

## THE FOUNDERS TOAST- 13th may 1997. 170th anniversary

Presented by W. Bro. G. A. Wiles

W. Brethren and brethren.

Tonight we celebrate 170th anniversary of laying of the foundation stone of the Humber lodge No 57 Anne St, Hull. The building of this magnificent temple. I have taken a copy of a picture from our history book which I hope you will feel free to peruse after this meeting.

Tonight I would like to take you beyond that ceremony and ask you the question.

“Whence came freemasonry?”

This question which as occupied the attention of many profound students. They have pondered many rites and ceremonies of Egypt, Greece and Rome. Many ancient statues were decorated with aprons, some plain white, while others with blue, purple and crimson. Some of wrought gold others with tassels and fringes we could dig very deep and find many other related circumstances. What is clear we have been given a glorious heritage. What is certain is our masonic heritage as its origins with operative stone masons. Their perfection and craftsmanship portrayed in the many ancient buildings throughout England which are the envy of the world. One great example to this is York minster which has withstood storms and tempest and in recent years even fire. It is significant that at this very time we are active in part of the preservation of this building. I refer to the St William's window.

There is no doubt that the Grand Lodge of England the Premier Grand Lodge of the world was founded in 1717 by 4 London lodges all meeting in various taverns in the city of London. We have the period of Ancients and Moderns often referred to in this toast, also the various numbers attached to our warrant. The important date as far as I am concerned is July 1810, when we became the Humber Lodge the resolution being past in the Fleece Inn in Market Place.

From this we enter the ups and downs in our history until 1817 then for some 3 years it seems no official minutes were kept we can only assume the lodge was in a bad way and near to total extinction. An emergency meeting was called on June the 21st 1819 for the election of officers, only 4 brethren turned up and business could not be transacted. The funds were also exhausted because of the urgency of the situation these brethren made arrangements to hold a dinner free of charge for the brethren the date June the 24th 1819 only 5 brethren assembled. On July 31st the same year only 4 brethren attended including the Tyler. It was then resolved to sell the furniture and to liquidate the lodge. The net proceeds £62-12-2d everything being disposed of with the exception of the warrant, jewels and some items of clothing. A financial dispute between the treasurer and the lodge resulted in the treasurer taking possession of these.

For some 15 months it seems the Humber lodge ceased to meet. November the 8th 1820 a meeting of 6 brethren resolved that the lodge should meet on the first Wednesday in every month in the Black Swan, Dock Street. On January 12th the lodge was certainly unconstitutional because the warrant and the other items saved from the sale being still in the hands of the brother who formally acted as the treasurer. It was not until the 22nd of November

1822 that an attempt was made to adjust these differences with the former treasurer.

On that date he was summoned to attend with the warrant in order to arrange the surrender of the same. The treasurer did not believe this would be a meeting of brotherly love left the warrant with the bar maid charging her to hand it over to no one but himself. It was a meeting of some considerable discord and disorder. The warrant was recovered by the W. Master leaving the meeting and persuading the bar maid to hand over the warrant. Instead of bearing it in triumph to the meeting he deposited it in an empty house leading down a passage to Dock Street. You will imagine the brotherly love continued. Because of this conduct the warrant was suspended by the P.G.M., the lodge then continued in a very irregular manner installing a W. Master without it. 11 months after this event peace and harmony restored the suspension was lifted. The time of uncertainty continued until two dates stand out In 1824, Oct 6th and Nov 3rd respectively two brethren Lt. William Crow, and Thomas Feetam where accepted as joining members from the Minerva lodge.

It was then the fortunes of the Humber lodge changed. As a direct result of these brethren's actions the land for the building of the foundation stone we celebrate this evening was purchased from Mrs Osborne on the north side of Osborne Street, which became our home.

The lodge meeting at this time in the Turks Head the landlord was not very pleased at the prospect of the loss of income of his earnings ordered the lodge to move. The W. Master, wardens and officers having to pick up the various items of furniture. With candles still burning the brethren had to leave immediately.

The W. Master been fearful for the warrant once again wore it round his body in place of his apron. The whole of the lodge effects having to be deposited in the home of Bro. Feetam. The next lodge meeting was held at the Humber Tavern, Humber street. Then the Neptune Inn, Chapel Lane. Then came the marvellous ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone. Four months after the ceremony the building was completed. I took a photocopy of this photograph from our history book which I submitted to you at the beginning of my toast. I was astounded that the most prominent feature standing out with such clarity was the all seeing eye of god. The most important lesson to us all.

I have taken you through these uncertain times in our history to emphasize the importance of this night when we remember the names of Bros, Crow, Feetam and Eglin. Their dedication to the Humber lodge.

In my introduction to this toast my emphasis was on the origins of our order. I tried to take your minds back to the very beginning of freemasonry how the principles of all we believe in was born. From the erection of the magnificent edifices, the skills and craftsmanship of our ancestors. The symbolic skills we apply to our masonic believe today. Let us then with humility remember the strength and dedication of those men who have toiled endlessly to leave us with our inheritance and relate this to our founders.

Not only our founders but the brethren we have known in our lifetime, great men who worked to make this our beloved lodge the Humber No 57 our sacred retreat in times of sorrow and stress. W. Bro Chris Harvey, W. Bro Sidney Gibbs, W. Bro Clive Naylor just three from many that I mention because of the nearness I personally feel to them.

So brethren we remember our founders and as we do so let us with their example set our hopes, our ambitions for this our beloved lodge as high as they did. I quote the words of one historian "God grant that our foundation is sure and our building is upright so that in our last day, when the world's great architect inspects our work, it will meet with his approval."

Brethren, be upstanding in darkness and in silence we honour the toast to Bros. Crow, Feetam, Eglin and all our founders.

We should ask ourselves are we making any contribution to this our beloved lodge. It was with interest to me to discover in my preparation for this toast to our founders, That Bros, Crow and Eglin donated £10-00 and £5-00 respectively to establish the Humber lodge benevolence fund January 1830 and that Bro. Crow became the first treasurer of that fund.

It is with sadness I note that 164 years later the only history we can record is that W. Bro Reginald Gibson Smith had to put this same fund into dissolution due to the fact that it could no longer be sustained with the level of funding and that I was the last treasurer and was instrumental in the disposal of the same fund. I implore each and every one of you to strive and to emulate our founders and to look to add to the history of the Humber lodge and preserve its dignity with our own efforts.