

# Freemasonry & the Enlightenment

## Architecture, Symbols, & Influences

BY JAMES STEVENS CURL

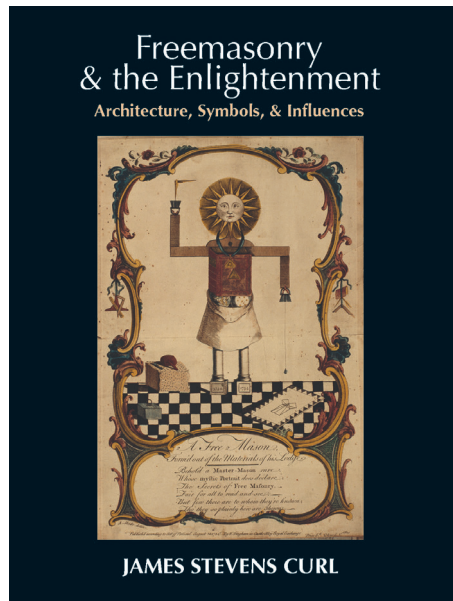
*A fine softback reprint of a long out-of-stock classic, originally published to great acclaim*

This superbly illustrated study of Freemasonry's influence on Western culture, especially in the 18th and early-19th centuries, has been recognised as one of the most original and important contributions towards a greater understanding of the Enlightenment published in recent times. Always a vivid and entertaining writer,

Curl, *éminence grise* in the international network of historians of the Craft, and as usual wearing his learning lightly, astonishes and delights us with his stimulating explorations of themes concerning music, literature, philosophy, art, architecture, and artefacts, all expertly woven through the main narrative. Curl is a master of his subject and of an ebullient literary style, so the results of his copious researches are always presented in a highly accessible and witty manner, free from obfuscation or tediousness, further illuminated by his unerring choice of wonderful illustrative matter. Curl began his studies of Freemasonry in the 1970s, leading to publications that were an immensely useful, and sane, introduction to a field often fraught with speculative sensationalism. In this book, which originally came out in 2011, he hugely expanded his investigations, showing how aspects of Masonic ideas have permeated the design of buildings, parks, gardens, and cemeteries, as well as much else. His Glossary outlines some of the complex themes and iconographies of the Craft (notably the symbolic and moral significance of the Architect's and Mason's instruments and tools), and the extensive Bibliography contains an enormous amount of material to stimulate further research, not least into the curious phenomenon of antipathy towards Freemasonry by authoritarian closed minds and totalitarian bigots.

The illustrations are exceptional, and are accompanied by detailed captions (themselves an illustrated history of elements found in the Craft). It is a curious fact that many historians have avoided Freemasonry through prejudice, timidity, and perhaps cowardice, but in this work Professor Curl has grasped the nettle, and shows there is an enormous wealth of material available, much of it previously deliberately hidden from view or unaccountably ignored for reasons that defy logic, yet which will whet the most jaded of appetites.

Professor Andrew Prescott provided a sensitive Preface to this comprehensive revelation of neglected aspects of Western culture, and that is reprinted here.



THIS SOFTBACK REPRINT follows the success of **The Nerfl Press's** handsome facsimile edition of **J.C. Loudon's** great book on *Cemeteries* (2019), and **Professor Curl's** *St Michael's Kirkyard, Dumfries: A Presbyterian Valhalla* (2021).

**Professor Emeritus James Stevens Curl** is a distinguished writer with many highly-acclaimed books to his credit. He has won for himself an international reputation for accurate and painstaking scholarship, thoroughness of research, and lucidity of style. Among his many accolades were the President's Medal of the British Academy for 'outstanding service to the cause of the humanities' in recognition of his 'contribution to the wider study of the History of Architecture in Britain and Ireland' (2017), and an Arthur Ross Award for Excellence in the Classical Tradition (History & Writing) by the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art, USA (2019). He was Visiting Fellow at Peterhouse, University of Cambridge, in the academical years 1991-2 and 2001-2, and is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy.



James Stevens Curl at LXXX, portrait in oils by Jeffrey Morgan (2020)  
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*Freemasonry & the Enlightenment* is finely printed on 356 pp., with 71 colour plates, 227 b&w illus., and 24 figs., and costs **£60.00** per copy, including postage and packing within the United Kingdom only. For postage outside the UK and **within Europe** please add **£12.00**, and for postage **outside Europe** please add **£25.00**.

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