

## The Founders Toast, May 3rd. 1984.

Tonight we celebrate the 157th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Humber Lodge premises in Anne Street, a building which stood for 114 years, and we honour as our founders Bros. Lt. Wm. Crow, Thomas Feetham and Joseph Eglin.

This is our tradition - this is the tradition of the Humber Lodge, and tonight it is my privilege to have been asked to propose this toast.

Because we had an historical evening in the Temple hearing about and looking at some of our old books, documents and possessions, I think it would be a little unfair to subject our members and our guests to a further lengthy discourse on Lodge history, and I propose therefore, without detracting from the sincerity of the toast, or the maintenance of our traditions, to be a little more brief than I have been known to be in the past.

In our celebration this evening we honour especially as our founders three men for very special reasons. Men who by their zeal, their generosity and their love of Freemasonry made this event possible, Bros. Crow, Feetham and Eglin. Although they were not the original founders in the true sense of the word, and although there have been a great many distinguished Masons who have contributed much to the prosperity of our Lodge, we honour especially these three because they came to the rescue when the Lodge was at a very low ebb in 1824 - when it was in fact right on the point of folding up altogether - a situation faced by many early Lodges, and by hard work, by enthusiasm and by tremendous generosity reversed the fortunes of the Humber Lodge and set it on the road to prosperity once again. And they didn't waste much time about it either.

Just think of the time schedule.

In October 1824 Bros. Crow & Feetham were accepted as joining members from the Minerva Lodge.

Six months later, in 1825 months Bro. Crow became Master.

In March 1827 a meeting was held with Bro. Crow in the Chair when it was resolved:

"That a subscription be entered into for the purpose of erecting a new Masonic Hall, and that ground on the north side of Osborne St, the property of Mrs. Osborne, be purchased for the site."

Five days later the purchase had been completed.

Three weeks later a tender for the building had been accepted for £349.7s 2p.

And three weeks after that the foundation stone was laid by W. Bro. Robert Mackenzie Beverley, Deputy Provincial Grand Master Yorkshire North & East Ridings. The date May 7th 1827.

The following month Bro. Feetham became Master, and by October the building had been completed and opened with due ceremony,

I doubt very much whether such a project could be completed in the same time today.

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone was very elaborate, it was held in public, everyone wore full regalia, and it was all carried out with tremendous pomp and ceremony, colour and enthusiasm which was so popular in the early part of the nineteenth century. Perhaps just to capture the mood of 157 years ago let me just read a little of the record for you.

The procession is formed. The musicians playing a solemn air: no common lively tune is to be heard: but something expressive of solemn jubilation, as in great Anthems, or a chant which might last during the procession, indeed nothing is so proper as this sort of Music.

Arrived at the place fixed for the building, the whole company stops, and forms itself into a square round the foundation stone. The canopy of the Grand Master is placed East of the stone, The Grand Master says:-

"Men, Women & Children here assembled to behold this ceremony, know all of you this day that we be lawful Masons true to the laws of our Country, and established of old with peace and honour in most countries, to do good to our Brethren, to build great buildings, and to fear God who is the great Architect of all things. Unless our Craft was good, and our calling honourable we should not have lasted so many centuries, nor should we have had so many illustrious Brothers in our Order, glad to promote our laws, and further our interests. Today we are here assembled in the face of you all to build a house for Masonry, which we pray God may prosper if it seem good to him, that it may become a house for good men and good deeds, to promote harmony and brotherly love throughout the world till the world itself shall end"

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, Bro. Crow, Bro. Feetam Bro. Eglin who contributed so much in terms of energy, foresight, service, and personal generosity would rest content I think in the knowledge that in 1984 the old Lodge was celebrating the 157th anniversary of the event, with a fine record behind it, and a future as secure and as assured as at any time in the past.

Perhaps Brethren it would not be inappropriate if we also celebrated the laying of another foundation stone, In 1864 the Lodge membership had grown to such an extent that very considerable extensions and improvements to the old building were required, and so another ceremony to lay the foundation stone for the extensions was required.

I find it interesting to recall the ceremonial of 120 years ago, and I thought you might be interested to hear just a little of the procedure. The Lodge met in the Public Rooms in Jarratt Street at 11 a.m. and the Lodge was opened in the First Degree. A procession was formed and they all proceeded to the site in Osborne Street via Grimston St. Saville St, Whitefriargate, Market Place, Mytongate, . The Order of procession was.

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In this day and age, we may find the ceremonies of laying foundation stones during the last century a little amusing, but those founders of our Lodge practised what in their time was right and proper and traditional. Attitudes are constantly changing, and we as Masons must move with the times, but the spirit in which the early members of our Lodge practised the Masonic Art will never change, our Ancient Landmarks are as secure as ever and as we all enjoy our Masonry here this evening we recall with great thankfulness, the dedication, the generosity and zeal of our founders who made our meeting here this evening possible.

Times may have changed, the ravages of War have deprived us of our old building, but the spirit of Freemasonry remains constant. Pause for a moment in our celebrations Brethren, and think on these things.

Worshipful Brethren and Brethren,  
In darkness and in Silence honour this most noble toast,  
Bro. Lt. Wm. Crow, Bro, Thomas Feetham, Bro. Joseph Eglin,  
and all our Founders.