

FOUNDERS NIGHT 12TH MAY 1992

Presented by Bro. Colin Watson.

Tonight is one of our special nights of the year and perhaps our most eccentric, for we celebrate tonight, the laying of the Foundation Stone of a building which was totally destroyed 51 years ago. We also honour three Founders, who are not founders at all, why do we do this?

The black and white floor of the Lodge room certainly represents the joys and sorrows, the chequered existence of the Humber Lodge, as we by tradition, in this toast, briefly dissect parts of our history - it must be brief because the first date we work from concerns that of our Warrant 19th May 1756 - The Ancient Knight Templars Lodge No. 53 of Liverpool. That is a long time ago, 236 years - Yes - I did say The Ancient Knights Templars Lodge No. 53 and at Liverpool.

Now there must have been Founders to that Lodge, but their details have dimmed somewhat in the hoary past.

To explain this first eccentricity, we must fly 53 years on to 16th March 1809 when this Warrant was transferred to Hull by endorsement and in 1810 its name was changed to what we know today, The Humber Lodge.

1809 and we meet our second party of Founders:

Thomas Larard, Watchmaker, Market Place, (My Great Great Grandfather)

Denton Northgraves, Watchmaker, Silver Street

Thomas Brown, Publican, Wincolmllee

Joseph Levy, Watchmaker, Blanket Street

Thomas Johnson, Stationer, Market Place

Samuel Abrams, Jeweller, Kingston Court

Thomas West, Merchant, French's Gardens

Israel Shacklock, Shoemaker, Dock Bridge

Andrew MacLaren, Publican, Grimsby Lane,

George Larkin. / have nothing of this occupation.

Who as members of Two Military Lodges No, 120 and 215 attached to the 2nd Royal Lancashire and Cumberland Regiments, stationed in Hull. Although I do know Thomas Larard was a Past Master of Minerva.

The request to Grand Lodge, for permissions to form a Lodge, by these brethren, had a note of urgency attached to it as the Military Lodges were soon to depart from Hull.

Why this urgency? when there was the Minerva Lodge and the Rodney Lodge already working in Hull, with the Rodney Lodge showing certain signs of becoming defunct, surely the answer was to join the Rodney Lodge and resurrect its fortunes - We must digress a little to find the answer to this question, which lies in the very deep rift in Freemasonry in those days - the fact that, at that time, there were two Grand Lodges - The reason for this is complicated and too long to explain in this toast, suffice it to say, the division was very deep and somewhat bitter,

Grand Lodge being formed in 1717 - but by 1751 a breakaway group headed by Lawrence Dermott formed a rival Grand Lodge known as the Ancient Grand Lodge - Lawrence Dermott's name is on our Warrant by the way. So bitter was the feeling between the Ancients and the Moderns, as they were called, that fraternal visits between the lodges were forbidden. So when we discover that the Minerva and the Rodney Lodges were both Modern Grand Lodge affiliated - obviously the Military Lodges were not - these Founders then were desperately needing an Ancient Lodge, to work what they thought was the correct workings, and so the request and the urgency.

The reply was just as urgent and the Duke of Atholl, Grand Master of the Ancients Grand Lodge, wrote in the margin of the application "Give them the Warrant of No, 53" - the Liverpool Lodge having had this warrant withdrawn for some misdemeanour. Whether the transfer of the warrant was in fact to speed up the process, due to the withdrawal of the Military Lodges or to overcome the Unlawful Societies Act of 1799, which declared certain Societies unlawful - but in a clause of that act was inserted that "the Act was not to extend to regular Lodges of Freemasons held before the passing of the Act" To overcome the problem the Ancients Grand Lodge re-issued Warrants that had been surrendered by defunct lodges. Which of the two is not of any real importance, the main thing is that those 10 good men and brethren of Hull got their Ancients Lodge in Hull in 1809, and had its name changed to Humber Lodge a year later. All that was 183 years ago, I think brethren that if those 10 brethren and the members of the Military Lodges had known that we would be remembering their efforts 183 years later, they would rest very content in the Grand Lodge above.

So our little pocket of history has so far taken us from 1756 to 1809 (53 years and we are, it seems, not get at the beginning) The Lodge over the next few years, 18 to be historically correct, progress through many peaks and troughs, the first 5 years being of steady progress. Regular Lodges of Instruction were held and Royal Arch Chapter was formed and practised in 1811 under the Craft Warrant. The peak must have been the obtaining of a Warrant, the low when all the furniture had to be sold to pay debts - and shortly after that the Warrant was withdrawn for some serious misdemeanour, that must have been very low indeed, in 1822.

Now I am a sincere believer in the theory that situations create the men for the job - and it is at this very low ebb that the names of the three brethren who always take precedence over all others and form the centre of our toast this evening appear in 1823.

Bro. Wm. Crow. Bro, Thos. Feetam and Bro. Jos, Eglin. These three brethren aided by generous financial assistance, the Silver Jewels, Furniture and effects of the Rodney Lodge were purchased. Drawing in others as great men always do, they also 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 Humber 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 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 adapted 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 11th 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 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 premise by a single Lodge was no longer viable, and albeit with some reluctance the Lodge returned to the Masonic Hall in Park Street. And so we return to the Minerva Home and I think Bros. Crow, Feetam and Eglin will also rest in the Grand Lodge above content that their baby has grown up and nested in their mother lodge's home, after all those years.

I have resisted the temptation of many of my predecessors in this toast to enlarge upon the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, a grand affair of marching and music and addresses to "The Good Citizens of Hull"

I have also resisted stories of individual characters' generousities, such as the night long long ago, when we met in public houses and the landlord threw out the brethren in the middle of a ceremony and they immediately made off to another venue walking through the streets with the wardens' candles still lighted.

I do not want to spoil your researches brethren into our past, but to enjoy much much more of our history you will find much of value in our library.

And so brethren, I draw to a close of my toast, but not to the close of our history, which rolls on, my talk has been of events - we have wandered through the change of name, we have had various numbers attached. We seem in the past to have met in every pub in Hull – owned our own premises in Osborne Street, Wellington Lane and rented in Park Street and Dagger Lane. It is all there Brethren to see, to find, to enjoy.

A Freemasons Lodge is not a building, it is a collection of men – you brethren are the character of the future and these are the happy times you will talk about in many years to come and it is all due to our Founders, especially the three brethren who laid the foundation stone of a building, a symbolical stone of the foundation of the Lodge as we know it today.

And so I ask you to think on these things — to be upstanding take your glasses in hand - and in darkness and in silence to honour the toast to:

Bro. Wm Crow Bro. Thomas Feetam Bro. Joseph Eglin and all our founders