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## **Foreword**

There's a certain kind of fellow one encounters all too often who's very fond of striking a thoughtful pose, wagging his finger in the air, and saying with a good deal more authority than he actually possesses, "You know what's wrong with (your favorite topic is inserted here)? Well, I'll tell ya!" And he proceeds to do just that until you beg off with a quick look at your watch and a muttered "Phew look at the time."

Unfortunately, this type of fellow has been doing this very thing on the subject of Freemasonry for decades. People have been identifying the problems that face the fraternity and making long faces over it for a long time. Tearing down is easy. All it takes is a wrecking ball. Building is hard.

Comes now Most Worshipful Brother Hugh Young, the author of this volume. Hugh has seen a lot in his years as a Mason and a Past Grand Master. And while he's seen problems, he's also seen solutions. It's easy to sit on the sidelines and complain, but it's a whole lot tougher to come up with good, solid, simple advice to fix it, and follow it through to completion.

I met Hugh in Scotland in 2007 at the International Conference on the History of Freemasonry where he was presenting a paper about, of all things, a game he'd created for Masons to teach the history and practices of the Craft. He'd traveled halfway around the world to spread the word that learning about Freemasonry could actually be enjoyable, which seemed to surprise most of the academics in the room.

We'd never met before, but he treated me like we were old friends who had known each other for years. Certainly part of that is the mystic tie of Freemasonry, but it was also Hugh's personality, and he very quickly impressed me with his positive attitude and love of the fraternity.

The book you hold is not a collection of grumpy “in my day” rants from some bellyaching back-bencher on Buzzard’s Row. It is a gold mine filled with nuggets of wisdom from many years of working hard to make Freemasonry better. Hugh treats the subjects of Masonic education, Lodge programming and management with common sense, humour and a practical understanding. He knows that leading and motivating a Lodge full of volunteers who don’t have to come back to Lodge next Tuesday can be as challenging as herding cats, so his observations are practical.

As he states right up front, this book represents his opinion. But that opinion has lots of experience behind it, along with an enthusiasm for Masons and Masonry that’s hard to beat. There’s no one, single, magic bullet that will bring long lost members back to Lodge, fill up Lodge treasuries and turn all members into eager Masonic geniuses. Every Lodge is different, with it’s own challenges to be faced. But you are bound to find ideas here to make you think, to send you in the right direction, and to make your Lodge the very best it can be.

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