

Sankey Lecture in Masonic Studies,
"Perceptions of Freemasonry from the 18th century to the Internet"
Saturday, April 17, 2010
David S. Howes Theatre, Brock University
3:00 PM

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Speaker: Dr. Andreas Önnerfors
Director / Senior Lecturer in History
Centre for Research into Freemasonry
(The University of Sheffield)

About the Speaker: Andreas Önnerfors (b. 71) was raised in Germany in a Swedish-German family. He took his German Abitur in 1990 in Trier. After a period of extensive travel and some initial studies, he served in the Swedish Army between 1993 and 1996, interrupted by studies in History of Sciences and Ideas. Being trained at the Interpreter School of the Swedish Armed Forces, he acquired Russian. In 1997, he again took up his undergraduate studies in the History of Sciences and Ideas at the University of Lund, Sweden where he completed his BA and MA starting PhD-training in 1999. In 2000, he also was admitted to a German PhD-scheme at the University of Greifswald at the Baltic shore. Andreas defended his PhD-thesis successfully in 2003. It is titled "Svenska Pommern: kulturmöten och identifikation 1720-1815" (Swedish Pomerania: Cultural Encounters and Identification 1720-1815). Since then, Andreas has undertaken postdoctoral research on Swedish Eighteenth Century freemasonry and has taught courses mainly within European Studies. He also has a large interest in press history and the history of sciences. Andreas has published about forty papers and articles in various languages, a majority of them on freemasonry.

About the Lecture: Since its modern establishment in urban London of the late 1710s, freemasonry was covered extensively in the press. One of the first steps of the fraternity was to publish its mythological history and charges, the famous Constitutions of Anderson of 1723. Books and pamphlets attacking and defending freemasonry almost immediately appeared on the market. This dynamics accelerated in connection with events such as the papal condemnations of freemasonry and peaked early around the years of the French revolution. Since then, anti-masonry in different colors on the spectrum has influenced the image of freemasonry both in political ideologies, conspiracy theories of various kind, as much as in popular culture as recently demonstrated by Dan Brown's new novel *The Lost Key*. Freemasonry itself has reacted modestly upon this development of an image over time with few successful exceptions that also will be addressed by the lecture. The presence of a seemingly secret society in media begs also the question how private freemasonry in reality was and is. It is legitimate to ask if public perceptions of freemasonry not even constitute a major element of the impact of freemasonry upon society itself. This lecture aims at to map the main lines of these perceptions from the first press articles to the presence of freemasonry in the main media of the twenty-first century, the Internet.

Tickets: The event is free, but tickets are required. To reserve your tickets, please contact the Centre for the Arts Box Office at 905-688-5550 X3257 or boxoffice@brocku.ca.

Note on Parking: The most convenient location for parking is Lot D - Visitors Parking located directly south of the David S. Howes Theatre.
(Please note there is a fee for parking). If you have any questions please contact the box office."