

Humber Lodge No 57

*Speech made by W. BRO. W. KENDALL, P.A.G.D.C.,
in proposing the Founders Toast, on the 7th May, 1934.*

"Worshipful Master' Grand and Provincial Grand Officers, Past Masters, Officers and Brethren,—What I have to say in proposing this toast most of you have heard before, and will I hope hear many times again. In the words of Shakespeare, ' I only speak right on. I tell you that which you yourselves do know.' We are concerned this evening with an event that occurred in 18:27. I shall begin my remarks with that event, but shall afterwards have occasion to refer to earlier and later events, for in an address of this nature, it is almost impossible to observe a strictly chronological order. On Monday, tin- 7th of May, 1827, the foundation-stone of this lodge building was laid, with due ceremonial, by the then Dy. Provincial Grand Master, W. Bro. Robert Mackenzie, Beverley, and for many years it has been the custom to hold a special meeting on the 7th May to celebrate the anniversary of that auspicious occasion, and to give expression to feelings of grateful appreciation for the tangible evidence of the zeal and devotion of a small band of brethren whose whole-hearted enthusiasm and vigorous action were instrumental in buying the land and putting up the building, of which the laying of the foundation-stone formed an important ceremonial part. On that historic day, 107 years ago to-day, the I lumber Lodge was opened in the *Neptune Inn*, Chapel Lane, by the Dy. Provincial Grand Master, who, after having asked numerous questions and received satisfactory replies, said something like this:

'Master, Past Masters, Deacons and Master Masons,- All is right, and as it should be, and I give you all the joy of this day's proceedings. It has begun in zeal, let it end in charity. Let us give due praise to the Master and brethren of the Humber Lodge for wishing to raise a temple to Freemasonry. May the blessing of heaven be with us all, and may the new lodge increase in virtue, harbour the poor brethren, and console the rich. Amen and Amen.'

Worshipful Master, may I remark in parenthesis, that that was a very pretty touch: ' console the rich!' I am afraid that is a duty, which, if we ever knew it, we often forget in these' days. But to return to my narrative - the brethren then formed themselves into procession and marched to the site of the intended building here in Osborne Street, the foundation-stone itself being carried in the procession by four Master Masons. The lodge building was completed in four months, and it may perhaps be said of the builder, in the words of Emerson:

'He builded better than he knew.

The conscious stone to beauty grew.'

On the 19th September, 1827, the lust meeting was held in the new building, the formal opening meeting and dedication ceremony being held a fortnight later, when, it is recorded, there were 38 brethren present, including the Dy. Provincial Grand Master. During the past hundred years, extensive additions

and alterations have from time to time been made, notably in 1864, 1884 and 1910. In 1864 a second foundation-stone was laid with appropriate ceremonial, the new buildings being consecrated in the following year, viz., 1865. But I do not need to refer to these events particularly.

A student of the history of the Humber Lodge quickly learns three very important dates, viz., 1756, the year in which a warrant was issued authorizing the constitution of a lodge in Liverpool; 1809, the year in which certain Hull brethren decided to form a new lodge in Hull, and for that purpose acquired the warrant referred to ; and 1827, the year in which the foundation-stone of this building was laid. It may be noted as a matter of interest that the warrant of 1756, authorizing the constitution of a lodge in Liverpool, did not mention the name of the lodge, nor did the endorsement authorizing the transfer of the warrant to Hull. There is some obscurity as to what the name was originally, but there is no doubt that in 1809 it was the *Ancient Knight Templar Lodge*, which was changed to Humber in 1810, a name which, in all human probability, will never again be changed.

Now, when we speak of the founders of a lodge, we usually refer to those brethren who have actively interested themselves in obtaining a warrant for its constitution, and whose names are mentioned in the warrant itself. But no one, I think, would ever regard the Liverpool brethren named in the warrant of 1756, viz., Bros. Patrick Vaughan, _Edward Ledward and Thomas Griffiths, as the real founders of the Humber Lodge. One's thoughts would more naturally turn to the Hull brethren of 1809, and I have at times felt, if I may be permitted to say so without being controversial, that for some reasons it would have been much better if those Hull brethren of 1809 had obtained a new warrant. Had they done so, for one thing, their names, or at any rate the names of the principal founders, would have been mentioned in the warrant, and would thus have been clearly placed on record for all time. As it is, we scarcely know who they were beyond the fact that Bro. William White was the first Master. It may be that the information is available, but I have not been able to find it, and it is certainly not given in the writings of the late Bro. Shaw, or the late Bro. Oldroyd. What does appear to be quite clear is that from 1809 and right through the following decade, the lodge had a very precarious existence, and underwent many vicissitudes, the number of members—or at any rate the number of active members—being extremely small, and the spirit of harmony not always very evident. The meetings were held in an inn, as was the more or less general custom in those days, first in the *Fleece Inn*, in the Market Place, afterwards at the *Black Swan*, in Dock Street, and then the *Turk's Head* in Mytongate, the *Humber Tavern*, in Humber Street—that must have been a good address : Humber Lodge, Humber Tavern, Humber Street— and last of all, the *Neptune Inn*, in Chapel Lane. Nowadays we meet in a handsome, well-appointed temple. In those days the lodge met at one or other of the inns I have mentioned, in a room sparsely furnished and devoid of ornament or decoration. In these days it is no uncommon thing for nearly a hundred members to be present at an ordinary meeting of the lodge. In the old days to which I refer, the records show that the number attending was usually only six or seven. At one time, viz., in 1819, it is on record that in order to

discharge certain financial obligations, the lodge furniture and organ were sold, realizing £60, or, if the statement be more interesting if more precise, £61.12s.2p.

Now I come to the most important part of my remarks. In 1824, an event occurred, which afterwards proved to be of great historic interest, viz., the admission, as a joining member, of Bro. Lieut. William Crow, followed almost immediately by the admission of Bro. Thomas Feetam, both of these brethren having previously been active members of the *Minerva Lodge*. About the same time there was a large influx of joining members from the *Rodney Lodge*, which if not actually defunct at that time, was rapidly approaching the end of its existence. In the following year, that was, in 1825, Bro. Crow was elected Master, with Bro. Feetam as his Junior Warden, and it was apparently from this time that things began to move. The brethren mainly responsible for the election of the temple were Bro. William Crow, Bro. Thomas Feetam, and Bro. Joseph Eglin; and for their efforts in that connection and subsequently, these three brethren have for more than a century been regarded as the real founders of the Humber Lodge; and they are the brethren whose names we hold in respect and veneration, and especially honour on this and similar occasions. Bro. Crow, in particular, appears to have been a forceful personality, one of those people we sometimes meet with, who have the faculty of getting things done, and there, seems very little doubt that, although we honour three brethren as founders, the master-mind was that of Bro. Crow. As the late Bro. Shaw said, in his 'History of the Humber Lodge, 'At the time Bro. Crow joined the Lodge, its very existence was in the gravest jeopardy. So strong a supporter was Bro. Crow of the idea of the lodge owning its own temple, that he gave £100 himself towards the cost, followed by a gift of £32, this £132 forming a considerable proportion of the total cost of £545. Bro. Crow died in 1834, at the age of 63. The second founder. Bro. Feetam, was the Master in 1827, being installed a month after the foundation stone, was laid. He was an active member for many years, being the Treasurer for 30, and occupied the chair a second time in 1850. He died on the 31st December, 1858, at the age of 65. That is a long time ago, 75 years and yet we have a member, happily with us this evening, who remembers him. Our senior Past Master our octogenarian, ever green, greatly respected Past Master, Bro. Milner, has told me that he remembers when he was a small boy, seeing his father and Thomas Feetam engaged in conversation. I mention that as an interesting item, and as one which serves in some way to bridge the long span between 1827 and 1934. The third founder, Bro. Eglin, of whom we do not seem to have many particulars beyond that he was Master in 1828, went in 1836 to reside in Hamburg, where he died a few months later, at the early age of 34 He must have been a man of some substance, for I notice he gave £60 the Building Fund. We have photographs of Bro. Crow and Bro. Feetam but we do not appear to have one of Bro. Eglin. It may be of interest, especially to the younger brethren, to note the age of each of these three brethren at the lime of the foundation-stone laying, viz.: Bro. Crow was 56; Bio. Feetam 34; and Bro. Eglin, 25.

Worshipful Master, I hope I am not overtaxing the patience of the brethren. Although I have

tried to compress a good deal of information within a small compass, there are still a few things I wish to say. For instance, I wish to refer to the Benevolent Fund. The idea of the formation of a Benevolent Fund was first mooted in 1825, but the fund apparently was not seriously started until 1830, and then largely at the instigation of Bro. Crow, who, with Bro. Eglin, gave £15 to start it. At the end of the first year, the fund amounted to £31 19s. 6d. As a matter of interest, it may be noted that at the end of 1933, that is, 103 years later, the figure was £16,402 19s. 6d. It is rather odd that the shillings and pence should, be the same in both cases, but it will be noticed there has been a tremendous increase in the pounds figure.

Whilst honouring the memory of our famous founders, it is not out of place, perhaps, to mention that the lodge, during the past hundred years, has always been happy to number in its ranks men of high purpose and great endeavour, who, although they may not have been able to leave behind them such tangible evidence of their work as the founders did, yet contributed very largely, in their day and generation, in building up and maintaining the honour and reputation of the lodge. Amongst such names are those of Bros. John Ward, Jeremiah Stark, John Pearson Bell, John Love Seaton, William Tesseyman, Thomas Thompson, Edward Corris, Walter Cell Padgett. Hubert Johnson, Harry Glassman, Henry Jabez Oldroyd, Walter Johnson, Frederick William De Veiling and probably there are others whose names ought also to be mentioned. From the warmth of your reception of the name of Bro. De Veiling, I am sure you will agree with me that we ought to have his portrait on our walls. We, in the present day, who enjoy such a rich inheritance, have every reason to be proud of, and thankful for, their great work for the Lodge. Throwing our minds back, it is probably safe to say that with the exception of the introduction of electric light, and that must have been more than thirty years ago, there has not been, for a great many years, any material change in the temple itself. And when we reflect that the period embraced, in the last 107 years has seen the advent of the locomotive, the steamship, the motor car, the aeroplane, and not forgetting that modern marvel, the wireless, it is a striking fact, is it not, that amid all these changes, the principles and tenets of Freemasonry remain unchanged and unchangeable. As we contemplate the wonderful work of our illustrious founders and of the brethren whose names I have mentioned, let us endeavour to emulate their fine example. Let us remember the words of the poet:

'We live in deeds, not years;
In thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial. We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.'

Before submitting the toast, I would ask that when I do so, the brethren will rise and drink to it in silence. Worshipful Master and brethren, I give you the toast: To the memory of Bro. William Crow, Bro. Thomas Feetam, and Bro. Joseph Eglin, whose efforts led to the laying of the foundation-stone of this lodge building, on the 7th of May, 1827, and whom we honour as the Founders of the Humber Lodge."

*Printed and presented by Bro. P. Batten, I.G. and distributed by Permission of W. Bro. W. Kendall
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