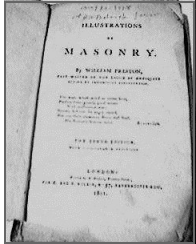


## William Preston

1742–1818



**William Preston** was a Scottish author, born in Edinburgh, on the 7 August 1742. He died on April 1, 1818. With the death of his father, Preston left college and found a job as a secretary to Thomas Ruddiman, with whom he carried out extensive research, required by the same in his classical and linguistic studies. With the death of Ruddiman, Preston became a printer for Walter Ruddiman, Thomas' brother, to whom he had been apprenticed. After working in the printing office for about a year, he set out for London in 1760, intent upon making a name for himself as an author. One of his references was addressed to William Strahan, the King's printer, with whom Preston secured a position, which he retained for many years. The exact date of Preston's initiation into Freemasonry is not known, but is thought to have been between 1762 and 1763, in London. His experiences from this point on made a deep impression upon him, inducing Preston to undertake a major study of Freemasonry, its origin and its teachings, and this effort was intensified when he was elected a Worshipful Master. He discovered a vast body of traditional and historical lore in the old documents of the Craft, and begun modernizing the format of group meetings in such a way as to make ritual accessible, bringing a rudimentary knowledge of the arts and sciences to members of the Fraternity. Preston embarked upon detailed communication with Masons worldwide, so developing extensive knowledge of the Craft, and collecting the material which was to become his best known book, *Illustrations of Masonry* published in 1772. He delved into the most obscure places in search of Masonic lore, and became a frequent visitor to many different Lodges. On 15 June, 1774, he visited the Lodge of Antiquity No. 1, (one of the four Lodges that formed the Premier Grand Lodge of England in 1717), and was subsequently elected a member and Worshipful Master at the same meeting.

He became an active member of the Grand Lodge, and was later appointed Deputy Grand Secretary under James Heseline. After a brief period of expulsion from the fraternity for his support of a factional disagreement between the Grand Lodge of Moderns and the society over public use of ritual paraphernalia he was reinstated in 1787, all his honours and dignities restored, whereupon he resumed his Masonic activities. From 1765 to 1772, Preston engaged in personal research and correspondence with Freemasons at home and abroad, absorbing all he could about Freemasonry and the arts it encouraged. He had taken the works of Freemasonry, and revised them in such form as to receive the approval of the leading members of the Craft. New editions of his book were regularly demanded, and up to the present time it has gone through 20 editions in England, 6 in America, and several more in other European languages. *"He was one of the first men to influence a change in the social standards prevalent in the old lodges. From a position as the youngest Entered Apprentice standing in the North East corner of his lodge, he progressed until he was recognized as the foremost Masonic Scholar of his generation, the name of William Preston is still pre-eminent in the annals of Freemasonry"*.

### FROM YOUR SECRETARY

*'Wisdom is oftimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar.'*

**William Wordsworth.** (1770—1850. Poet Laureate).

Another year and more new members, a good start, to say the least! The Book Sale at the last meeting was very successful, because of the generosity of you, the members and visitors and raised a welcome amount for the Provincial Library and Museum's Acquisition Fund. With my 'other hat on' I would like to say, thank you all very much.

Please give W/Bro. Eddie plenty of support at this meeting's Talk and remember, guests are always very welcome.

W/Bro. Pierre Waddoups

## Southchurch Masonic Study Circle



Founded 1977

President

R.W/Bro. John M. Webb PGM

Chairman

W/Bro. Mark Perkins TD  
perkins.mark@btinternet.com

Secretary

W/Bro. Pierre Waddoups  
pwaddoups7798@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer

W/Bro. Mike Wilson  
mikewilson@orbuk.org

Southend Masonic Centre  
Saxon Hall  
Aviation Way Southend on Sea  
Essex SS2 6UN  
on  
Thursday 15h March 2012  
at 8pm

# AGENDA

1. Open the Meeting and to welcome visitors
2. Apologies for absence
3. Read and if approved, confirm the Minutes of the previous Meeting
4. Matters arising from those Minutes
5. Objects of Masonic Interest
6. Talk by W/Bro. Eddie Alicoon.  
*'Getting and Giving of Masonic Knowledge.'*
7. Questions and Answers
8. Any Other Business
9. Close the Meeting

## WEB SITE

Please do see our updated Web Site and any topic or item you wish to be uploaded, please contact the Web Master, W/Bro. Ian Whitley.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

W/Bro. Eddie Alicoon LGR, is a member of the 'Masonic Society' an organisation whose byword is;

*'The ultimate success of Masonry depends on the intelligence of her disciples.'*

Formed in 2010, it held its Second Annual Symposium in July 2011, in Edinburgh, over two days and at which Bro. Eddie spoke about 'Famous Freemasons'.

Bro. Eddie is a retired Sales Executive and has worked as an advisor for the Citizens' Advice Bureau, during which time, he has spoken on the history of the Redbridge, CAB. He has a comprehensive list of Masonic and non-Masonic Talks. Eddie has been a Lodge Secretary and is a member of the RA, Mark and RAM. He is also a Freeman of the City of London.

## CALENDAR FOR 2012

Thursday 17h May 2012

W/Bro. Charles Lawrence.

*A Brick by Brick Account of the Metamorphosis of Operative to Speculative Masonry.*

Thursday 20h September 2012

W/Bro. Steve Smith.

*Can Pythagoras and Euclid still be considered relevant to modern Freemasonry?*

Thursday 6th December 2012 (Cheese and Wine)

W/Bro. Brian Wright

*A Year in the Life of a Provincial Warden!*

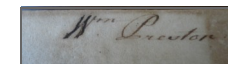
## ABOUT THE TALK



The Talk is influenced by the Prestonian Lecture of 1988, written by W/Bro. Harry Mendoza and takes the same title and theme!

The following words are taken from the Conclusion of the Prestonian Lecture;

*'What advantage would accrue if brethren in general had a higher standard of Masonic education? Put simply, I would suggest that the work in the lodge would improve and that there would be a greater appreciation and understanding of the ceremonies. Possible 'spin offs' might include greater familiarity with the Volume of the Sacred Law. And, because of a greater desire to carry out the principles and tenets of the Craft, an improvement in our efforts to help one another. Another facet would be that more brethren would be able to convince non-masons of the values of our society. This in turn may encourage more suitable candidates.'*



## The London Grand Rank Association



Are you a member of the LGR Association and would like to meet up locally with other members?

For details of the Essex Branch, please see,

Mike Wilson ( Study Circle Treasurer), who is the Essex Area Representative.