

A.R. Baker (ed.), *Corona Gladiorum* Transactions of the Bristol Masonic Society 2015-2016 (Bristol, Bristol Masonic Society 2017). 214pp., 25ill., 1 map. Cardcovers, no price stated [ISBN: 9780993040825]. **Reviewed 08.2017**

This volume brings together addresses given to the Bristol Masonic Society during their 2015-16 season. The Society draws its membership from Bristol Freemasons of various Lodges who are keen to learn more about the history, traditions and philosophy of their Craft. Also included are two addresses given by members of the Society elsewhere, two addresses given in past years and a poem, *Absent Brethren*.

Many contributors are local, including the Revd Father Steven Hawkins, President of the Society for the year and until recently vicar of St Martin's, Knowle. Others hail from further afield, including guests from Maryland, USA and the West Indies. Topics are similarly wide-ranging and include "Mormonism and Freemasonry: Strange Bedfellows", "Karate-Do and Freemasonry" and "Freemasonry in Eastern Europe".

The 2015-16 addresses to the Society are accompanied by transcripts of the questions and discussions which followed. As is often the case with learned Societies, these can form one of the most interesting parts of an evening. A former President of BGAS, Dr Martin Crossley-Evans, is frequently prominent in these discussions.

To a non-Mason, such as your reviewer, the technical terms used are daunting, but such is the erudition and enthusiasm of the contributors that the reader is eager to learn more. The non-masonic reader may wish to have an encyclopedia of Freemasonry, or failing that Wikipedia, at his elbow.

Of particular interest to our members will be a guided masonic tour of Arno's Vale Cemetery given in June 2016 by Alan and Jane Bambury, volunteers at the Cemetery. After a brief account of its history, attention focuses on a number of Freemasons buried there. These include many whose names will be familiar to students of nineteenth and early twentieth century Bristol, among them Drs Alexander Fairbrother and William Bird Herapath, pioneers respectively of the use of ether as an anaesthetic and of the process which led many years later to the marketing of polaroid sunglasses; Frederick Ashmead, responsible for Bristol's first sewage system and the son of George Culley Ashmead (he of the Ashmead Maps, now reproduced on the Know Your Place website); and William Hort, who with his wife Elizabeth established a famous eatery in Small Street, which subsequently moved to nearby Broad Street. (It is a tribute to them that although the establishment is no longer owned by the family, the present proprietors have seen fit to retain the name of "Horts".)

Others deserve to be better known, such as William Augustus Frederick Powell, the glassmaker whose two middle names are a tribute to that prominent Royal Freemason the Duke of Sussex and who, barely of age, enrolled as a Special Constable to help defeat lawlessness during the Bristol riots of 1831; Rowland Brotherhood who moved to Bristol from Swindon, having been one of the contractors responsible for the laying of the Great

Western Railway; Peter Stewart MacIver, founder of the *Western Daily Press*; and Paul James Bush, another medical man who in 1917, at the age of sixty, was appointed Commanding Officer of a Military Hospital in France and retired with the rank of Colonel and the CBE.

Nor does the tour eschew scandal, most notably in the case of Uriah Alsop, the furniture maker whose involvement with two sisters, his wife and his mistress, led to him siring fifteen children by the former and ten more by the latter. His masonic career was apparently short lived!

The transcript of the tour is helpfully accompanied by a map of the Cemetery and twenty-four inset colour photographs of individual graves.

Mr and Mrs Bambury also contribute a biographical memoir of Alan's father, Ernest Arthur Bambury (1909-99) who took over and greatly expanded his father's sheet metal business before in turn bequeathing it to his sons, and to whose memory the volume is dedicated. As well as his masonic activities, he was for thirteen years a Bristol City Councillor and a member of its Airport Committee and for twelve years a governor of Brislington Comprehensive School.

It is not clear whether this volume is readily available to non-members of the Society, but your reviewer intends donating his copy to the BGAS library.

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