Sea, Essex, on Thursday 20th Sept. 2007 at 8pm.**

We look forward to seeing you and don't forget, guests are welcome.

Secretary : **W.Bro. Pierre Waddoups**

## AGENDA

- 1 **To welcome visitors and prospective new members.**
- 2 **To receive apologies for absence**
- 3 **To read and if approved, confirm the Minutes of the last Meeting held on the 15th May 2007.**
- 4 **Matters arising from the Minutes**
- 5 **Objects of Masonic Interest.**
- 6 **Speaker. Bro. Bernard Williamson will present a Paper entitled:- *Essex Oaths.***
- 7 **Questions and answers.**
- 8 **Any other Business**

### YOUR WEB SITE.

It would be great to get some feedback on your web site which I have lovingly constructed. The address is:-

<http://www.southchurch-masonic.org.uk>

You can contact me either through the site 'contact' page or directly by e-mail. My address is:-  
[alec@tisl.demon.co.uk](mailto:alec@tisl.demon.co.uk)

**Encourage me please and visit your site and Forum!**

## A SECRETARY'S PLEA

Sadly, the 30th Anniversary Lunch had to be cancelled through lack of support from members of the Study Circle.

The original dates clashed with either a Lodge Meeting or an LOI being a weekday or a Saturday so that a Sunday was chosen to avoid these regular commitments.

But this caused problems with it being either Easter or a family day and it had to be outside the holiday period. So April on the balance of probabilities seemed the best time of the year.

It would be good to know your reasons for not being able to support the event so that we can avoid such pitfalls should we ever try to organise a similar event.

There is a fable by that famous Greek Aesop, entitled "*The Miller, the Son and the Donkey.*" It is well worth a read and the moral of the fable is "*he who tries to please everybody, pleases nobody.*"

Pierre.

### THE AUTHOR OF THE PAPER.

Bernard Williamson must be known to all by now!

Journalist, broadcaster, raconteur and a committee member, to boot.

Having spoken a few times before on differing themes, but this time his Talk is more of a re-iteration of a topic mentioned a year or so ago. Which is designed to be a team building exercise as much as it is to garner information about the Seditious Oaths Act.

Please come along and support Bernard which in turn, supports us all!

*'Better be ignorant of a matter than half know it.'* -Publius Syrus.

Pierre.

## From your Secretary

.Goethe (1749-1832) the German Poet and Freemason when he was on his death-bed, it is purported that he asked a friend who was sitting vigil to, '*open the window and let in more light.*' The last request of a famous Freemason and the first wish of every new made one – light.

If one word could be used to sum up the meaning of Masonry, it would probably be light. From the beginning to the end in every Degree, the whole point is to bring the light of the GAOTU into the life of every Freemason.

And not just this light, either, for I believe this light need not just be a spiritual light it can also be the light of knowledge and of truth. To bring knowledge by education to every Mason is also a purpose of the Craft.

I like to think that that's what we do, so well, at this Study Circle, of ours, that of, bringing a little light. After over thirty years we are still true to our motto which says we should aim '*to bring light and lustre to all within its circle.*'

If you have a particular topic that you would like share with members of the Circle, please do let me know. Please don't, as the proverb say, '*hide your light under a bushel!*'

Pierre.

## For your Diary.

**December 13th.  
(Cheese and Wine evening)  
Quiz by Bro. Terry Lockhart.**