

Either side of the skull and at the very bottom of the coffin are three Hebrew letters, each one the same and representing the fifth letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. The letter is called *He* and also represents the figure Five. In total they equal fifteen and that figure represents the fifteen Fellow Craft who set out to search for our Master. Individually they represent the Five Points of Fellowship, the Five Signs of a Master Mason and the Five Fellow Craft who found the body of our Master. The four ciphers in two sets of two underneath the skull stand for 'MB', the two words of a Master Mason.

The drawing laying across the coffin is self-explanatory and shows the ornaments of a Master Mason's Lodge - the Porch, the Dormer and the Square pavement. Lastly, below the drawing are the three tools with which our Master was slain, namely the Level, the Plumb Rule and the Heavy Maul.



## District of Cyprus Mentoring Programme

A series of Fact Sheets for a  
**Master Mason**



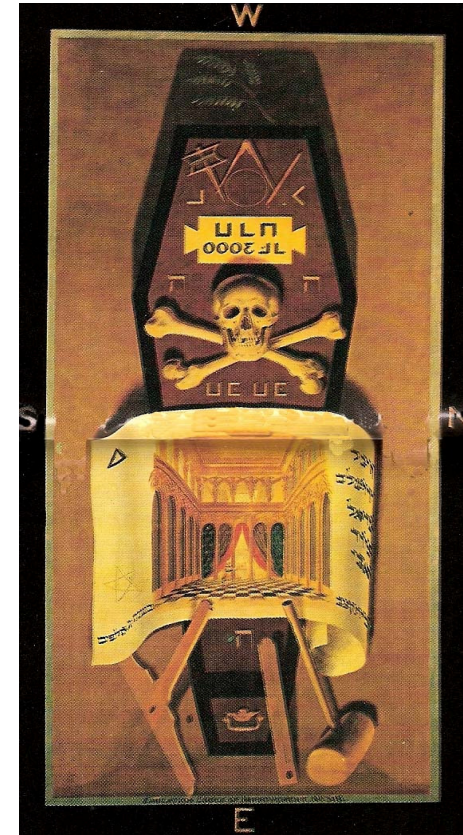
# Making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge

## *The Third Degree Tracing Board*

The Third Degree ceremony demonstrates dramatically that death is preferable to 'falsehood and dishonour'. The raising is not a resurrection but a demonstration of how a corpse was recovered from a primitive burial to a more fitting internment, and how gestures then used were adopted as the Signs of the Degree. It also teaches us loyalty to our fellow men, particularly Master Masons, but, and this is important, that offences contrary to the laws of God or the ordinances of the realm are not covered by this Obligation of loyalty. No Brother is entitled to claim that in such matters you should keep silent or behave otherwise than as a dutiful citizen; it is only his 'Lawful Secrets' you are bound to keep. Your Masonic responsibility is, as you were taught at the start of your Masonic career, 'to do your duty to God, to your neighbour and to yourself'. The explanation of the Third Degree Tracing Board is quite short when compared to the those of the First and Second Degrees, but the Tracing Board contains much information.

There are many different styles of Tracing Boards, but the one described in this Fact Sheet is the one shown in the Emulation Ritual Book. At the time of our story, bodies were not buried in coffins but wrapped in a 'winding sheet', but as you will recall Freemasonry is veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Therefore, the coffin, skull and crossbones are symbolic, which as you were told are purely emblems of mortality. At the head of the west of the Tracing Board is a sprig of acacia, a symbol of life eternal. It is placed at the head and not elsewhere because the seat of intelligence lies in the brain. Below and inside the outline of the coffin we find the three Working Tools of a Master Mason, namely the Skirret, the Pencil and the Compasses. You will notice that both points of the Compasses are visible and within their extension is a circle, which clearly fits in with the last part of your Obligation as a Master Mason when the Worshipful Master explains the position of the Compasses and says: "... *In this the whole is exhibited implying that you are now at liberty to work with both those points in order to render the circle of your Masonic duties complete*".

At each side of the Working Tools there are two square shapes with the one on the right hand side being askew. These are actually ciphers and are arranged to be read from right to left as one would read the Hebrew language, and they stand for 'T C' the first Artificer in metals and the password leading from the Second to the Third Degree.



Below is a small box with male dovetails at each side; inside the box is another set of ciphers. The three large ciphers represent 'HAB', which stand for Hiram Abif. Underneath are two ciphers and the figure '3000'. The two ciphers stand for *Anno Lucis*, which means the year of creation and together this equates to the last few lines of the explanation of the Third Degree Tracing Board that HAB was slain 3000 years after the creation of the world.