



Worshipful Master, Brethren.

It is my privilege and pleasure to present the address this evening.



The 188th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone for the New Humber Lodge building on the corner of Anne St and Osborne St. by Right Worshipful brother R. M. Beverley the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Yorkshire. The ceremony was carried out in front of more than 100 who had gathered for the occasion - This is our Tradition an established practice of our lodge and I am honoured to have been invited to follow in the footsteps of the many esteemed brothers who precede me.

It has become customary for this address to consider a little of the history of our grand old lodge and so for the sake of continuity I will now present a brief timeline of this oft told story, and may I state at the outset for those who have never read the tale in all its detail you should speak to, W. Bro. Terry Fisher, the lodge Librarian and archivist who can lend you a copy of G. A. Shaw's History of the Humber Lodge published in 1911.



I would also recommend for your perusal "Kinston upon Hull the Masonic Heritage" by W. Bro. Barry Hovell whom I would like to acknowledge for the permission he has granted in the use of his researches.



Our warrant of Constitution, Numbered 53, was issued to form a Lodge in Liverpool by James Murray the second Duke of Atholl, Grand Master of the "Ancients", May 19th 1756, 259 years ago.



The year Mozart was born, George II was on the throne 2 days after the seven year war was declared against France for invading the Mediterranean Island of Minorca then a British possession, and it is also the year when the event in India known as the Black Hole of Calcutta took place.



The only known fact of this first lodge to which the warrant was issued is that it met at the Buck and Dog Tavern, Strand St, in the City. This Lodge apparently lapsed, and the warrant used in 1775 by another Lodge in Liverpool, which Lodge was eventually suspended in 1807 and the warrant returned to London for irregular behaviour.

In 1809 the warrant was transferred (by endorsement) to Hull it was in fact purchased for 5 guineas by one T Larard a watchmaker, for a Lodge to be known as the "Ancient Knight Templars", whose meetings were held at the Fleece Inn in Market Place. On July 2nd 1810, the name of the Lodge was changed to that of the "Humber" which name has remained firm for the last 205 years.

In its early years the lodge thrived initiating some 208 members, sadly in spite of the many new masons made by 1815 the membership was reduced to 28 perhaps these losses and failure of members to pay subscriptions meant that money was tight. In 1817 the Treasurer was privately of the opinion that "the Lodge needed members of more probity, power and influence than those that drank the assets of the lodge into debt"

The warrant which initially was numbered 53, in 1813, the Two Grand Lodges, the "Ancients" and the "Moderns", became united under the title of the United Grand Lodge of England; the Humber Lodge became No. 73 on the Register thereof, and was so recorded until 1832 when, upon a renumbering of the Lodges it was reduced to No. 65, and in 1863 this was again reduced to No. 57, which number it still remains.

We now turn to the main characters celebrated this evening, Bros. Fetham, Eglin and Crow.



Little is known of Bro. Joseph Eglin who was aged 25 in 1827 when the foundation stone was laid; serving as Worshipful master in 1828. In 1836 Bro Eglin went of to Hamburg where he died of an enlarged heart some months later aged 34.



More is known of Bro. Thomas Fetham he was 34 when the stone was laid and also became Worshipful Master of the Lodge in that important year, he served the Humber Lodge well during his lifetime being Worshipful Master twice (1827 & 1850) To Bro., Feetham, the lodge owes gratitude as one of the longest serving of its members. Indeed he was honoured for 21 year's service as Treasurer with a Portrait paid for by the lodge. 6 years later in the same role, he was again honoured with the presentation of a silver tea service. He continued in this role until his death on the last day of 1858 aged 65 then having served as Treasurer for 30 years. The lodge was placed in mourning for a period of 3 months. The PGM granted dispensation for a Masonic funeral in full regalia held at Holy Trinity church. The lodge subsequently purchased 6 graves fronting his vault in which indigent masons could be laid to rest, such was the philanthropy.



As a retired member of the Senior Service myself I crave your indulgence whilst I give you more detail of a man described as the major influence and driving force of the reversal of the Humber lodge fortunes in the 1820's.



W.Bro, Lt William Crow Royal Navy: William was born in Great Yarmouth in 1770 to William & Abigail Crow his father was a furniture maker, he had two sisters Susannah and Abigail.



He joined the Royal Navy in 1781 aged 10 or 11 serving as a Purser's Servant on board HMS Britannia a 1st rate ship of the line with 100 guns and a crew of some 850 men she saw service in the Mediterranean fleet and the Napoleonic wars being at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 Crow was not aboard at this time.

There is then a sizable gap in the record; it is assumed he had gone into the Merchant Fleet, when he reappears he is an able seaman being at least 20 years old and having served at sea for a minimum of 5 years.

He served on board HMS Gibraltar a 2nd rate ship of the line with 80 guns from July 1790. In 1795 Crow served onboard HMS Repulse for a year she was a fifteen year old 3rd rate ship of the line with 64 guns held in reserve in Portsmouth. He was also posted to a 5th rate frigate HMS Clyde carrying 38 guns and a crew of 224, on which he served for a year.



For the Next few years Crow studied hard and after passing examination in Navigation and Seamanship he successfully applied for the position of Lieutenant in 1801, over the proceeding seven years he had been at sea serving as Able Seaman, Midshipman and Masters Mate, his referees in gaining his Lieutenants post were later to become well know and high ranking Naval Men Admirals Fairfax and Cunningham.



In 1806 Lt William Crow RN was initiated into the Godlophin Lodge No.235 (Moderns) in St Mary's, Scilly Isles he was one of nine initiates that year, many of his new brethren with maritime connections from as far a field as Copenhagen, Guernsey, London and Plymouth as well as locals from the Scillies with varying occupations from Master Mariners, Surgeons, and Shipwrights and varying in age from 24 to 39 paying an initiation fee of £5:00 was founded in 1775 and expired in 1828. A new lodge 7790 was formed 1961.



We next find William Crow commanding a gun Brigantine, HMS Gallant from 1811 to 1813 she was a two masted vessel approx 80 feet long and carried up to 14 guns she was operational in the Channel and the Mediterranean. In 1813 under his command the ship patrolled the Northern Waters including the Baltic. He captured at least 11 enemy vessels over a period of two and a half years and would have become quite wealthy from his share of the prize money. During his times at sea it is doubtful that Crow could have spent much time on his Freemasonry.



We have no knowledge of why Crow came to Hull but we know he was exalted a companion of the Holy Royal Arch 10th March 1814 in the Minerva Chapter he was at that time living on Neptune St but later moved to 7 Lowgate opposite the present Guildhall a very busy and fashionable area of the day.

In 1820 Crow had applied to join the Phoenix Lodge, but with twelve of nineteen ballots going against him he was refused admittance, in the same year he became Senior Deacon in Minerva and was renowned and rewarded for recovering the books of the lodge from the past treasurer with the intervention of the PGM. In June 1823 he became Worshipful Master of Minerva Lodge and his influence increased greatly, he also became First principal of Minerva Chapter in the same year.

Crow had, or developed, a view of Freemasonry which was at odds with some of his Minerva Brethren and in 1824 joined the Humber lodge and was accompanied by some 17 of his brethren, such a body blow was felt by Minerva Lodge and it suffered for some time to come. It has been suggested that they joined Humber, which had a small and elderly membership, in order to take over and forge a lodge working the way they envisioned, Lt William Crow RN was installed as Worshipful Master of Humber after only eight months followed in rapid succession by his great Supporters Fetham, Eglin



And a young brother not often mentioned John Ward the famous Marine Artist.



Crow gained provincial honours in 1827. Whilst he was the driving force to bring about the building of the New Humber Lodge premises he was not alone, he chaired the meeting of 23 March 1827 at which it was resolved to enter into a subscription to build a new Masonic Hall only five days later the building committee was formed and an agreement to buy the land on Anne St by messrs Crow and others was formed and the contract signed. By April 19th the plans had been prepared and tender for building by Bro. Kidd accepted, and three weeks later the event we celebrate tonight took place with the laying of the foundation stone.



As well as the building fund to which these brothers donated so generously they also established the benevolent and pensions fund.



As in 1915 during a Zeppelin raid the Fleece Inn, Market Place, Our fist meeting place was totally destroyed by German bombs.



Brethren after an imperfect start to our history and from the laying of that Foundation Stone on 7th May 1927 we have raised (albeit some what figuratively a superstructure perfect in its parts (almost) and honourable to the Builder.



Worshipful Master, Brethren, - Upstanding - in Darkness and in silence I ask you to honour the toast to our founders and predecessors, but more especially: Brothers Fetham, Eglin and Crow.