

Founders Toast 8 May 2001
Presented by Bro. J.R. Proudlev. P.P. G.STWD.

Tonight I have the privilege and honour of submitting the toast.

It is to celebrate the 174th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Humber Lodge premises in Anne Street, Hull, and to those Brethren whom we regard as our founders.

This building in Anne Street stood for 114 years until destroyed by enemy action on May 7th/8th 1941. The warrant of our Lodge is dated 1756. A warrant of Constitution No. 53, was issued by the Duke of Atholl, Grand Master of the "Ancients" bearing the date, May 19th 1756. The Original destination and use of this warrant is a bit of a mystery.

What is certain is that it was re-issued in 1775, authorising, the holding of a Lodge at the "Buck and Dog tavern in Stand Street, Liverpool on the 1st and 3rd Monday in every calendar month, under the title of the "Ancient Lodge". How and why this Lodge was suspended and the warrant dormant until 1809 is also a mystery.

In 1809, several Freemasons in Hull applied to the Brethren of Liverpool, who were still in possession of the warrant and eventually purchased the same.

These Brethren were assisted in their request by two Military Lodges working in the town of Hull, No: 120 and No: 125 who were attached to the Cumberland and Lancaster regiments of Militia.

I have often wondered and I am sure that there are others amongst us who have also wondered why these Brethren offered to purchase an existing warrant instead of applying to the Grand Master for a new one.

In 1795, the King, King George III was attacked on his way to open parliament. The attack resulted in the passing of the "Treasonable Practices Act ", followed by the "Seditious Meetings Act" which prohibited meetings of more than 50 people without giving notice to a magistrate.

These acts were followed by the "Unlawful Societies Act", banning societies who took oaths not required by law. The effect of these acts stopped all Masonic activities.

It was well for us that we had influential personages leading the craft at that time thus the requirements of the act were amended, so that Lodges which had existed before the act were allowed to continue, provided that they sent annually, the names and descriptions of all their members to the clerk of the peace, on or before the 25th day of March, this ceased in 1966.

As no new lodges could be formed, the practice of re-issuing warrants started, whereby new Lodges were formed using old warrants belonging to Lodges no longer working.

Having secured the warrant, permission to work with it was obtained from the Grand Master, which the

endorsement on the document testifies to this day.

The first meeting was held on the 16th day of March, 1809. Bro. William White being the 1st Worshipful Master.

For just over a year, the Lodge was known as the "Ancient Knight Templars" meeting at the "Fleece Inn" in the Market Place. On July 2nd 1810, it was resolved that the name be changed to the "Humber Lodge".

From 1809 the Humber Lodge seemed to have had a rather precarious existence, not a lot of members and the spirit of "Love and Harmony" not always evident.

The meetings were held in various public houses, "The Fleece Inn", Market Place, the "Black Swan", Dock Street, the "Turks Head", Mytongate, the "Humber Tavern" and the "Neptune Inn" in Chapel Lane.

Two Brethren, Lt. Crow R.N. and Thomas Feetham were, on October 6th and November 3rd respectively, accepted as joining members.

The Humber Lodge owed these accessions to the misfortunes of a sister Lodge, the Minerva then No. 467, as both of these Brethren had originally been active members of the latter. It seems that a split had occurred in the Minerva Lodge, in fact, fourteen Brethren resigned in one evening. These Brethren, and more eventually became joining members of the Humber Lodge.

The year 1824 appears to have been the turning point of the Lodges fortunes. Bro. Lt. William Crow, R.N, Thomas Feetham and Joseph Eglin, using their business acumen and being wholly dedicated to the Humber Lodge started a fund for the building of a masonic hall.

The sum of £300 was speedily subscribed and the building committee signed an agreement to buy some land belonging to a Mrs. Osborne for the sum of £204. 16s. Od payable over 5 years, during which time it was to be rented for the annual sum of £10. 4s 9p.

The foundation stone was eventually laid on the 7th May 1827. The three Brethren mentioned, being mainly responsible for the erection of the Humber Lodge building are the ones who we regard as our founders.

Upon the foundation stone laid on the 7th day of May 1827, the superstructure of the Humber Lodge was raised.

I hope that the sincerity of the membership over the years have proved honourable to the builders ever remembering the energy, foresight and personal generosity of the men who we honour as our founders this evening. It is not sufficient in a day and age when moral values and principles which we hold dear and which motivated our founders have changed and are still changing, that we should forget the past and look only to the future.

We should still be determined to maintain our traditions which were set by our forebears not to change things just for changes sake. I ask you Brethren to pause for a moment in our celebrations to think on these things.

Worshipful Brethren and Brethren, be upstanding, in darkness and in silence to honour this noble and traditional toast.

Bro. Lt. William Crow R.N. Bro. Thomas Feetham, Bro. Joseph Eglin and all our founders.