

Forget-Me-Not

It is not a widely known fact that during the Nazi reign in Germany, Freemasonry was outlawed and its members hunted down, murdered or at best interned in concentration camps. Masonic lodges were ransacked and destroyed.

The reason that Freemasonry incurred the wrath of the Nazi's was that our principal of equality, that every man is equal regardless of race or religion, clearly was not in keeping with Nazi ideals. Also the foundations of our institution, which are recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible, were seen as an unhealthy, close association with the Jewish religion. In fact the Holy Royal Arch Chapter jewel that members wear, could easily be mistaken as a symbol of the Jewish religion, with its centrepiece being so designed.

As a consequence of this oppression, Freemasonry in Germany was forced underground and the display or wearing of any Masonic symbol would clearly have been foolhardy.

So a symbol was sought, by which brethren could recognise each other, and the simple Forget-Me-not was chosen, probably because it was so ordinary, widespread and as such would not attract unwanted attention. Therefore the wearing of a Forget-Me-Not in one's lapel would signal to other Freemason's that you were a brother.

At the end of the Second World War, the Grand Lodge of Germany reconvened, and announced that the Forget-Me-Not would remain as a symbol by which German brethren would recognise each other. And also to be worn in the memory of those brave brethren who continued to practice Freemasonry against these odds, and had lost their lives.

In later years the Forget-Me-Not was adopted by Freemasonry in general, in continued memory of those brave German brethren, and as a symbol that despite the great oppression, adversity and evil faced during those dark years, the light of Freemasonry was not extinguished.

So that is the origins of the Forget-Me-Not lapel pin, and how it has come to be a custom in some Lodges, that a newly raised Master Mason is presented with one by his proposer, or good friend as a symbol of eternal friendship and as a reminder that the light of Freemasonry will continue to shine through all adversity.