

THE WEBSITE OF THE ORDER OF THE
SECRET MONITOR OR BROTHERHOOD OF
DAVID AND JONATHAN IN THE BRITISH ISLES AND
ITS DISTRICTS AND CONCLAVES OVERSEAS'



History and Origins



Order of the Secret Monitor or Brotherhood of David and Jonathan

The first references to this Order are known to be of Dutch origin and there is an interesting document written in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century which states that the Order of David and Jonathan was brought to the New World about the year 1658 by Dutch settlers of Jewish descent who settled in Newport, Rhode Island.

Looking at the history of the Netherlands, the northernmost part of the Netherlands, Holland, was essentially Protestant in its religious persuasion in the 1550s but an unfortunate dynastic marriage caused first a strong Austrian and then a Spanish influence. Both Austria and Spain were strongholds of

Roman Catholicism and in those days of extreme religious intolerance was consequently abhorrent to the Dutch Lutherians. Inevitably this led to the formation of underground secret societies with the object of freeing the Mother-land from the fetters of their overlords.

As we can read in the Old Testament books of Samuel, just as David was persecuted by Saul, so were the Dutch Protestants harassed by the Catholics. A revolutionary brotherhood was formed with modes of recognition suited to the hours of darkness as well as in daylight, and signs and symbols were chosen from the David and Jonathan story in the Bible.

That was in the late 16th century; and it occurred again a hundred years later when Louis XIV of France invaded the Low Countries again in a Catholic crusade against the Huguenots; the same modes of recognition were employed to cause confusion amongst the invaders.

Many Dutch Protestants emigrated to the New World to find a new life with greater liberty than seemed possible in Holland at that time and it is probable that the Order travelled with them. Any opposition to the way of life of the Dutch settlers immediately drew forth a resurgence of the David and Jonathan cult which had served the Netherlanders so well in the past.



The Secret Monitor grew in America as a side degree conferred by any Mason who had received it himself. It was brought to England in around 1875, by Dr. Issachar Zacharie when he returned from America following his service as Chiropodist-General to the United States Army during the Civil War. He settled back at 80, Brook Street, London, where he built up a busy and successful practice as an orthopedic surgeon. In London he became a member of the Bon Accord Mark Lodge and there he met a number of other brethren who had become Secret Monitors during their Masonic progress in other countries. At his invitation, they all met at his house on 5th. May, 1887 and resolved to form a Conclave to be called the Alfred Meadows Conclave. (Alfred Meadows was a distinguished surgeon) Under the leadership of Dr. Zacharie a Grand Council was formed later in 1887 and the ritual was extended when a further two degrees were added, one of which pertained to the Chair of the Supreme Ruler.

The degrees gained in popularity, but this success was to bring about a series of unfortunate events, for in the meantime the Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees had been empowered by an American body of similar name to confer their version of the degree. Regretfully a period of over 37 years elapsed, during which both orders were conferring a Secret Monitor degree, but the matter was finally resolved in 1931 when C.W. Napier-Clavering was in the favourable position of being Grand Supreme Ruler of the Secret Monitor and also Grand Master of Allied Masonry. He then implemented an agreement transferring all rights to the Grand Council of the Order of the Secret Monitor and the degree was removed from the list of degrees of the Allied body.

The Order comprises the following degrees:

1. Secret Monitor
2. Prince
3. Supreme Ruler

Structure and Qualification

In this Order, assemblies are termed Conclaves, each with a Supreme Ruler at its head. The Visiting Deacons (of which there are four) are Officers with a special function peculiar to this degree. It is laid down that they should afford assistance and support to a brother in time of sorrow and distress and they should also search out and warn him if he is exposed to danger, secret or apparent. This duty is no sinecure as each of the members of a Conclave has a number between 1 and 4 against his name in the Conclave list and the appropriate Deacon is required to contact his members prior to each meeting and is called upon to report on that Brother if he is not present at the Roll Call.

The structure is as follows:

First Degree.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Supreme Ruler | 9. Assistant Director of Ceremonies |
| 2. Councillor | 10. Organist |
| 3. Guide | 11. Assistant Secretary |
| 4. Chaplain | 12. Scroll Bearer |
| 5. Treasurer | 13. Guarder |
| 6. Secretary | 14. Stewards |
| 7. Director of Ceremonies | 15. Sentinel |
| 8. Visiting Deacons (<i>Four</i>) | |

Second Degree.

1. David (*Supreme Ruler of the 1st. Degree*)
2. Jonathan (*the Immediate Past S.R.*)
3. Abishai (*Guide of the 1st. Degree*)
4. Adino (*1st. Visiting Deacon*)
5. Eleazar (*2nd. Visiting Deacon*)
6. Shammah (*Guarder of the 1st. Degree*)
7. Lecturer (*A Past S.R.*)

There is only the single qualification of Master Mason for prospective Candidates for this Order.

Regalia.

The Regalia of the First Degree comprises a jewel in gilt, being of two equilateral triangles interlaced with three arrows and charged with the letters D and J. It is suspended from a ribbon in the colours of the Order, i.e. purple-orange-purple. Officers wear a crimson sash, four inches wide and having a gold fringe below the frog, which also features two interlaced triangles in metal gilt.

In the Princes (Second) Degree an identical jewel is worn but it is suspended from a ribbon of equal stripes, orange-purple-orange.

A Supreme Ruler wears the jewel of the Order suspended from a collarette in the colours of the Second Degree, together with the appropriate sash bearing the initials SR in silver. He also wears a purple robe with orange or gold facings.

The Degrees.

The legend of the First Degree is narrated during the Induction Ceremony and tells the story of the remarkable friendship which existed between David and Jonathan. During the ceremony the Candidate is instructed in a certain course of action to be adopted when a brother is about to do anything which might prove injurious to himself and it teaches a beautiful lesson on Friendship and Fidelity.

The Admission ceremony to an Assembly of Princes is also derived from the Book of Samuel and narrates how Saul sought the life of David. It further relates an interesting legend of the methods contrived to thwart the efforts of the jealous King.

By reading the Old Testament books of Samuel, all the names of the Conclave Officers fall into place.

The last named degree is unusual when compared with the other Orders of Freemasonry, in that the ceremony of Installation constitutes the Third Degree of the Order pertaining to the Kingship of David and is fundamentally concerned with the headship of a Conclave. Embodied in the ritual of this degree, however, is the ceremony of commissioning, which gives rank and status within the Order as a whole, a certificate being issued to that effect.

The full title of the Order is "The Order of the Secret Monitor, or Brotherhood of David and Jonathan, in the British Isles and its Districts and Conclaves Overseas". It has its headquarters at Mark Masons' Hall, 86, St. James's Street, London, and the head of the Order is termed the "Grand Supreme Ruler".

There are now over 500 Conclaves spread between some 30 Provinces or Districts. Each Province or District has a Provincial or District Grand Supreme Ruler at its head.

