

Masonic link may explain Hamilton's 'charmed life'

Dunblane massacre: *Suspensions grow that killer followed grandfather into the Freemasons*



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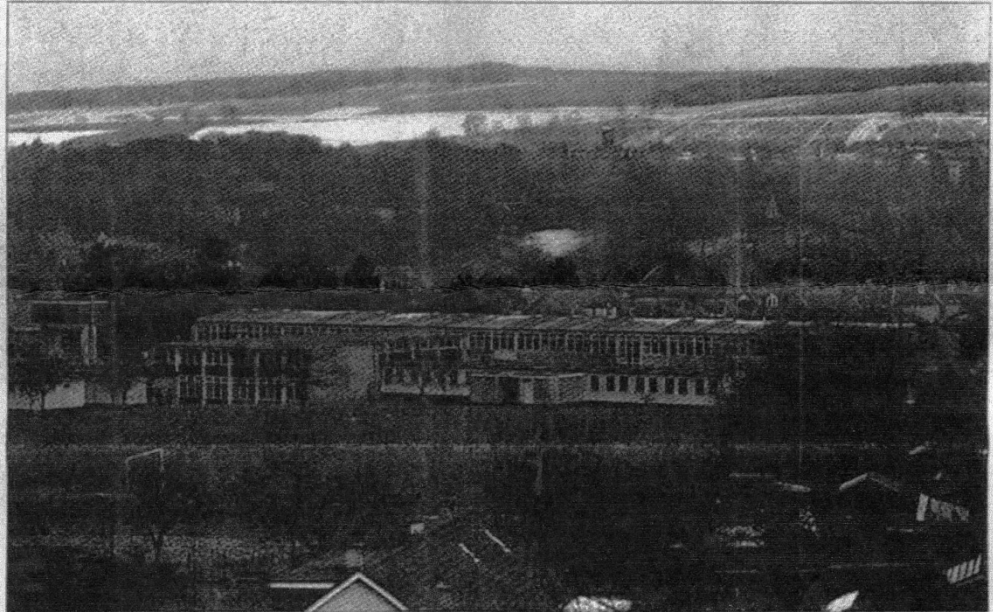
A Labour MP who has campaigned against secret societies said last night that Hamilton's membership of the Freemasons could explain his "apparently charmed life" and should be investigated by Lord Cullen's inquiry into the massacre.

People have claimed that Hamilton was a Freemason and may have socialised with people in positions of influence while attending Masonic meetings and functions.

A senior Scottish Freemason told *The Scotsman* that Hamilton had been a Mason for a number of years and had visited functions at different lodges.

"Although I believe his lodge didn't knowingly protect him, I am sure favours between individual brothers would have been exchanged," he said.

The Scotsman has obtained a list of more than 100 senior Freemasons in the Central Belt of Scotland in an effort to trace Hamilton's own lodge membership. Of the dozen we contacted most refused to confirm or categorically deny that Hamilton was a Freemason.



Dunblane Primary, the scene of the killings by Thomas Hamilton (above): Questions are being asked about possible links with Masons. Picture: Robert Perry

The Scotsman has also discovered that Hamilton's grandfather Jimmy - who raised him after his natural parents separated - has been a Freemason for more than 40 years, and that Hamilton had probably followed the natural course into the lodge.

One past master of a Stirlingshire lodge said that Jimmy, now aged 88, had often attended functions at his lodge. He had not met Thomas Hamilton, but thought that he would have followed his

grandfather into Freemasonry.

A grand master of another Stirlingshire lodge said he was "wary about saying too much" because of the sensitivity surrounding the massacre.

However, he added: "I've known old Jimmy for many years and he was a member of a Glasgow lodge. I don't know about [Thomas], but it is likely he would have followed Jimmy into his lodge."

Although Freemasonry is virtually unknown at the top of Scottish business, many of its

members are shopkeepers - such as Hamilton - lawyers, middle managers and police officers. As the owner of a DIY shop, Hamilton would have been a natural Freemason.

Martin Short, the author of *Inside the Brotherhood* - a book on Freemasonry - says the most common form of entry into Freemasonry is for a father to sponsor the son into the apprenticeship. He adds that "an astonishing" 20 per cent of police officers are currently Freemasons.

Chris Mullin, the Labour MP who has campaigned against secret societies, said he found the alleged Masonic link with Hamilton "very interesting".

"It certainly provides a possible explanation of the apparently charmed life that Hamilton led," he said.

"This is obviously a matter that Lord Cullen will wish to explore as part of his inquiry."

Last night, a spokesman for the Grand Lodge of Scotland in Edinburgh admitted that it did not have a collated database of

its members and could not be certain whether or not Hamilton was a Freemason.

Another spokesman for the Grand Lodge said if a lodge became aware that one of its members was trying to misuse membership, then they had the powers to throw them out.

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Comment on the Scotsman article: Given the extraordinarily charmed life that Thomas Hamilton had led, which allowed him to be involved in so many acts of sexual misconduct without being convicted in the courts it is not surprising that Chris Mullin, MP thought that Lord Cullen would wish to explore Hamilton's alleged freemasonry as part of his inquiry . With similar concerns a member of the public had responded to Lord Cullen's invitation in the newspapers for submissions to the inquiry and had politely asked Lord Cullen to make a personal Masonic membership declaration and ask all those giving evidence at the inquiry to make similar. Lord Cullen ignored both requests.

Furthermore Lord Cullen didn't even summon Thomas Hamilton's Masonic grandfather Jimmy to give evidence to the inquiry. Instead evidence was heard of Thomas Hamilton's Masonic status from a friend of Jimmy Hamilton's, and a fellow freemason Robert Deuchers. Mr Deuchers in evidence said he didn't think Thomas Hamilton (who he didn't socialise with) was a freemason from something said by Jimmy, but under cross-examination he admitted that it was not something that Jimmy had said, or that he had knowledge of, but rather he got the impression from Tom (Hamilton), that he "wasn't interested in anything such as the Masons." Quite astonishingly Lord Cullen concluded that Deuchers' evidence indicated that Thomas Hamilton had never been a freemason!

On this, the only oral evidence given to the inquiry, the flimsiest of impressions by an admitted freemason and friend of Jimmy Hamilton and vague references in letters from Hamilton that the police were biased in favour of the "brotherhood of masons" satisfied Lord Cullen that Hamilton was not a member of the masons. The evidence of the examination <sic> of freemasonry in the Dunblane Inquiry and the conclusions in the Report is set out below. This tiny input is all that featured on freemasonry in a 26-day Inquiry and the 188-page 97,700-word Report that it spawned.

Page 502 Inquiry Transcript, R.C.H. Deuchars led in evidence by Mr. Lake.

Did you socialise with Hamilton's father? - Yes, once we got to know each other, yes, we met on a Saturday or Sunday in the Masonic Lodge in Stirling.

Did you ever socialise with Hamilton? - No.

Are you in a position to say whether or not Hamilton was a Mason? - I don't think he was. I mean, talking to the gentleman that I assumed was his father I would say that no, Thomas Hamilton was not a member of the Masonic Lodge.

Pages 509 & 510 Inquiry Transcript, RCH Deuchers under cross-examination by Mr Campbell.

I think you told us that you became quite friendly with Jimmy Hamilton, Mr. Thomas Hamilton's adopted father? – I did.

And you would actually go for a drink to the Masonic Lodge? - That is correct.

Which Lodge was that? - Lodge No. 30 in Forth Street, Stirling.

When you were asked by my learned friend Mr. Lake as to whether or not Mr.

Thomas Hamilton was a Mason, I think you made some reference to remarks made by Jimmy Hamilton in giving your answer that in your view he was not a Mason.

What did Mr. Jimmy Hamilton say that caused you to be of that opinion? - I wouldn't like to say. I don't know. Tom just gave me the impression that he wasn't interested/

interested in anything such as the Masons. I couldn't say what inference James made of that. Sorry.

Was Jimmy Hamilton a Mason? - He was.

In the same Lodge? - No, he wasn't actually a member of Lodge 30. He was a member of Lodge 76.

From the Report by Lord Cullen:

5.6 Thomas Hamilton harboured a long-standing grievance against the Scouts and the police. In the large volume of correspondence which he generated a recurring theme is his assertion that the police were biased in favour of the "brotherhood of masons" and that there was a "brotherhood" link between the Scouts and the police. In passing it may be noted that this together with evidence given by Mr Deuchars indicated that Thomas Hamilton had never been a freemason. I am satisfied that he was not a member of the masons.