

## HUMBER LODGE No 57. Founders Toast 7<sup>th</sup> May 1977

The Humber Lodge Warrant was first issued to a Lodge in Liverpool by the Grand Lodge of the most Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons by the Right Worshipful the Earl of Atholl, Grand Master, and was registered No. 53 on the 19th May 1756.

After some years the Lodge to whom it was issued ceased to exist, the Warrant became dormant, and on April 17th 1775 it was reissued and confirmed bearing the same number to a Lodge which became known as the Ancient Knight Templars Lodge meeting in Strand Street Liverpool.

For many years this Lodge was successful. In a letter to Grand Lodge dated December 22nd 1804 applying for two certificates the Master states that

" these two make twenty seven initiations since I have had the honour of presiding in Lodge No. 53 being only the last six months."

Certainly at that time it appeared to be prosperous, but some time later it came under the censure of Grand Lodge for unmasonic conduct, who in 1807 suspended the Lodge and demanded the return of the Warrant. There was some reluctance on the part of the Ancient Knight Templars to comply, as correspondence shows, but by 1807 it was certainly back in the possession of the Grand Lodge in London.

At this time there were a number of citizens of Hull who were members of two military Lodges Nos. 120 and 215 attached to the 2nd Royal Lancashire and Cumberland regiments of militia then stationed in the town, both holding Warrants under the " Ancients" dispensation, and meeting at the old Citadel. As it appeared that the regiments would soon depart from the town, the Hull members were naturally desirous of forming a Lodge of their own, and thus it was that early in 1809, a petition for a Warrant was sent to the Ancient Grand Lodge, supported and recommended by the two military Lodges. Across the margin of this petition is written

" Let the petitioners have the Warrant No. 53 lately held at Liverpool to be transferred to them February 24th, 1809."

The reason for transferring a Warrant rather than issuing a new one as would be the case today has caused much speculation in the past, but it is reasonable to assume that the Ancients Grand Lodge were using this method to overcome the dictates of the Unlawful Societies Act of 1799 which declared certain Societies unlawful, but in which a clause was inserted that the Act

" was not to extend to regular Lodges of Freemasons held before the passing of the Act."

To overcome this problem the Ancients Grand Lodge re-issued Warrants that had been surrendered by defunct Lodges, or where the withdrawal of a Warrant coincided with a new petition, of transferring the Warrant to a new body of Masons meeting at a different place. In this case they did not appear to create a new Lodge, merely a change of meeting place of an existing Lodge. It was thus decided to transfer the old Liverpool Lodge with its Warrant No. 53 to continue its existence as the Ancient Knight Templars Lodge in Hull.

Because of the circumstances of the transfer of the Warrant, the Humber Lodge was legally constituted in 1775, and has an unbroken existence from that date, a fact recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England when the Lodge received its Centenary Warrant in 1877. The first meeting in Hull was held on March 16th 1809 at the Fleece Inn, Market Place, and at this meeting Bro. William White was selected and installed as Worshipful Master, whilst Thomas Larard who had been designated as Worshipful Master in the petition, became Senior Warden. For a little over a year the name Ancient Knight Templars was retained, but the Brethren considering it more appropriate, the name was changed to Humber on July 2nd 1810. The number was altered to 73 at the union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813, to 65 in 1832, and to its present number 57 in 1863.

The first five years of the existence of the Lodge in Hull were years of steady progression. Regular Lodges of Instruction were held, and in 1811 a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons was formed and practised under the Craft Warrant, a perfectly regular arrangement for "Ancient" Lodges prior to the union of the two Grand Lodges. Following the formation of the United Grand Chapter, a separate Warrant was issued to the Humber Chapter in 1826. Thus in 1927 the Humber Chapter celebrated the centenary of its foundation after over a hundred years of activity and prosperity. In 1817 and for the next few years difficulties and dissensions arose within the Lodge, and during this period few records were maintained. The Lodge appears to have carried on in a perfunctory kind of way, with meetings at irregular intervals until 1820 when fortunes had fallen so low that the organ and sundry items of furniture were sold to liquidate its debts.

In 1822 an attempt was made to adjust the differences existing between the former treasurer and members of the Lodge, but following a stormy meeting, the treasurer informed the Provincial Grand Master of certain irregularities in the running of the Lodge, and his Lordship, asserting his prerogative suspended the Warrant.

From 1823 onwards there was a remarkable revival of interest: the suspension by Grand Lodge was removed, and a steady intake of new members again established the Lodge on a sounder basis. At this time there were three members in particular who made a determined effort to retrieve the past. Bros. Lieut. Wm. Crow, Thos. Feetham and Jos. Eglin. Aided by generous financial assistance the splendid silver jewels, furniture and effects of the Rodney Lodge were purchased. By faithful persistence and personal efforts these worthy Brethren and others inspired by their example arranged the purchase of a site in Osborne Street upon which to build a new Masonic Hall. Within seven months the building was erected and on October 3rd the Humber Chapter was convened for the express purpose of dedicating the new Hall built by the members of the number Lodge, and to hold the first Provincial Royal Arch Chapter for the Province. With the erection of the new building the Humber Lodge entered upon a long period of steady progress and gradually increasing prosperity.

The Mark Masons degree was worked by the Humber Craft Lodge as early as 1829 but having lapsed for some years, the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons issued a separate Warrant No. 182 in 1875, and following the unbroken working of the Mark degree under this Warrant, the centenary celebrations were held in 1975.

From 1830 onwards many improvements and additions were made to the Lodge premises until in 1864 the growth of the Lodge and the high position it held in the Craft generally warranted further extensive improvements, and a comprehensive scheme was adopted to convert the existing building into a banqueting room, provided for a Temple above it, with suitable offices and accommodation for the Tyler. The whole project was completed the following year at a cost of almost £1500, and the new Lodge buildings were consecrated on December 11<sup>th</sup> 1865 by R.W. Bro. George Marwood, Deputy Provincial Grand Master.

With the erection of the new buildings the Lodge settled down to a more uneventful career than that which characterised it in the earlier stages of its history. Many eminent citizens of Hull joined its ranks and have contributed in no small measure to the prosperity and stability of the Lodge, and whilst within a short history it is impossible to refer to the service of so many individual Brethren, we are proud to recall briefly the distinguished record of two of our members. Dr. John Pearson Bell, Master in 1842, Provincial Grand Secretary in 1860, and honoured in 1866 with the appointment of Deputy Provincial Grand Master, and W. Bro. Llewellyn Kitchen, Master in 1905, Past Grand Deacon of England, and Deputy Provincial Grand Master in 1940. Their record of service to Freemasonry is one of which the Humber Lodge will always be proud.

Honorary membership of the Lodge has from time to time been conferred upon some few whose service to Masonry and elevation to high Office have prompted the Lodge to offer them their own distinction, and amongst those so honoured are: In 1853 Lord Londesborough, Provincial Grand Master, 1855 R. W. Bro. George Marwood, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, 1863 The Rt.Hon. Earl de Grey and Ripon, Deputy Grand Master., 1895 The Earl of Londesborough, Past Grand Warden of England, and more recently in 1977 we are honoured by the acceptance of Hon. Membership by our R. W. Provincial Grand Master, The Most Hon. The Marquis of Zetland.

Following a petition by members, a daughter Lodge, the De La Pole No. 1605 was granted its Warrant in 1876, which in turn has provided the Humber Lodge with two granddaughter Lodges, the Wilberforce No. 2134 in 1885 and the Thesaurus No. 3891 in 1919. A second daughter Lodge the Holderness No. 3563 was consecrated in 1912, and so with our associations with the Humber Lodge of Installed Masters there are now five active Lodges; in North Humberside with close kindred ties to the old Humber.

On May 7th 1941, the old Lodge building in Anne Street which had stood for 114 years was completely destroyed by the ravages of war, and with the exception of our minute books and other records, all our valuable possessions accumulated over so many years were lost.

For the next eight years the Lodge enjoyed the hospitality of the Minerva and Thesaurus Lodges until new premises were purchased and prepared in Wellington Lane, and in due course consecrated on the 7th May 1949. Within ten years however the Lodge decided that the maintenance of a large premises by a single Lodge was no longer viable, and albeit with some reluctance the Lodge returned to the Masonic Hall in Park Street, since which time events have proved the correctness of the decision.

The bi-centenary of the Humber Lodge which we celebrate today has provided a suitable occasion to bring this short history up to date for the benefit of the Brethren and those who will surely follow, in the hope that their interest in the past will stimulate them to ensure the prosperity, unanimity and perpetuity of our beloved Humber Lodge No. 57 in the future.