

The Founders Toast Tuesday 16th May 1996

Presented by W. Bro. Winston Pannett

Tonight we celebrate the 169th Anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Humber Lodge **building** in Anne St. A building which stood for 114 years, until it was destroyed by enemy action on the 7th May 1941. In the Toast connected with this celebration we also honour as our Founders Bros. Lt. William Crow, Thomas Feetham and Joseph Eglin.

This is our tradition.

This is the tradition of the Humber Lodge.

And tonight I am honoured to have been invited to propose this Toast.

It may seem a little eccentric for us to still celebrate the laying of the foundation stone ... of a building that was totally destroyed 55 years ago..... And the fact that Bros. Crow, Feetham and Eglin were not our Founders at all.... However,... the dictionary describes the word founder as a person who establishes an Institution or Society. In this context we have no hesitation in honouring, as our Founders, these three illustrious brethren whose generosity, zeal and enthusiasm ...reversed the ailing fortunes of the Humber Lodge, between 1824 and 1827, making possible the laying of the foundation stone of the lodge building in Anne St. and which 169th anniversary we celebrate tonight.

This evening provides us with an opportunity to look back with pride - to remind ourselves of our heritage ... and to remember the work and dedication of so many Freemasons, who preceded us as members of our Lodge and greatly contributed to the Establishment we enjoy today.

Tonight also... we might ponder and consider what influence **we** might have on our history, as we move towards the next millennium.

Let us go back then very briefly to the beginning -

To set the scene and recall something of our history - Which hopefully will remind us of what we owe to our founders.

The early history of the Lodge is fairly well known and documented.

The Humber Lodge Warrant was first issued to a lodge in Liverpool by the Right Worshipful The Earl of Atholl, Grand Master of The Ancients, on the 19th May 1756, **some 240 years ago.**

After some years the warrant became dormant and in 1775 it was re-issued and confirmed bearing the same number....**53** to a lodge which became known as 'The Ancient Knights Templars', who met in Strand St. Liverpool.

For many years this lodge was successful - so much so that in a letter to Grand Lodge, the Master stated that he had carried out 27 initiations in the previous six months.

Some time later the warrant was withdrawn because of un-masonic conduct and returned to London.

In 1809 there was a petition from **10** citizens of Hull to form a new lodge.

These applicants were members of two military lodges, then stationed in the town. As it appeared that the Regiments would soon depart - they were anxious to form their own lodge - supported and recommended by the two military lodges.... **Warrant no, 53** lately held at Liverpool - was duly transferred to Hull on February 24th **1809**.

Thus the old Liverpool lodge with its warrant No. 53, continued its existence as the 'Ancient Knights Templar' lodge **in Hull**.

Although the Humber lodge as we know it really started in Hull in 1809, because of the circumstances of the warrant transfer, **it was legally constituted in 1775, 221 years ago**.

Thus on 16th March 1809 - the lodge met for the first time - at the Fleece Inn - Market Place. Bro. William White was selected and installed as Worshipful Master and Bro. Thomas Larard (W. Bro. Colin Watson's Great Great Grandfather) became Senior Warden.

On 2nd July 1810 - it was resolved that the name be changed from 'Ancient Knights Templar' to Humber lodge.

The first five years of the lodge in Hull showed steady progress - regular lodges of Instruction were held and a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons was formed.

In 1817 and for the next few years difficulties and dissension arose within the lodge and no records were maintained.

In 1820 the organ and sundry items of furniture were sold to clear its debts.

By 1821 the lodge had moved to the Black Swan in Dock St.... now with only 11 members left on the books.

The following year they moved to the Turks Head in Myton Gate and later its believed to the Humber Tavern in Humber St.

Now we come to Two very important dates..... **October 6th 1824**, Bro. Crow of the Minerva Lodge was accepted as a joining member;.....**November 3rd 1824**, Bros. Feetham & Eglin, of the same lodge, were also accepted as joining members.

From that time on the fortunes of the Humber lodge took a dramatic turn for the better, and due to the generosity of Bros. Crow, Feetham and Eglin..... there was a much needed improvement in the lodge finances.

For the next three years there was a tremendous revival in interest - so much so that - on March 21st 1827 it was proposed that the members of the Humber and Minerva lodges should unite for the purposes of erecting a Freemasons Lodge building.

Two days later a meeting, chaired by Bro. Crow resolved that a subscription be entered into for the purpose of building a new Masonic Hall, that a committee be formed of Humber and Minerva Lodges and ground purchased on the North side of Osborne St.

March 28th - a Building Committee was formed and an agreement signed for the purchase of Anne St. At this stage, for some unknown reason, the Minerva lodge decided to withdraw from the project.

April 19th - three weeks later - the plans had been prepared and the lodge accepted the tender for the building, from Bro. Kidd for £340.7s.2d.

May 7th - three weeks later, **the event we celebrate with such pride tonight, was the laying of the foundation stone by the DPG Bro. R M Beverley.**

The ceremony of laying the stone was very elaborate.....It was held in public.....Everyone wore full regalia.....And musicians played a solemn air. - There was a procession through the streets to the site.....And it was all carried out with tremendous pomp, colour and enthusiasm.....so popular in the early part of the 19th century.

Upon the foundation stone laid that day, **May 7th 1827**.....the superstructure of the Humber Lodge was raised.....which by the sincerity of its members, has I believe, ever remained honourable to the builders.....

Bros. Crow, Feetham and Eglin would rest content, I think, in the knowledge that in 1996 the old lodge, celebrating the anniversary of the event, with a fine record behind it and having a future as secure and assured as at any time in our history.

That same year Bro. Feetham was elected the Worshipful Master. On the 3rd of October the new building was opened.

Just think of the time schedule brethren ... 21st March 1827.....the first meeting to discuss the project and 149 days later the Grand opening ceremony..... a feat it might be difficult to equal today.

Times have changed.....55 years ago this very month the ravages of War deprived us of our building, but the spirit of our masonry remains constant..... As we look forward into the future, it helps to maintain a proper perspective by calling to mind the early struggles for survival by our Founders,

whose devotion to the principles of brotherly love, relief and truth, .. have set the scene for our present enjoyment.

It is not sufficient , in this day and age, when the moral values we hold dear have changed and are still changing , that we should forget the past and look only to the future.

It is right and proper that on this day each year we should take stock of ourselves and our lodge.

And remember with gratitude all our predecessors who have contributed to the prosperity of the Humber Lodge - determined to maintain our tradition.

I ask you therefore brethren to pause for a moment in our celebration and to think on these things.

Worshipful brethren and brethren be pleased to stand - and in darkness and in silence honour this most noble Toast:

Bro. Lt. William Crow.

Bro. Thomas Feetham

and Bro. Joseph Eglin

And all our Founders.....