

HUMBER LODGE NO. 57 - 7th May 1987

FOUNDERS TOAST

Worshipful master, worshipful brethren and brethren.

It is my privilege to propose the toast to our founders. I do so with great humility having researched the history of the Humber Lodge to some small degree and examined the contributions given to this toast by many eminent worshipful brothers in the past who I am sure were all far better qualified than I to undertake the task. We meet this evening and celebrate the 160th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Humber lodge premises in Anne street, hull, a building which stood for 114 years, when it was destroyed by enemy action on the 7th/ 8th May 1941.

We also tonight honour the toast to our founders, Brothers Lieutenant William Crow - Thomas Feetham -and Joseph Eglin.

Many of you have heard this toast proposed on numerous occasions and each year the proposer endeavours to change its presentation to maintain interest. The contents, however, can never be changed as it is recorded history and of which we are duly proud. I make no apology for repetition and for our most recent members I hope this dissertation proves to be of interest and enables you to ponder and consider what influence we might have on our history as we progress towards the twenty-first century.

On the 7th may 1827 the foundation stone of the Lodge building in Anne street was laid by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, W. Bro. Robert McKenzie Beverley and on the 19th september of that year the first meeting in the building was held, the dedication ceremony being some two weeks later.

In 1864 a second foundation stone was laid following extensive additions and alterations and the new building was consecrated in 1865.

It is not my intention to make this founders toast a history of Humber lodge but I might make reference to a few important dates.

In 1756 warrant No. 53 was issued authorising the constitution of a lodge in Liverpool and in 1809 certain Hull brethren decided to form a new lodge in this city and for that purpose acquired that same warrant. We appear to be unable to discover the name of the Liverpool lodge but in 1809 it became the Ancient Knight Templar Lodge which was changed to Humber in 1810.

We therefore cannot fairly describe the members named in the warrant of 1756 as being our founders.

The names of the founders of the Hull Lodge of 1809 are on record but for the sake of brevity I will refer to them by occupation. There were three watchmakers, two publicans, a shoe maker, a jeweller, a stationer and a merchant.

From 1809 the lodge lived a very precarious existence, its members being few in number and the spirit of harmony not always evident. The meetings were usually held on Sunday evenings and invariably in licensed

premises. For unspecified periods the following public houses were used, no doubt to the pleasure and monetary advantage of the brewers – The Fleece Inn, Market Place, Black Swann, Dock Street, Turks Head, Mytongate, Humber Tavern and the Neptune Inn, Chapel Lane.

The rooms were sparsely furnished and devoid of ornament or decoration. Records indicate that attendance were usually less than ten despite the fact officers were fined for non-attendance. Dissension at that time prevailed to the extent the Provincial Grand Master suspended the warrant until harmony was re-established. There are no records of meetings being held between 1817 and 1823 when on the latter date, the suspension was removed. Evidently the master in 1817 was not held responsible as he was re-elected to that office in 1823.

The year 1824 proved to be the turning point of the fortunes of Humber Lodge for in that year brothers Lt. William Crow, Thomas Feetham and Joseph Eglin joined the Lodge. By their faithful persistence and admirable business acumen they purchased the freehold site in Osborne Street in March 1827 for the sum of £145.

These three brethren were principally responsible for the erection of the temple and it is their names we hold in veneration and respect as founders of the Humber Lodge and which on this and similar occasions we especially honour.

In 1825 Bro. Lt. William Crow was elected master and he died in 1834 at the age of 63 years.

Bro. Thomas Feetham held the office of master in 1827 and 1850 and died in 1858 at the age of 65 years.

Bro. Joseph Eglin was elected master in 1828 and died in 1836 at the very young age of 34 years.

Through the unselfish efforts and enthusiasm of our founders the Humber Lodge continued to prosper and over the years members of great endeavour have worked to maintain the high honour reputation of the Lodge.

During the past 160 years there have been many far reaching changes in life style, particularly in technology. We in masonry have recently suffered close external examination resulting in unfair criticism aggravated by the media but to quote the representative of the Provincial Grand Master at the Humber installation of 1894 -

"We live in revolutionary times but a society of gentlemen like the masons is one of the strongest bulwarks which the crown could possess"

I say, in contemplating the wonderful work of our founders, let us endeavour to emulate their fine example by truth, honour and virtue as a perfect response to those who wish to unjustly criticise us. Look around you at this festive occasion see and feel the warmth of true companionship. Our glorious history and the strenuous efforts of our founders was not in vain, the values have not been diminished by the passing of time for the Humber Lodge moves towards the autumn of the century in strength and with fortitude.

We are proud to be masons and equally proud to be members of this old and respected lodge whose future is assured by the quality of its members following the precepts of free masonry.

Worshipful brethren and brethren -

Rise and in darkness and in silence honour this noble toast

To brothers - Lt. William Crow

Thomas Feetham

Joseph Eglin

And all the founders of the Humber Lodge No. 57.