

The Freemasons so thrown together would undoubtedly have held meetings and over the years it is more than likely that their primitive hosts would have become familiar with some of the Masonic procedures, including the signs of recognition, even without actually knowing the meanings thereof.

Were Les Hidden's Aborigines therefore really knowledgeable on the subject of Masonic signs?

Was the brother in his party mistaken?

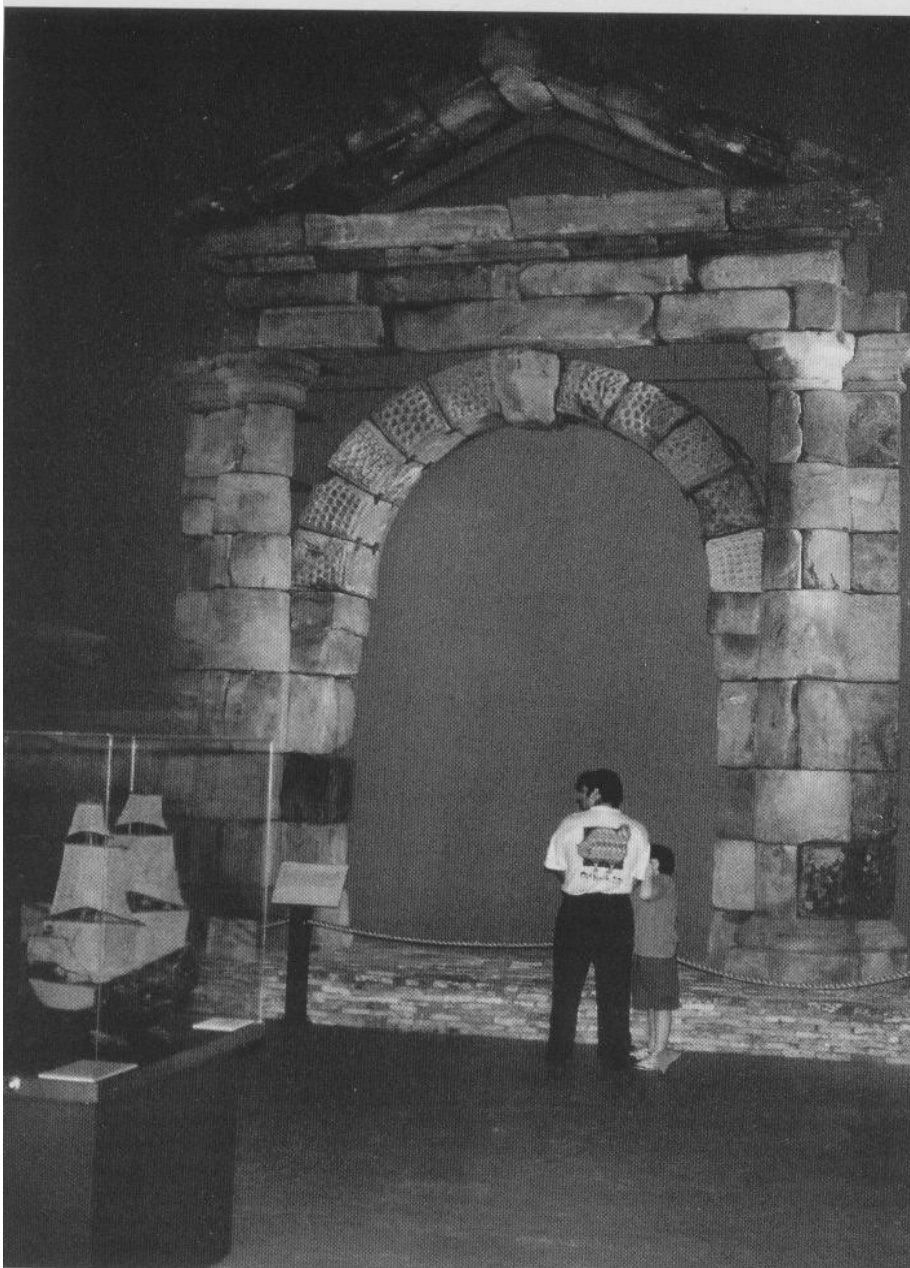
What about the dressed stones? What, I wonder, is their story?

"A Few Minutes of Freemasonry" delivered to Lodge Wahroonga No. 674 (NSW and the ACT) 26 August 2009



Replica of the "Batavia"





The re-assembled stone ballast found in the sailing Vessel "Batavia" which sailed out of Java in June 1629

IF STONES COULD TALK

In the September 1997 issue of the British Masonic magazine "The Square" an article appeared entitled "Bush Tucker Man" in which Major Les Hiddens reported seeing Aboriginal Australians in Western Australia, giving Masonic signs when approached. Les Hiddens was not a Freemason, but one of his party was and it was on this brother's say-so that the occurrences were reported.

The first human beings to be found in Australia the Aborigines, could in no way have been Freemasons with knowledge of the signs of recognition. How then was this possible?

A theory is suggested as follows:

On the 4 June 1629, the sailing ship "Batavia" out of Java, was wrecked on Abrolhos Island, off the western coastline of Australia. The commander Francois Pelsaert and 315 others survived the wreck. Fifty returned to Batavia in Java in an open boat to fetch help.

Mutineers murdered 125 whilst the others fled inland to mix with the local Aborigines.

It is suggested that amongst this latter group there must have been Freemasons, based on what was subsequently found in the wreck of the "Batavia", 3 1/2 centuries later.

What was left of the Batavia was salvaged from the sea and is now preserved in the Fremantle Maritime Museum in Western Australia.

The amazing thing, however, was that the stone ballast found in the ship was in the form of prepared stonework which was reassembled in the museum. From the picture on the opposite page it is clear that this archway has a distinct Masonic appearance with a column and plinth construction and an arch and keystone.

The marks made by the iron tools used by the operative masons of the day are still easily visible.

From whence the stonework came, and its intended purpose, is not known, but it is proposed that because of this finding, the possibility of Freemasons being on board is very strong and after the wreck, amongst those who fled inland to escape the mutineers, could very well have included a number of Masons.

They would have mixed and lived with the Aboriginal community for the remainder of their lives as it was unlikely that there were any other passing ships that might conceivably have picked them up.