



**Leicester**

**The Lodge of Research  
No. 2429**

**Transactions 2001-02**

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## EDITORIAL

The three meetings of the Lodge this year have ranged widely. The progress of Freemasonry under the United Grand Lodge of England has always had its vicissitudes. Its development overseas in the Empire raised some interesting issues and also how they were resolved, such a paper is that of our Master. The history of our hall has been researched over the years but heretofore has not been put into the context of its location and it is interesting to study its place in the development of the Town and City. The History of the Grand Superintendent of Works shows that some Grand and Provincial honours are operative, whilst others are speculative.

Most of us are familiar with the first half of Chapter 12 of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Our *Transactions* over the years have published many interpretations of it by many distinguished scholars. Despite it having been written over two thousand years ago, W.Bro. Rev. Canon M. Wilson, P.A.G.Chap., P.P.G.Chap. expounds on its relevance for today.

During the year there have been two consecrations of "side degrees" in this Province. The orations delivered on these occasions not only dwell on the peculiarities of the Orders, but also their relevance to Freemasonry in general and the world in which we live.

**The Lodge of Research, No. 2429**

Officers 2001–2002

*Worshipful Master*

**BRO. [REDACTED]**

Bro. ALAN SIMPSON (P.M.)	Senior Warden
Bro. M. DAVID M. PARKES BOWEN (P.M.)	Junior Warden
Bro. NORMAN B. ASHCROFT P.M.	Chaplain
Bro. ROGER G. PIPES (P.M.)	Treasurer
Bro. WALTER W. GLOVER (P.M.)	Secretary
Bro. WILLIAM V. DEAN P.M.	Director of Ceremonies
Bro. JEREMY A. RIDGE P.M.	Almoner
Bro. AUBREY N. NEWMAN P.M.	Charity Steward
Bro. PETER A. NEAVERTON (P.M.)	Senior Deacon
Bro. JOHN M. CAPPIN (P.M.)	Junior Deacon
Bro. KENNETH G. MASON P.M.	Assistant Director of Ceremonies
Bro. RALPH LEEK (P.M.)	Organist
Bro. JOHN T. HARRISON (P.M.)	Assistant Secretary
Bro. BRYAN B. WILLS (P.M.)	Inner Guard
Bro. VICTOR C. CLARKE (P.M.)	Steward
Bro. MICHAEL E. HERBERT (P.M.)	Steward
Bro. ALAN SELBY (P.M.)	Tyler

*Immediate Past Master*

**W.BRO EDWARD W. BRAMFORD**

*Master Elect*

**W.BRO. ALAN SIMPSON**

*Treasurer's Address*

**"Tanglewood", 35 The Oval, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5JB  
Tel. 0116-2713795**

*Secretary's Address*

**Freemasons' Hall, 80 London Road, Leicester LE2 0RA  
Tel. 0116-2545325**

*Editor*

**W.BRO. J.A. RIDGE  
c/o The Library and Museum  
Freemasons' Hall, 80 London Road, Leicester LE2 0RA  
Tel. 0116-2545325**

**Redacted**

## Historical Note

The Lodge of Research, No. 2429, was consecrated on 26th October, 1892, W.Bro. J.T. Thorp, a masonic historian of outstanding note, being installed as the first Master.

**The Lodge seeks to exchange opinions with Freemasons throughout the world, and to attract and interest Brethren by means of Papers on the historical and symbolic aspects of Masonry.**

(Revised By-Laws, 1962)

## Membership

The membership of the Lodge is limited in number. The members will *as a rule*, be elected from among the members of the Correspondence Circle.

## Papers

The writers of Papers are alone responsible for the opinions expressed therein.

## CORRESPONDENCE CIRCLE

The members of the Correspondence Circle are entitled  
to have posted to them, as issued, the Summonses convoking the meetings of the Lodge,  
to be supplied gratis, with the Annual *Transactions* of the Lodge,  
to attend Meetings of the Lodge  
to take part in any discussions relating to any Papers which may be read, or subjects of general masonic interest which may be introduced,  
to read Papers and introduce discussions on masonic subjects (by arrangement).

They are not entitled to vote, hold office, or take part in the management of the Lodge,

A Candidate for Membership of the Correspondence Circle is subject to election by a show of hands.

The names of Candidates will be submitted to the Permanent Committee at their next Meeting after completed application forms have been received by the Secretary.

No entrance fee is required, and the Annual Subscription is £10.00 payable in advance in the month of July. Any member whose subscription is unpaid for the current year is not entitled to a copy of the Lodge *Transactions*.

The Lodge reserves to itself the full power to exclude any Member from the Correspondence Circle whom it may deem unworthy of continued membership.

*Note:-* All Master Masons, in good standing, whether Members of Lodges in this Province or elsewhere, are eligible for membership of the Correspondence Circle.

### **The Four-hundred and sixty-fourth Meeting**

was held on

MONDAY 26th November 2001.

There were present W.Bro. E.W. Bramford, W.M.; W.Bro. [REDACTED], S.W.; W.Bro. A Simpson, J.W.; thirteen officers, nine full members, thirty-three members of the Correspondence Circle and seven visitors, a total attendance of sixty-five.

Ten Brethren were elected members of the Correspondence Circle.

The Master elect, W.Bro. [REDACTED] was presented by the Director of Ceremonies, installed by W. Bro. E.W. Bramford and proclaimed in the three degrees.

After the Worshipful Master had appointed and invested his officers for the year he delivered his inaugural address entitled:

“Prosonno Coomar Dutt – A Clash of Wills and Patience Rewarded”

The Brethren afterwards met together for refreshments and conversation.

### **The Four-hundred and sixty-fifth Meeting**

was held on

MONDAY 22nd January 2002.

There were present W.Bro. [REDACTED], W.M.; W.Bro. A. Simpson, S.W.; W.Bro. M.D.M. Parkes Bowen, J.W.; twelve officers, nine full members, thirty-seven members of the Correspondence Circle and nine visitors, a total attendance of seventy.

Three Brethren were elected members of the Correspondence Circle. W.Bro. B.E. Head presented a paper entitled:

“A History of Freemasons’ Hall and the Environs”

The Brethren afterwards met together for refreshments and conversation.

**The Four-hundred and sixty-sixth Meeting**  
was held on  
MONDAY 25th March 2002.

There were present W.Bro. A. Simpson, J.W.; twelve officers, nine full members, twenty-eight members of the Correspondence Circle and one visitor, a total attendance of fifty-one.

In the absence of the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. [REDACTED], the Master's chair was occupied by W.Bro. E.W. Bramford.

Three Brethren were elected members of the Correspondence Circle.

The annual election resulted as follows:-

Master elect W. Bro. A. Simpson  
Treasurer W.Bro. R.G. Pipes.

V.W.Bro. D.W. Burford, P.J.G.W. presented a paper entitled:

"The History and Duties of the Grand Superintendent of Works."

A vote of thanks was given by the Provincial Grand Master and the Brethren expressed their appreciation.

The Brethren afterwards met together for refreshment and conversation.

## PROSONNO COOMAR DUTT – A CLASH OF WILLS AND PATIENCE REWARDED

W.Bro. [REDACTED] C.St.J., P.P. Supt. Wks

The subject of this dissertation is a Hindu gentleman by the name of Prosonno Coomar Dutt. What started as research into an “interesting” event concerning this man has developed into a study of character, not wholly edifying to one of the participants and, at present, remains incomplete but time and circumstance should see the completion as far as is possible.

Mr. Dutt was born on Wednesday 16th March 1836 into the then well known Dutt family of Calcutta, India. When he was twenty-seven years old, in 1863, and for whatever reason, he had his name put forward as a possible Candidate for Initiation into the “Courage with Humanity Lodge, No. 392”, Calcutta. However, by virtue of Article 55 of the by-laws of the District Grand Lodge of Benegal which stated:

*“No Mahomedan or other Asiatic shall be initiated in any Lodge without the previous sanctions of the Provincial Grand Master”*

the Master of the Courage with Humanity Lodge was obliged to put this proposition to the Provincial Grand Master. Throughout this research one finds some confusion between the use of Provincial and District as regards the “Provincial or District Grand Master” or “Lodge”.

The dispensation was denied by the District Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Hugh David Sandeman, who decided that it would be discussed at the Quarterly Communication of the District Grand Lodge, to be held on the 22nd September 1863. The precise motion was:

*“As to whether the admission of Hindus into Freemasonry is in consonance with the principles of the Order as inculcated by the Grand Lodge of England.”*

After deliberation which, apparently, included most of the leading members of the District, Sandeman stated

*“That Hindus were not eligible for admission into Masonry, and, further, that it was not desirable, with reference to social considerations, that they should be admitted, and so long as he held a veto under the by-laws, he would exercise the power rigidly and with the utmost caution.”*

A ballot was taken which supported Sandeman and was unfavourable to the admission of Hindus.

As a result of this setback Mr. Dutt wrote, on the 9th November of 1863, to the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, the Right Honourable the Earl of Zetland, K.G., in the following terms:



PROSONNO COOMAR DUTT,  
*Deputy District Grand Master, Bengal, 1895.*

*My Lord,*

*It is with great diffidence I venture on so bold a step as to address your Lordship direct, but trust my extreme anxiety to place before you, with as little delay as possible, a matter of deep interest to which very many of my countrymen will plead a sufficient excuse for my presumption in neglecting the ordinary official channels of communication and appealing immediately to your Lordship. The subject which I thus venture to beg your Lordship's kind consideration of, is the recent decision of the Provincial Grand Master of Bengal, unjustly, as I humbly conceive, excluding Hindus from Freemasonry, and more particularly my own peculiar case. My application for admission to the Fraternity, accompanied by testimonials as to character from gentlemen of the highest respectability, was submitted by the Worshipful Master of Lodge "Courage with Humanity", No. 392, English Constitution, to the Provincial Grand Master, who, at the Quarterly Meeting of the District Grand Lodge, expressed himself opposed to, and decided against the admission of Hindus, and I am consequently shut out.*

*The peculiar hardship of my case is this: previously to the above meeting in July last, another Hindu of my own rank in society was proposed and initiated into the Order, upon making a declaration which I also am quite ready to make, namely: "I am not a Pantheist or a Polytheist. I do not identify my Creator with any one of his creatures. I believe in the existence of one Great Architect of the Universe, whose wish is the happiness of all his creatures, whose will is law, whose laws are impressed on the hearts of every right-thinking individual, and whose never-failing justice shall reach the transgressor of His laws on the Great Day of Judgment to come." And yet by this arbitrary decision of the District Grand Master, I am excluded without recourse, while he enjoys all the privileges of Freemasonry.*

*This I consider unfair and unjust in the extreme, and I humbly trust that your Lordship may take a similar view and revoke a decree that debarbs so many of the human race from an Order which professes to be open to all and to exclude no man on account of his religion.*

*In common with a large number of my countrymen, I am, from social reasons, obliged to conform to certain caste rules, but I am not now, nor ever was, an idolator; and while Mussulmans, Jews, and Parsees are admitted, I complain that our exclusion is most unjust.*

*But many of the highest Masons, and a moiety of the Brethren were in favour of our admission, and it does not seem to me altogether right that the decision of a question of so much moment should depend upon the peculiar views or prejudices of a single individual.*

*The objection that we cannot be properly obligated is so weak a one as hardly to deserve notice. Surely the oath on which our evidence is taken in Courts of Justice on matters of the gravest importance, and which depend often on life or death, must be sufficient.*

*With a view that your Lordship should know directly from ourselves how deeply we feel this injustice, I have taken the liberty of intruding on your valuable time. Again asking pardon for my boldness, and trusting a favourable hearing from your Lordship, I beg to subscribe myself.*

*Your Lordship's Most humble and devoted servant,  
Prosonno Coomur Dutt,  
Colootolla, Calcutta,*

To which he received the response from Freemasons' Hall, London, on 7th February 1865.

*Sir,*

*I must beg you to accept my apologies for the delay that has occurred in communicating to you the decision come to by the Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland, with respect to the general question relating to the initiation of Hindus and other natives of India. Delay was unavoidable as letters had to be written to India and information had to be gathered from different sources, for until the receipt of your first letter of the 9th November 1863, the Grand Master was not aware that any objections had ever been raised against the initiation of any one who professed a belief in the Great Architect of Heaven and Earth and who was in other respects worthy to be admitted into the Order; and his Lordship was surprised to find that the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal had passed, and had acted upon, a prohibitory law. This law, however, has since been removed, and there is nothing, at least, in as far as the Grand Master can infer to prevent you or any other gentlemen who believe in the one Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent God, and who in private life practise the sacred duties of morality from being initiated into the secrets and mysteries of our Order. It is, of course, to be understood that each Private Lodge has its own rules respecting the admission or rejection of Candidates. With these by-laws, provided they are not inconsistent with the general laws of the Order, the Grand Master cannot interfere.*

*I have the honour to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
Wm. Gray Clarke,  
Grand Secretary.*

Now, although the delay in replying to Mr. Dutt is acknowledged by the Grand Secretary, the mitigating circumstances are not fully explained. He did not get a reply for fifteen months, because, in the meantime, the Grand Master and Sandeman had crossed swords over the case of W. Bro. Jordan, Master of the Lodge of Harmony. Bro. Jordan had sought permission to initiate Prince Said-ud-Dowlah. Again Article 55 came into play and, again permission was refused. Bro. Jordan received written support from three Past Masters of his lodge who encouraged him to disregard the refusal and initiate the Prince. Jordan proceeded with the Initiation.

Sandeman has been described as a dominating and formidable personality. He was powerfully built with a vigorous “*full set*” of magnificent moustache and beard. W. Bro. G.E. Walker in the Prestonian Lecture of 1979\* applies the phrase, from John Aubrey, of “*great goggli eyes, not of sweet aspect*”. This was a man who would brook no opposition. A man who would react swiftly and extravagantly.

Two of the Past Masters quickly made their submission and apologised, but one, a W. Bro. O’Mealy, continued with his resistance. Meanwhile, Jordan acted in a remarkable manner by placing the Lodge in abeyance and decamping with its Warrant and books. The District Grand Master demanded their return. Jordan refused. As a result, the District Grand Lodge unanimously ordered him to be excluded, whilst O’Mealy was to be suspended from the Craft for one year.

The District reported this to the Grand Lodge. However, ignoring the District by-law 52 which required any appeal to be routed through the District, Bros. Jordan and O’Mealy appealed directly to the Grand Lodge.

When the Grand Secretary wrote to Sandeman in no uncertain terms. By-law 55 “*cannot be upheld or enforced; it is directly opposed to the spirit of our Institution and to the very words of the Antient Charges*”. Also “*It is the privilege of a Lodge, and one which cannot be interfered with, to decide who it will receive, the required formalities ... being duly observed*”. And continued that Bro. O’Mealy was justified in his advice to Bro. Jordan, and “*in asserting and continuing to maintain his opinion on the subject*”. The Grand Master “*directs that Bro. O’Mealy be forthwith reinstated*”. The expulsion of Bro. Jordan would certainly be reversed, “*seeing that the offence charged against him in the first instance was his refusing to obey an illegal by-law*”, if the matter were to come formally before the Grand Lodge. Sandeman was advised to get the District Grand Lodge to reverse its own decision, in order to forestall an appeal.

Finally, the Grand Master instructed Sandeman that many of the Bengal by-laws “*are contrary to and inconsistent with the laws and constitutions of Grand Lodge*”; and later he ordered by-laws 52 (Appeals) and 55 (Asiatics) to be struck out.

The Grand Secretary wrote, privately, to Sandeman urging Bengal not to appeal against these decisions. But they insisted on doing so, and were inevitably turned down by Grand Lodge. The rejection of the appeal was announced at District Grand Lodge by the Deputy District Grand Master, with “*a strong expression of regret at the indelicacy of the applause with which the reversal of a decision of this District Grand Lodge was received by members of the Grand Lodge of England*”.

However, one must question Sandeman’s true motives in opposing Mr. Dutt, for at the Initiation of the Maharajah Dulcep Singh in Star in the Fast, in March 1861 he said in a speech:

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\* “250 Years of Masonry in India: A Study in Resolved Discords.”

*"... while Duleep Singh had been admitted ... in Calcutta, another Lodge ... had lately witnessed ... the initiation of a Mohammedian nobleman, while the Rajah of Kapurthala and his brother Bikram Singh were about to join our Order at Lahore. He was also glad to see as a guest ... his noble Brother the Nawab Zulaladin ... Were not these ... ample and convincing proofs that Freemasonry is not an institution for any particular sect or nation or for any one country or religion? And was it not a pleasing thing to know and to feel that there does exist in this world a least one Society where, whatever might be the feelings of race, all could meet as brothers descended from one common parent ..."* Etc etc.

It would appear that, to quote an English Cricket Captain a century or so later that there is one law for one and another law for the other.

We return to Mr. Dutt who forwarded a copy of the first response from the Grand Lodge to the District Grand Master of Bengal, to which there was no acknowledgement.

On the 16th day of August 1865, Mr. Dutt again forwarded another representation to the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England against the appeal of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal to which the following reply was received from Freemasons' Hall, London, dated 19th October 1865,

*Sir,*

*I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 16th August last, referring to your correspondence that has already taken place, with reference to the initiation into Masonry of Hindus and other natives of India and stating that the Provincial Grand Master of Bengal still refuses to allow any Lodge in his District to initiate such persons, and requesting that the Grand Master will order that the application of Hindus and other Asiatics may be received in a Private Lodge without informing the Provincial Grand Master of Bengal of such application. As regards expressions made use of by certain Brethren at a meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal to which you allude, you must please distinctly understand that although the Most Worshipful Grand Master declared that it was illegal to have a by-law prohibiting Lodges from initiating Hindus and other Asiatics, His Lordship did not intend, and indeed he has no power, to interfere with the individual feelings or opinions of any member of the Order, nor with any decision a Lodge might come to upon a ballot. Every member of a Masonic Lodge has a perfect right to vote against the admission of any Candidate whose admission would, in his opinion, be disadvantageous to the welfare and harmony of his Lodge. This is a matter beyond the Grand Master's control, and on that it would be very undesirable to interfere with.*

*The Grand Master has, since the meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal to which you refer, again refused to allow the objectionable by-law to be retained. Any Lodge that is so disposed can admit you or any other native; but you must understand that no Lodge is compelled to do so.*

*I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
Wm. Gray Clarke,  
Grand Secretary.*

The following letter was received by the Right Worshipful District Grand Master of Bengal in reply to his appeal dated the 24th June 1865:

*Freemasons' Hall, London, W.C.,  
23rd September 1865.*

*To: H.D. Sandeman, Esq., C.S.,  
District Grand Master, District Grand Lodge of Bengal,  
Freemasons' Hall, 55 Bentinck Street, Calcutta.*

*Rt. Wor. Sir and Bro.,*

*I have the honour to inform you that the Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland, has again, in conformity with the wishes of the Brethren in Bengal, very fully and carefully considered the by-laws relating to "Appeals" and to the "initiation of Hindus or other Asiatics." The printed Report of the Proceedings of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal, at a meeting held on the 24th June last, when these questions were discussed, have also been submitted to His Lordship.*

*As regards the initiation of Hindus or other Asiatics, the Grand Master feels bound to adhere to the opinion he has already formed on this subject, and which has been communicated to you.*

*Every Private Lodge has the undoubted right to decide for itself whom it will admit provided the ancient landmarks and the laws of the Grand Lodge are not infringed. In one of the ancient charges it is expressly stated that "Let a man's religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the Order provided he believes in the Glorious Architect of Heaven and Earth and practises the sacred duties of morality."*

*The Grand Master cannot alter that rule, neither can he sanction any subordinate authority enacting a rule, compelling a Lodge to ignore it. And, it must be observed that, although a District or Provincial Grand Lodge has the power to frame laws for its own government, it is simply authorised to make a regulation for the guidance, not the government, of the Private Lodges in the District. If you will have the goodness to send a fair and corrected copy of the by-laws, the Grand Master will affix his signature to, and notify his approval of, the same.*

*I have &c., &c.,  
Wm. Gray Clarke,  
Grand Secretary.*

Now, there was a snowstorm of letter writing, which included:

on 2nd April 1866.

*To: The Grand Secretary, from Mr. Dutt*

*Sir,*

*Allow me the pleasure of expressing my gratitude towards you for your having taken so much trouble and interest on my behalf in the matter of my application for the admission of Hindus into Freemasonry.*

*May I trouble you now to decide with the opinion of His Lordship, the Earl of Zetland, the following question:*

*Whether a Hindu can be initiated into the Craft on the same oath as by which he assumes charge of the duty of a Judge of the High Court or a Member of the Viceroy's Council, also when he is in Courts of Justice, where evidences are taken of him on the matters of the gravest importance and upon which life or death often depends.*

Which received the reply, from the Grand Secretary:

*I have had the honour of submitting for the consideration of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, the Earl of Zetland, your letter dated 2nd of April last, having reference to the particular form of obligation that should be taken by a Hindu gentleman at his initiation into Freemasonry, and I have his Lordship's commands to say that in his opinion, but without prescribing any set form of words, the obligation should be such as would be binding on the conscience of the Candidate, and such as the particular forms and trusts of his religious persuasion would be required on other occasions, where a binding obligation was required.*

Mr. P.C. Dutt also referred the subject matter of initiation of Hindus into the mysteries of Freemasonry to several eminent and distinguished Masons of Scotland, Ireland, and India, for their independent opinion. Copies of a few of the letters are:

*Government House, Calcutta,  
24th February 1869.*

*From:*

*The Private Secretary to his Excellency, The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Mayo,  
G.M.S.I. Viceroy and Governor-General of India,*

*To: Prosonno Coomar Dutt, Esq., Colootolla.*

*Sir,*

*In reply to your letter of the 19th instant, I am directed by His Excellency to say that he fully agrees with the opinion expressed by the Most Worshipful Grand Master, and considers that there is nothing in either the rules or spirit of Freemasonry which prevents persons who do not profess Christianity from being admitted to the Order. His Excellency is, however, of opinion that no power is entrusted in any Masonic authority that can*

*control or interfere with the discretion which, by the rules of the Order, is vested in each Lodge as to the admission or rejection of Candidates for Initiation.*

*Yours &c., &c.,  
O.T. Burke, Major,  
Private Secretary to the Viceroy.*

*11th October 1869.*

*From: The Right Honourable the Earl of Dalhousie, Most Worshipful Grand Master of Scotland, Brechin Castle.*

*To: Prosonno Coomar Dutt Esq., Colootolla, Calcutta.*

*Sir,*

*I have received your letter of the 3rd September last and its enclosure, which I have perused, it does not appear that you have applied for initiation into the Craft to any Lodge under the Scottish Rules, and therefore I can give no opinion on the subject.*

*The Grand Lodge of Scotland cannot interfere in any way with the views of the Grand Lodge of England on this or any other matter. Had you applied to a Lodge, holding under the Grand Lodge of Scotland, for initiation, and they had found difficulty as to duly obligating you, the Grand Lodge of Scotland would have been ready to advise their Brethren in India as to the point.*

*I am &c., &c.,  
Dalhousie,  
Grand Master of Scotland.*

*1st November 1869.*

*From: The Most Noble the Duke of Leinster, Most Worshipful Grand Master of Ireland, Carton House, Maynooth,*

*To: Prosonno Coomar Dutt, Esq., Colootolla, Calcutta.*

*Sir,*

*I have the pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your letter dated 3rd September 1869 with enclosure, I fully concur with the views expressed by the Right Honourable the Earl of Zetland, the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.*

*It is also my opinion that any gentleman who believes in the Glorious Architect of the Universe and performs the sacred duties of morality, cannot be excluded from being admitted into the mysteries of Freemasonry; but at the same time it is understood that each Private Lodge has its own rules regarding the admission or rejection of any*

*Candidate for Joining or for Initiation, whose admission would be disadvantageous to the welfare and harmony of the Lodge.*

*I remain, &c., &c.,*

*Leinster,*

*Grand Master of Ireland.*

After nine years of continued patience and perseverance, Mr. P.C. Dutt was proposed, seconded and balloted for and duly elected as a Candidate for the mysteries and privileges of Ancient Freemasonry in Lodge "Anchor and Hope, No. 234", under the United Grand Lodge of England, Freemasons' Hall, 55, Bentinck Street, Calcutta. He was initiated, passed and raised on 13th June, 11th July and 22nd August 1872, respectively; appointed Secretary on 1st September, and Junior Warden on 26th December, in the same year; installed Master for the first time on 12th December 1873, and continued in office for the ensuing year. A Past Master's Jewel and a suit of Regalia of his past rank and office in the District Grand Lodge of Bengal, and also an illuminated address with Masonic devices, were presented to him at a Regular Meeting of the Lodge held on 27th October 1876, in recognition of "*his valuable services to the Lodge for the admission of his countrymen into the privileges of Freemasonry.*"

At a Quarterly Communication of District Grand Lodge of Bengal, held on 27th December 1888, the Right Worshipful Brother His Highness the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, Past Senior Grand Warden of England, and Master of Lodge "Anchor and Hope, No. 234", addressed the District Grand Lodge:

*"Right Worshipful Sir and Brethren – The honour devolves upon me of presenting to this District Grand Lodge the portrait of our very worthy and Worshipful Brother, Prosonno Coomar Dutt, P.M., No. 234. It had been the desire of the Brethren of Lodge 'Anchor and Hope,' No. 234, to have this testimony of the esteem and affection in which they held our Worshipful Brother, in recognition of his services to the Lodge. It is hardly necessary for me to dwell upon them. Wor. Bro. Dutt is among us tonight, and he is well known to you all as the first Hindu Mason in Bengal (E.C.), and especially for his great services in the introduction of Freemasonry among the Hindus of India. I have, therefore, great pleasure, Right Worshipful Sir, in presenting to you this portrait of Wor. Bro. Prosonno Coomar Dutt."*

The District Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother the Honourable Sir Henry Thoby Prinsep, Kt., in acknowledging the gift, said:

*"It gives me great pleasure in accepting, on behalf of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal, this picture of Wor. Bro. P.C. Dutt. Bro. Dutt was, as had been properly said, the first Hindu Mason in Bengal, and he might say in India. He had to contend with great difficulties at the outset in gaining*

*admission into the Craft; but with the perseverance for which he had long been known to them, he showed that he was determined to have his way, and succeeded not only in gaining admission into the Order, but in rising to eminence in it; and these qualities have, with other qualities of a high order, raised Wor. Bro. P.C. Dutt to the high position of a Junior Grand Warden of this District Grand Lodge. He hoped that Bro. Dutt may long live among us to continue his useful works in Freemasonry. He would endeavour to place Bro. Dutt's portrait in a suitable place in this building."*

Bro. Prosonno Coomar Dutt, in acknowledging the honour done to him, said:

*"I cannot find words to express to you, Right Worshipful Grand Master, my gratitude for the honour done to my Mother Lodge 'Anchor and Hope,' and to myself, by the Brethren who have presented my picture to this District Grand Lodge, and have expressed a desire that it should be placed in company of the eminent Brethren whose portraits already adorn this Hall. This honour is far beyond any thing I could ever have expected, and I feel proud, indeed, that it should be the first picture of a Native Brother within these walls. It is another indication if any were wanted of the genial kindness ever manifested towards our native Brethren, who will be gratified in finding the portrait of one of their own countrymen added to those already placed in this Masonic Hall. In conclusion, I have to thank you, Right Worshipful Sir, for accepting this picture on behalf of the District Grand Lodge, and for allowing it to be hung up within this Masonic Temple."*

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Prosonno Coomar Dutt became actively involved in the various masonic orders and degrees for which he was eligible. He achieved high rank both nationally and internationally and remained involved until his death in 1911. He was also a Correspondence Circle member of this *Lodge of Research No. 2429*.

## THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONS' HALL AND THE ENVIRONS

W. Bro. B.E. Head, P.P.A.G.D.C.

The early meeting places for our Lodges were local hostelries. The names of Crown & Thistle, Lion & Dolphin, The Three Cranes, The George and The Bell all appeared in the early minutes of St. John's Lodge.

The first mention of a Masonic Hall in Leicester appeared in the Leicester Journal dated 24th June 1825 soliciting applications for shares. The advertisement stated that the estimated cost would be £4,000 which it was intended to raise by the issue of shares at £50 each and the proposed scheme comprehended a building applicable for every public use such as a reading room, ballroom, concert room, etc. and a tavern, upon a genteel and comfortable scale. The public were assured that the undertaking would pay a comfortable rate of return. The land was purchased extending from Market Street to Bowling Green Street. It remained for many years in the hands of George Pochin of Barkby Hall, one of the people who provided the money (his coat of arms appears above the office door in our Library). The land was developed many years later as the County Club and currently is occupied by Waterstones the booksellers. This was a very ambitious project when you consider that only St. John's Lodge was active in the town.

The second attempt to find a permanent home was proposed at a Lodge in October 1842. It was proposed to erect a Masonic Hall at a cost of £1,200 in £10 shares at the corner of Wycliffe Street, now Salisburys, Solicitors. An especial meeting was called but only five brethren and the Tyler attended, none of the senior members of the Lodge being present. Renewed interest led to the purchase of a site in Halford Street and the new Masonic Hall was built in 1859. The foundation stone was laid on the 15th February and the Provincial Grand Master, Earl Howe, assisted by the officers of Provincial Grand Lodge, solemnly consecrated the building on 15th September, a mere seven months afterwards. The cost of the building was set at £2,000. There were voluntary contributions from the two local lodges and one Chapter, of nearly £1,200 and nearly another £500 being subscribed from individual brethren ranging from £36 down to small amounts along with the sum of £195 from Lord Howe. These are recorded on the boards on the Oliver staircase.

Because of a shortage of funds the whole project was not completed. The 1883 records show that for some considerable time it had been felt that the hall facilities were totally inadequate. At a meeting on 7th August it was agreed that because of the unsafe and unsatisfactory conditions, building work must begin, but it was pointed out that there would be a severe loss of revenue as the rooms could not be let out for dances etc.

The second phase consisted of the construction of a new staircase to the top floor of the adjoining building, namely the Coventry Arms, the formation

of a bedroom for the Tyler (greatly needed!), a second kitchen to be fully fitted with all the necessary equipment for catering for one hundred and fifty persons. This would be a great improvement as until then the Provincial Grand Lodge banquets and other large functions had to be provided for off the premises. The total cost was to be £242 7s 8d. with a proposed further outlay of £30 to £35 for a new lodge room carpet as the original had been down for over twenty-five years.

The committee meeting of 22nd October 1884 records a disaster. It was found necessary to pull down the large hall to floor level due to both side walls being found to be much out of plumb and the roof unsafe. The additional works entailed a further outlay of £300. The property was conveyed to trustees. A further request for financial support was made primarily to the younger, newly joined brethren with a request that *"All donations to be paid without delay to the Leicestershire Banking Company, Leicester, so that claims of the contractors of the works may be discharged as only then will they be subject to discount."*

The first notice of a proposed move from Halford Street to alternative premises is recorded in the minutes of a meeting called on Thursday 25th April 1907. There were present representatives of Lodges 279, 50, 523, 779, 1007, 1265, 1330, 1391, 1560, 2028, 2429, 3078. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Worshipful Brother Edward Holmes. The Provincial Grand Secretary read the summons convening the meeting. The only business being: *"To consider a report from the Freemasons Hall committee with respect to a scheme for a new Masonic Hall in Leicester."*

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master said he felt that he was addressing a most important assembly and that it was a matter of the utmost importance which they were met to consider, and although there were bound to be strong feelings, he hoped they would consider the scheme dispassionately. He suggested that one of three things might happen: They might decide to remain in the existing premises. Secondly, a section of the brethren might elect to go elsewhere and cause a division. Lastly as a result of their deliberations they might think it necessary to seek fresh premises. The Provincial Grand Secretary stated that numerous complaints were made as to the insanitary conditions and the lack of comfort, and also the inadequacy of the robing room. They were also reminded that at a previous meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge a resolution was proposed by Worshipful Brother Sir Herbert Marshall, seconded by Brother H.C. Beeby *"That a recommendation be made to the Freemasons Hall committee, requesting them to take into consideration the necessity of providing a new Masonic Hall."*

Following further discussion a report was prepared giving five cogent reasons against the possibility of providing improved accommodation on the present site. A sites committee was appointed with forty sites to view. Eventually a site recommended by the committee was approved, and as a result of lengthy negotiations an option for the purchase was obtained. An accommodation and finance committee was formed. The ultimate decision

was to recommend the purchase of a site just above Prebend Street, formerly the residence of the late Miss Needham. The site contained about 1676 sq. yds. Discussion then took place regarding the retention or disposal of the existing premises.

After deliberation it is recorded that the Provincial Grand Treasurer, W.Bro. C. Bennion, rose to move the following resolution:

*"That this Provincial Grand Lodge approves the proposed erection of a new Masonic Hall for Leicester, and of the purchase as a site for the same at the price of £2,500 of property situate in London Road, Leicester, belonging to the Trustees of the late Miss Needham, and it hereby consents to the Trustees of the present Freemasons Hall either selling or permanently or temporarily letting that building and the Coventry Arms Inn adjoining and applying the income arising therefrom in the purchase of a new site and the erection and maintenance of the new Hall."*

W.Bro. S. Perkins Pick, an eminent local architect and partner in the practice of Everard & Pick, later Pick Everard, who was also a P.M. of St. John's Lodge, gave the following reasons for his recommendation of the purchase of the site: *It was within three minutes walk of the principal station. The tendency for the town to grow in a southerly direction; the site was a very large one sufficient for all time. The present house was well built with good cellarage and no walls to underpin.* One Bro. raised the question of how the brethren would reach the proposed new hall. He was reminded that trams ran every two or three minutes from all quarters of the town. Brother W.A. Lea, Master of the Lodge of Research No. 2429, stated that he was totally opposed to the scheme and declared that we were intending to purchase a property without funds to pay for it, and he was of the opinion that the site would deteriorate rather than increase in value. After discussion the vote to purchase was carried with two dissentients.

Unfortunately the opposition did not cease there. On the 23rd November 1908 a resolution was put before a special meeting of the Lodge of Research No. 2429:

*"That the Lodge do not meet in the proposed new Masonic Hall for two years from the date of the opening ceremony, but as soon as the new building is commenced the committee will take immediate steps to obtain a home for the Lodge during those two years; (2) That the Lodge do not appoint representatives for the Freemasons Hall Committee, and the W.M. for the time being be requested to take no part in its deliberations as representative of the Lodge; (3) That a suitable assistant secretary be appointed to carry out all the detail work of Secretary's Office."*

On Monday 11th February 1910 it was resolved that the Lodge *should for the time being meet at the Masonic Hall, Syston and the Lodge met on 23rd May at Syston.* This proposed change of venue however did not last as

the meeting held on 25th September 1911 was held at Freemasons Hall, Leicester.

The minutes of Provincial Grand Lodge dated 4th November 1907 affirmed that agreement had been reached from all contributing to the purchase at the agreed price and that the purchase should be completed by Christmas. A committee had been set up to endeavour to raise the sum of £3,000 by individual subscription. To this end a bazaar was to be held at the Temperance Hall in May 1908 for the purpose of raising funds. The meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge in 1908 confirmed that the sum of the purchase had largely been defrayed by the generosity of the brethren and that a further sum of £2,300 had been subscribed by individuals and Lodges. Members of the Province were encouraged to submit designs for the new building. Bro. S. Perkins Pick acted as assessor on behalf of the Hall. Twelve designs were submitted. The successful candidate was Bro. H.H. Thomson. Twelve tenders for the work were also received.

A special meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge was held on Saturday 7th July 1909. It is recorded as follows:

*Punctually at 1 o'clock the Right Worshipful the Provincial Grand Master, The Right Honourable The Earl Ferrers and the Present and Past Provincial Grand Officers entered the Lodge Room which had been specially prepared for the occasion. The 100th Psalm was sung. The Architect, Bro. Thomson presented the Prov. Grand Master with a Silver Trowel. The Builder, Bro. A Chambers, presented his Lordship with a Setting Maul of polished walnut both suitably inscribed. The Provincial Grand Master accepted the Trowel and Maul and addressed the Brethren. After a prayer by the Chaplain, the stone was raised by the Architect, the Builder, and the Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works. The Provincial Grand Secretary then placed beneath the stone a phial containing the Leicester Daily Post, The Leicester Advertiser, The Freemason, various papers and coins from one farthing to a pound and the current copy of the Freemasons' Calendar. The stone was lowered with three distinct stops, tested with the working tools and the ceremony was carried out according to ancient custom with offerings of Corn, Wine, Oil and Salt. Finally the Brethren sang "O God our help in ages past".*

The Dedication of the New Hall took place on Monday 25th April 1910, by the Most Worshipful the Pro Grand Master, the Right Hon. The Lord Amphill. The Provincial Grand Master addressed the Brethren and explained at length the necessity of the new Hall by reminding them that when the old Hall was dedicated the number of Lodges in the Province was only three; in 1873 when he was appointed the number had risen to nine, a number that had now doubled and another was in prospect, rendering the move to the new Hall essential.

The Ceremony must have been impressive. The Architect delivered the plans to the Provincial Grand Master, who then agreed to dedicate the Hall to Masonic purposes. The Elements of Consecration were carried round the

Lodge by the Dedicating Officer and assisting Brethren. After the first circuit the Dedicating Officer scattered corn upon the floor of the Lodge and dedicated the Hall to Masonry. After the second circuit he sprinkled the Lodge with wine and dedicated the Lodge to Virtue. After the third circuit he anointed the floor with oil, and dedicated it to Universal Benevolence. It is remarkable that even at this stage there were still some dissenters to the move.

The first meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge in the new Hall took place on 7th December 1910. One interesting factor is the vast difference between the original designs and the finished article. The financial statement was as follows: Total cost £12,500. Received from the sale of the old hall, £3,150. Subscriptions from Lodges and Brethren paid and promised £4,470. Total £7,620, this left a deficit of £4,880. Of this the sum of £3,500 was obtained on mortgage at 3¼%, with a bank overdraft of about £1,400.

The new hall and dining rooms were a credit to the architect. They are beautifully proportioned in the Roman Ionic style, a style that will never date. The Temple was simply called the Temple and not named the Holmes Temple until 1936.

The new Hall stimulated the formation of new Lodges. March 16th 1910 saw the beginning of St. Martin's Lodge No. 3431 followed in July by the Wyggeston Lodge No. 3448. Another area that was steadily developed in the new Hall was the Library and R.W. Bro. Edward Holmes in his address to the Brethren at the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting in March 1914 reminds all present of the very valuable library in the Hall and praised the efforts of Wor. Bros. J.T. Thorp and S.S. Partridge. November 1914 refers to an interesting addition to Freemasons' Hall by the institution of tablets recording the names of Worshipful Masters of the Lodges which met there and hope was expressed that Lodges meeting outside Leicester would consent to joining the scheme. The Provincial Grand Master then went on to say that they little thought when they met at the last meeting in March that in five months more than half the world would be engaged in a deadly war, and that our own beloved country would be in the condition of stress and strain which at present existed. He reminded the Brethren that their duty under such circumstances was clearly set out in the ritual. The 1916 report makes reference to the fact that for the whole of the previous year the Province had been deprived of the services of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Lieut. Col. C.F. Oliver owing to his service with the forces. Lieut. Col. Oliver was Colonel in Chief of the 2/4th Leicestershire Regt. who served in France as part of the 59th Division with distinction at Cambrai and the battle of the Lys. He was also in command of the National Reserve 3rd Volunteer Battalion, Leicestershire Regt.

One strange item was brought to the attention of the Brethren. It stated: A communication has been received from the Grand Secretary in which he calls attention to the fact that the singing of hymns or anthems during the time a Masonic Lodge is open is contrary to the regulations of Grand Lodge. He stated that the custom had prevailed in this province and asked

that such an irregularity should not be permitted in the future. This order was rescinded a year later with the proviso that the words proposed to be sung should be submitted to the Provincial Grand Master and also the Grand Master.

The meeting on Monday 24th February 1919 reports the presentation to the Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Edward Holmes, of a portrait and a moving tribute to his whole-hearted zeal in supporting the move from the inadequate premises in Halford Street to London Road. Mention was also made at this meeting of the very careful consideration given to the question of a War Memorial. This was to take the form of a cheque for £5,000 towards the building of the new Orthopaedic Department at the Royal Infirmary.

The foundation stone was laid on 28th July 1919 on behalf of those Brethren who fell in the Great War. The other was a memorial in connection with the Masonic Temple. The sum of £600 was donated for the Memorial tablet in the Hall and the beautifying and improvement of the organ.

The Provincial report for 1920–21 records the return to Freemasons' Hall of the "All seeing eye". This had occupied a prominent position in the old Hall during a period of fifty years and was discovered in the rubble during the demolition.

The next most important item was the ceremony of unveiling the Leicestershire and Rutland War Tablet in loving memory of the seven brethren who fell in the War and to record the names of all the brethren who served with H.M. Regular or Territorial Forces. The Prayer offered up by the Provincial Grand Chaplain is most touching:

*"O Almighty and Eternal God, Architect and Ruler of the Universe, unto whom no prayer is ever made without hope of thy compassion, remember in thy mercy our seven Brethren who laid down their lives for the cause whereunto their King and Country sent them, and grant that not only they, but all the Brethren who obeyed with them the call of duty, may be accounted worthy of a place in the Grand Lodge above. We the frail creatures of thy providence, humbly beseech Thee to accept and bless this Memorial to those our Brethren, and grant that the record of their courage and unselfishness, their willing service and sacrifice may inspire all who enter this Temple. Enable those of us who remained in the safety of our homes to be worthy of those who died for us. Grant us to do with a willing spirit whatsoever duty may be laid upon us, to make with gladness any sacrifice to which we may be called, and to shed abroad in the hearts of men both courage and good cheer, so that by patience and service we may ever be prepared to take part in the hour of our country's need, to the honour and glory of thy most Holy Name."*

The Provincial Grand Master echoed these sentiments saying

*"Time scatters the poppies of oblivion over most things, but the lapse of time has not effaced the impressions of sordid horror and melancholy which this period of war engraved upon the mind."*

I, and I am sure many others assumed that the Hall had always consisted of No. 78 and 80. I was of course much mistaken. With the re-numbering of London Road (I assume when the railway station was built) the 1908 directory records: 72 Charles Lakin, Surgeon (Master of St. John's 1896); 78 Joseph W. Field (Bowater & Field Dentists); 82 John Stretton Sloane, Surgeon, 84 Walter W. Porritt, and Joshua Porritt Organ builders; with numbers proceeding towards Saxe Coburg Street of 86, 88, 90, 92. This is in contrast to the earlier Kelly's which records: 58 Charles Lakin; 60 Miss Dalton; 62 Miss Needham (from whom we purchased the property), with a further 8 properties at 64, 64½, 66, 68, 70, 92, 74, 76 (eleven properties in all). In 1908 only nine properties are recorded.

In the 1928 directory 74 and 76 are missing. I can only assume that they were demolished and this explains the remains of cellars etc. under the present car park. The earliest census 1842 shows 58, London Road (corner of Prebend Street) as belonging to the Misses M.A. and E.H. Brookhouse (is this where Brookhouse Street takes its name?). No. 60, now 78 is recorded as belonging to John E. Dalton, Solicitor with Elizabeth his sister aged 30, Emily aged 33, with Sarah Rimington 22, serving maid, and Lucy Betts 28, serving maid. Mention of Lawyer Dalton is made in \*Ellis's book of Leicester, in which a Mr J. Edgar Harris describes Dalton as wearing knee breeches and a blue cloth coat with brass buttons and can regularly be seen coming out of his house just above Prebend Street.

The same census records No. 62, now 80: "John Needham, 62, Magistrate, Sarah his wife, 54, Thomas Stanley Solicitor, 24, Frances Mary, 20, Elizabeth Stanley, 18, Ann Susan, 13. The staff recorded are: Susan Thornton, 40, Cook, Mary Barnes, 18, Housemaid, Jane Naismith, 29, Lady's Maid, Elizabeth Hallan, 19, Scullery Maid and George Letts, 30, Groom".

1923 records for the first time the purchase of 78, London Road. It had been for some time the offices of the V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment). The minutes state: The headquarters of Freemasonry in Leicestershire & Rutland are rapidly becoming too small for its activities and the premises recently acquired will become sufficient for our needs for many years to come. The 1924 accounts show that the purchase cost was £6,565, with the contract for additions at £2,150 with furnishings at £237 10s. A loan was obtained from the National Provincial Bank of £7,929. A further amount of £2,150 was recorded for building works. No further mention of expansion occurs until 1929, when the Provincial Grand Lodge accounts report that the Hall Extension Fund is free from debt.

Further extensions are mentioned in October 1932. The Province had been bequeathed the J.T. Thorp Collection and the Report of General Purposes minute that certain alterations to the Hall were being considered so that this very valuable collection could be properly housed. Also

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\* C.D.B. Ellis: History in Leicester.

improved accommodation for the smaller Lodges both as regards the Temple and dining facilities. The 1930 extension fund accounts records the item: Property purchased £800 – this is two houses at the rear of the Hall and appears in the 1933 accounts as an item: rents from 9, and 11, Brookhouse Street.

The 1935 report states: It is generally known that the Hall Committee has been considering the provision of greater accommodation in Leicester and plans have been considering the provision of greater accommodation in Leicester and plans have been finally approved and tenders accepted. Additions are planned which will improve facilities for holding large Masonic gatherings and Ladies' Evenings and housing the Thorp collection in a fitting manner. The Architect for the new venture was E.T. Allcock and the builders Henry Herbert & Sons of Millstone Lane.

October 1936 was the date of the first meeting in the new Temple and also the presentation to Leicester Cathedral of a new bell to be called the Coronation Bell. The accounts show a payment for the new extension of £7,200.

The following year revealed that they owed on the premises £12,500 and a suggestion that £10,000 should be funded with a payment over twenty-three years and the balance funded by the members and Lodges with an adjustment in Hall charges. The corner house No. 72 was purchased in 1938 for £14,000 but was later sold in 1952 for £7,000, the land being converted into the present car park. Soon after the completion of the Oliver Suite war was declared. This led to the army occupying the Oliver Temple until 1952.

This new venture was in a totally different style to the original development being carried out in Art Deco style. The total cost of the new addition was £25,000. The final development known as the Morley suite was proposed in 1964 and completed in 1971/2 at a cost of £90,000. Two further houses were acquired in Prebend Street immediately adjoining the car park and subsequently demolished to provide further car parking space.

What then have we got? Surely the finest Georgian facade on London Road and for many miles around. It fulfils every criteria of a Georgian dwelling; sash-pull windows, long to make the interior light and airy, usually double hung with either six over six or eight over eight panes. The simple cornicing and mouldings (ceiling roses and elaborate mouldings are Victorian additions). On 78 there are the modillions under the soffit at roof level. The simple but classical overdoor with the cartouche and the wide run cement architrave and columns.

Whilst 80 has the beautifully proportioned portico again with the columns and pilasters.

What age is our property. At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century villas and quality dwellings were being built on London Road. Nearby Conduit Street and Sparkenhoe Street were laid out in the 1830s.

I suspect that the original houses were in brick and rendered at a later date. My reasoning is the material used for the facades would have been lime, probably the hydraulic lime known locally as Barrow lime from the

John & Joseph Ellis Barrow Lime Co., whilst the present rendering appears to be a sand cement mix. It is also noticeable that there are no visible joints and the astragal and capital mouldings are identical suggesting they were rendered as one.

The date of our properties I would suggest are circa 1835. The 1828 map shows only the property on the corner of Prebend Street but the 1840 shows a number of properties between the house on the corner of Prebend Street and Saxe-Coburg Street. The listed buildings register refers to them as early 19th century and names the Architect as Thornton.

A further clue as to the date is to be found in the caretaker's flat situated on the top floor. The floors are constructed of joists covered with reeds (rushes) and limeash on top. This is the residue taken from the kiln when the lime is burnt. The ash is drawn out complete with the remains of the wood, coal, stone, clay, gravel etc. present at the burning. It is allowed to cool, mixed with water and spread over the reeds to a depth of about 2-2½ inches. It draws oxygen from the air and then hardens. This form of flooring was durable, cheap, fire and vermin proof. This method of flooring was gradually discontinued in this area in about 1840.

The cellars of the halls are of a vaulted construction in brick, similar to a railway tunnel and the cellar floors are also brick. I would suggest that 82 was built at the same time - the wonderful portico with the carved triglyphs and metopes are, I am sure, original.

As the Hall and Freemasonry in the province has developed, how has the area developed? Some noted historians affirm that the line of the present London Road was the route of the Via Devana which was the Roman road which entered Leicestershire from the south east (near Rockingham), passing through the villages of Little and Great Stretton and following the line of London Road connecting with the South Gate of the town. Others however think that it led off at the top of London Road and followed the route of the present New Walk. Whichever is correct it would be a "via vicinalis" or thoroughfare.

From the time of Ethelfloeda, daughter of Alfred of Wessex, 918, until the arrival of the Normans, the town appears to be alternately in the hands of the Danes and the English. The area was possibly the site of a battle between them for around the junction of London Road and Evington Road, afterwards known as Gallows Close, between one and two hundred skeletons were found just beneath the surface and amongst them Saxon fibulae or brooches. This discovering was made in 1853 when the crown of the hill was lowered.

I can find no definite knowledge of the history of the present London Road. It was from early days the principal route passing through Leicester from London to the north. From the direction of Welford through Wigston one entered the South Gate, passed out through the North Gate towards Loughborough and the north. When Queen Anne of Denmark visited Leicester she passed out of the East Gate on her journey to Market Harborough. Her course

followed the route of the present London Road. Charles I in his flight from Naseby also proceeded through Glen and Oadby.

Speeds map of about 1600 indicates the continuation of Gallow Tree Gate as the London Way, whilst the Stukeley map of 1722 refers to it as the London Way by Harborrow. It appears that between these dates the road was improved and widened but the noted historian Mr. Gardiner states that the old road was abandoned in the 17th century due to an outbreak of the plague.

The improvement of the road possibly coincided with the Toll Act. In 1695 Acts were passed to set up tolls and in 1707 a board of trustees were appointed to collect the tolls and maintain the roads. Toll bars or turnpikes were set up and all carts, carriages, animals and wagons were charged a toll. Foot passengers were exempt. The tollgate stood originally about where the Marquis of Wellington now stands, but in 1851 was moved to nearer the Mayfield Road, which until 1892 was the town boundary. As the railways became more economical the turnpikes began to lose money, and by 1878 the tolls were ended and many tollhouses were demolished.

1760 saw the introduction of the stagecoach. The proprietor Richard Needham & Co. advertised to run from London to Nottingham through Market Harborough in two days (if God permitted). Four years later the "Leicester Journal" advertised a carriage called the flying machine capable of carrying four people to leave the Three Cranes Hotel, Gallowtree Gate at two in the morning and reach London the same night (subject of course to the possible attacks of highwaymen!).

1758 saw the formation nearby of the New Walk, originally known as the Queen's Walk. The council laid down that it should be for the purpose only of a footpath. Carriages were only allowed to approach from the rear hence the back entrances from London Road. 1768/9 saw the introduction of oil lamps in Gallowtree Gate and 1790 the improvement of the roads by the use of granite setts.

The new century saw the greatest advances. In 1806 the racecourse was built at the top of London Road hill. It was designated as a public open space but was not named after Victoria for many years. New streets of houses were built with brick the predominant material. 11th May 1840 witnessed the continued southward thrust of the railway, the Midland Counties Company being very much a Leicester concern, its headquarters being at the new station built in Campbell Street. This station was a masterpiece of the railway era and diminished in style and proportions the present station built by Trubshaw which superseded it in 1892.

The 1840s saw a waterworks company set up and a cemetery in June 1849. It also saw the first horse-drawn buses picking up from Campbell Street and carrying the passengers to the various districts of the town. The first electric tram did not appear until 1904.

Our own immediate site saw the development of Conduit Street in the 1830s and the construction nearby of the Leicester and Leicestershire Collegiate School, this being in 1836. The 1851 plan of the district shows

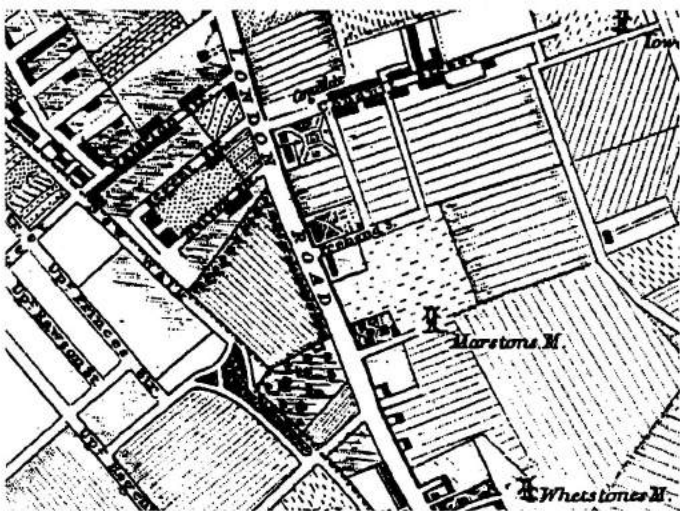
Conduit Street along the railway but no named streets further up London Road. The 1886 map shows a vast difference. London Road, beyond Highfields Street, had a remarkable building programme. The immediate district sported many German names: Hanover Street, now Andover Street, Gotha Street, now Gotham Street, Mecklenburg Street, now Severn Street, and Saxe-Coburg Street, now Saxby Street.

The changing of the names came in an act of patriotism during the first War in the form of a petition to the Mayor and Town Council to be rid of the streets in the borough which carried German names. The final erasure came when Bismarck Street was renamed Beaconsfield Road.

London Road must have witnessed the return of troops from the Boer War and later the return of the wounded in the first World War. It is minuted that after the battle of Passchendale over five hundred and forty men, muddied, white faced and unshaven formed a recurrent stream of motor cars and ambulances passing between the Midland Station and the old County Asylum which had been turned into the 5th Northern General Hospital. The last patient was discharged in 1919 and Thomas Fielding Johnson purchased the site for £40,000 for a university.

The 1920s no doubt witnessed the Jarrow marchers as they divided in Leicester to go south to London.

What of our immediate site? In the 13th century Simon De Montfort granted the use of land known as the Cowhay or Southfields. The 1805 map shows the land as St. Margaret's Fields or Prebend Land. This Church, St. Margaret's was in the See of Lincoln, and the Prebendal Church of Lincoln in Leicester.



Part of Fowler's plan of Leicester dated 1828 showing the London Road and neighbouring streets and fields



Survey 1886

# **THE HISTORY AND DUTIES OF THE GRAND SUPER- INTENDENT OF WORKS**

**R.W. Bro. D.W. Burford, P.J.G.W.  
Grand Superintendent of Works 1987-1992**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The history of the office of the Grand Superintendent of Works is, by its very nature, inextricably interwoven with almost all of that of Freemasons' Hall and what is now known as the New Connaught Rooms (which I shall refer to simply as the Connaught Rooms). That is, of course, an immense subject and I trust you will forgive me if I skip over quite a bit within the short time at my disposal.

However, to set the scene, the present Freemasons' Hall stands on a peninsular site extending from No. 47 Great Queen Street adjacent to Wild Street at the Western end to No. 60 next to the Connaught Rooms at the Eastern end although only the number 60 has been adopted as its postal address.

Eastwards of FMH, is No. 61 Great Queen Street, which is that part of the Connaught Rooms extending as far as, but not including, the door leading down to the Lower Ground Floor. Nos 62 and 63 cover that part which includes the door just mentioned and takes in the rest of the old part of the Connaught Rooms including the Main Entrance in front of the Grand Staircase.

The Connaught Rooms Extension, built in 1955 to a design similar in style to Freemasons' Hall, took up the site of Nos 64 and 65 Great Queen Street, which, until 1939, was known as Mark Masons' Hall, having been converted from Bacon's Hotel after United Grand Lodge bought the freehold of the hotel in 1899.

I should perhaps mention that the original Nos 45 and 46 Great Queen Street situated between Drury Lane and Wild Street were demolished as part of the road widening scheme at that end of which not only enabled Grand Lodge to do a valuable improvement line deal with the Local Authority prior to work starting on the new Hall in 1927 but also provided a fine vista of the corner tower of Freemasons' Hall from Long Acre.

## **2. THE OFFICE OF GRAND SUPERINTENDENT OF WORKS**

During the near two centuries which have passed since the Office was created in 1813, twenty-seven brethren have had the honour and, indeed, the immense privilege of being appointed Grand Superintendent of Works and of those, Alexander Burnett Brown served by far the longest, his tenure lasting throughout the period of the most extensive building activity at our headquarters since the original site was purchased in 1774. He was appointed in 1906 and retired in 1933. He had by then been appointed

Grand Superintendent in and over the Royal Arch Province of Middlesex in 1931, and in 1937 succeeded H.R.H. the Duke of York as Provincial Grand Master upon his accession after the abdication of King Edward VIII.

Six have served the Office for a period of only one year and two have done two-year stints. The others have served an average of eight and a half years, varying between Brown's twenty-seven years and Arthur Kenyon's three in 1954-1956.

Be that as it may, most have, in varying degrees according to their respective professional disciplines and the length of time spent in office, made some contribution to the on-going development and maintenance of the Headquarters of English Freemasonry, the home of the Mother Grand Lodge, known equally affectionately as "Freemasons' Hall"; "FMH"; or simply just plain "Great Queen Street".

### 3. THE CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE

The Office of "Grand Superintendant of the Works", was in fact an innovation introduced into the Craft by H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex when the Constitution for the United Grand Lodge of England was being drawn up, during the embryonic stage of slightly less than four weeks, following the ratification of the Preliminary Articles of Union by both Grand Lodges of England on the 1st December 1813.

Strangely it was neither an office nor a rank amongst those of the Grand Officers listed in the Articles of Union, an omission which applied equally to the Grand Director of Ceremonies and the Grand Organist although all three were appointed and invested at the Grand Assembly to celebrate the Union and the formation of United Grand Lodge on the 27th December 1813. However, it was not until 1815, that all three were "legitimised", so to speak, with the publication of the first "Post-Union" Book of Constitutions, which not only settled precedence or priority of rank but also, laid down that:

*the Grand Superintendant of the Works ought to be a brother well skilled in the science of geometry and in architecture. He is to advise with the board of works on all plans of building or edifices undertaken by the Grand Lodge, and furnish plans and estimates for the same: he is to superintend their construction, and see that they are conformable to the plans approved by the grand master, the grand lodge and board of works; he is to suggest improvements where necessary, in all the edifices of grand lodge; and on the first meeting of the board of works in every year, report on the state of repair or dilapidation of such edifices, and make such further reports, from time to time, as he may deem expedient.*

Between 1813 and 1819, the property in Great Queen Street which, incidentally, was passed to the newly constituted United Grand Lodge from the Premier Grand Lodge without charge, was entrusted to the care of a Board of Works set up under the chairmanship of the Grand Superintendant of the

Works but, under the 1819 Constitutions, the Board of Works was merged with others to form the Board of General Purposes and from that time until the recent massive upheaval in the administration of Grand Lodge affairs in 1999, Freemasons' Hall, its structure and its services were the responsibility of the Premises Committee appointed by the Board. For reasons unknown, the Grand Superintendent of the Works was no longer retained after 1819 as an ex-officio member of the Board of General Purposes and thereafter his place on the Board became the subject of annual appointment to that body.

Over the years the qualifications for the Office have been altered from time to time but probably the most significant was that which enabled other than Architects to be appointed so that now, Rule 35 of the Book of Constitutions calls for:

*the Grand Superintendent of Works shall advise the Board of General Purposes when required on any matter in connection with building and works and, he shall furnish reports on the state of repair of the properties of the Grand Lodge when required.*

In 1965, the Board of General Purposes took the sensible view that:

*since the responsibilities of the Grand Superintendent of Works had, in fact, increased very considerably in past years, it would be only proper that his Office should be recognised, as others were whose duties and responsibilities were laid down in the Book of Constitutions, and be included amongst its "ex-officio" members.*

Accordingly, Rule 216 of the Book of Constitutions, which determines the constitution of the Board, was duly amended by Grand Lodge on the 8th December 1965, but whereas the immediate responsibility for the maintenance of Freemasons' Hall was delegated by the Board to the Premises Committee, all the other properties of Grand Lodge including the Connaught Rooms, were managed by the Property Investment sub-committee of the Finance Committee on which the Grand Superintendent of Works was normally invited to sit.

It was a quaint Rule of the Board that no member other than the President, Vice President and the Chairmen of the several Committees could sit on more than two main Committees and it was unusual therefore for the Grand Superintendent of Works to serve on Committees other than the Finance and the Premises. Since 1999, of course, things are somewhat different from what they were. Both the Grand Superintendent of Works and his deputy are both ex-officio members of the Grand Council but do not sit, at least not as yet, on the new style Board of General Purposes. The Committee structure as we knew it before 1999 has gone and the Grand Treasurer has a direct responsibility to the Board for the management of Grand Lodge premises and property.

The Office of the Grand Superintendent of Works is, essentially, a professional appointment to which are attached specific duties whereas the

several masonic ranks which have sprung from it over the years, were introduced primarily to provide additional ranks of differing honorific status at both Grand and Provincial and District Grand Lodge levels.

Prior to 1999, it would have been unusual for either the Deputy or the Assistant Grand Superintendent of Works to be called upon to act or to advise the Board in a professional capacity, even though those chosen to fill those offices were and indeed still are mostly carefully selected from amongst those in practice in one or other of the building professions, and it is from those ranks that in modern times, the senior appointment has normally been selected.

Likewise, it is rare for Provincial and District Grand Masters to call upon their Provincial or District Grand Superintendent of Works, Deputies and/or Assistants, to provide a professional service, and appointments to all those offices are generally for the duration of one year only although, of course, there are exceptions particularly in cases where Provinces or Districts own their own premises.

Sadly, these ranks, particularly those of Provincial Deputy and Assistants, are therefore rarely other than symbols of Masonic status and corresponding appointments to past rank serve no other purpose but to give the holders a priority of rank within the Province or District in which they serve.

The past rank of Grand Superintendent of Works was not introduced until 1887 and then exclusively to men pre-eminent in Architecture. It was an honour very rarely bestowed, in fact, on only eleven occasions before the upheaval of Ranks in 1969. However, since the office of Grand Superintendent of Works was raised to "Very Worshipful" status in 1969, the past rank is now, normally, only bestowed upon Deputy Provincial or District Grand Masters primarily to give an alternative honorific distinction from that of the past rank of Grand Sword Bearer.

The rank of Assistant Grand Superintendent of Works was not created until 1906, and that of Deputy in 1969. Over the years the positions of all the ranks mentioned have gone up and down the precedence scale like a yo-yo; however, it is perhaps of interest to mention that a Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works was first appointed in my own Province of Surrey in 1861, twenty-two years before Provincial and District Grand Ranks were prescribed in the Book of Constitutions and, no doubt, other Provinces or Districts can relate having instituted a similar practice.

#### **4. THE SITUATION BEFORE THE UNION**

So much then for the constitutional status of the Grand Superintendent of Works and some of the changes which have been made by Grand Lodge from time to time, but before I move on to tell something of those who have been privileged to have held the Office, and, more particularly, those who have made a significant contribution, I should first briefly refer to the situation before the Union in December 1813.

For the first fifty years or so of its existence, the Premier Grand Lodge, founded by four London Lodges in 1717, held its Annual Investiture and Grand Feast in one of the City of London Livery Company Halls, and its Quarterly Communications in some tavern either in the City or, as the numbers attending grew larger, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand just a short distance to the West of Temple Bar. However, in spite of the formation in the meantime of the rival Ancient Grand Lodge and other dissident groups, it had, by 1768, grown steadily into a Society of near four hundred and fifty Lodges, and sorely in need of a permanent home and, more importantly, a large or great Hall suitable for its meetings.

A *Committee for Building a Hall* was set up and new regulations were introduced to permit the fund necessary to defray the cost to be raised independently of the General Fund of Charity.

In 1774, the decision was taken to acquire the Freehold of what we now know as No. 61 Great Queen Street, in consideration of the princely sum of £3,150. This was achieved with the help of a mortgage of £2,000. The property was conveyed as two houses having a street frontage of forty-four feet with a large garden at the rear, a total depth of two hundred feet. The houses were sited one behind the other each occupying the full width of the site and set twenty-two feet apart. They were connected by a ten feet wide corridor at ground floor level that also provided a direct access from the Street to the Garden at the rear.

The front house and part of the rear house were converted into a coffee house to become "Freemasons' Tavern" and let to a tenant, while the remainder of the property was adapted as offices for the Grand Secretary and his staff. A programme was prepared for the development of the garden to provide a new Hall suitable for use when required as a Grand Temple and other ancillary accommodation, and Thomas Sandby R.A. was commissioned to design and carry out the work. He was, at the same time, appointed a member of the "*Committee for Building a Hall*".

Sandby was a freemason and an extraordinarily talented man, a self-taught architect now alas best remembered as an artist and water colourist, but who had earlier become amongst many other things, the private secretary and draughtsman to the M.W.Bro. H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland P.G.M. It was in that capacity that he made the sketches of the battlefield at Culloden and of the Pretender's rebel encampments at and around Fort Augustus, which played a significant part in planning the Duke's success in the bloody victory of 1746. Soon after he was appointed Ranger of Windsor Great Park, which led to his being commissioned to design and supervise the construction of Virginia Water. He became a personal friend of King George III and was nominated by him as one of the twenty-eight founder members of the Royal Academy of Arts when the Academy was instituted and chartered by the Monarch in 1768. In 1770 he was appointed Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy Schools.

At the meeting of the *Committee for Building a Hall* on the 18th March 1775, Sandby was instructed to proceed with his design. Work started on

site straightaway; the Grand Master, the Rt Hon Lord Petre, laid the Foundation stone and the building was completed in 1776. The first Grand Chaplain, W.Bro. the Rev. Dr. William Dodd, who had been the first to hold the Office created in 1775, officiated at the dedication of the New Hall and gave a most inspiring oration. Unfortunately the poor Parson's stipend rarely matched his outgoings and sadly he was reduced to forgery in order to make ends meet. He finally met his Maker in a most ungentlemanly fashion, with a noose about his neck at Tyburn but not before being expelled, very properly of course, from the Craft in April 1777.

Sandby, on the other hand, received great acclaim and his merit was immediately recognised by his unique appointment as "Grand Architect", not a new rank in Grand Lodge but an office created especially as a reward to him and which he retained until he died in 1798.

The Hall itself was seventy-eight feet long by forty feet wide and stood fifty-eight feet high in exactly the position and at the same floor level as the present Balmoral Room, that is, the large room which lies between the present Grand Hall in Connaught Rooms and Freemasons' Hall next door. It was, by all accounts the first hall to be built in England with Masonic symbols, and, contrary to one of the many misconceptions about the relationship between the Royal Arch and the Premier Grand Lodge prior to the Union, Freemasons' Hall also became the headquarters of the Excellent Grand and Royal Chapter of the Society of Royal Arch Masons, then just ten years old.

Notwithstanding an enormous amount of money that had already been spent on repairs and alterations to enhance the original houses, Thomas Sandby and William Tyler P.G.Stwd., the Architect for the Tavern, jointly advised Grand Lodge in 1785, that the old buildings should be torn down and rebuilt. Still smarting from the trauma brought on by the cost of Sandby's Hall, which had not been fully repaid, and the income from lettings barely enough to cover expenses, Grand Lodge nevertheless took heed of the advice given, and in 1786, wisely agreed to go ahead with the proposals which provided for a new Tavern, a new suite for the Grand Secretary and other masonic rooms in front of Sandby's Temple.

Sandby died in 1798 and was succeeded as Grand Architect in 1799 by R.W.Bro. Robert Brettingham P.J.G.W., but alas those who advised the Grand Master had made one of those errors which fortunately seldom occur in our Order, but when they do bring embarrassment all round. At the Grand Feast on the 13th May 1801, the Acting Grand Master, R.W. Bro. the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Moira, one of those advisers, was obliged to announce at the investiture of the Grand Officers for the Year:

*that he was pleased to observe, that the Office of Grand Architect having been originally instituted as a Mark of the Society's personal respect for Thomas Sandby Esquire as Architect of the Hall, it was the opinion of many respectable Brethren that, that Office ought to terminate with him, and that it was therefore the Grand Master's pleasure to decline making*

*any appointments thereto: But that in compliment to William Tyler Esq the Architect of Free Mason's Tavern, and to Robert Brettingham Esq. who had been appointed to that Office for two years last past, they should each of them be permitted to wear the distinguishing Jewel of a Grand Architect at all meetings of the Society, but that the same should not be drawn into precedent.*

Unfortunately, we have no knowledge of the motif adopted for the badge of "Grand Architect", but there would appear to be little doubt that it was probably the "Protractor".

Sadly, Tyler died shortly after his preferment and Brettingham in 1806. I am not at all sure who then looked after the property if indeed anybody did, but in any event, it was only a comparatively short time before the Hall Committee were consulting Mr John Soane R.A. F.S.A., arguably the most eminent architect in practice in London and certainly the most fashionable, and was at the time heavily engaged on the new building for the Bank of England, and also several projects for the Crown. The two houses at Nos 62 and 63 Great Queen Street, immediately adjoining Freemasons' Tavern on the East side were posted for sale in October 1812 and, with the dire needs of a fast growing Society before them, the Committee were anxious to ascertain whether that property would be suitable for extension purposes.

Soane was not a Mason, but he lived no more than a stone's throw away on the North side of Lincoln's Inn Fields in what is now his Museum. Both as a student and a fellow Architect, he would have known Sandby well, and he frequently attended musical soirees and other social functions in Sandby's Hall. He was therefore, to some extent familiar with both the Hall and the Tavern, and his initial task was to carry out a survey of the two houses and their gardens, and later in March 1813, to prepare a valuation. After more than twelve years haggling, there was a growing realisation that the unification of the two Grand Lodges of England was nigh, and by June 1813 it was clear that the two would be united. Since the Ancient Grand Lodge had no premises of its own, it might have been thought logical for the Premier Grand Lodge to have gone ahead there and then to extend their premises, to provide a home for the new organisation; but no further steps were taken in that direction during the lifetime of the Premier Grand Lodge.

In August 1813 Soane was bidden to an audience with the Duke of Sussex at Kensington Palace for a quite different purpose. His Royal Highness had been elected in May as the first Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England and was seeking a symbol to commemorate the momentous event. Perhaps inspired by the Crest surmounting the Arms of the Ancient Grand Lodge, and later the Arms of the United Grand Lodge, which portrays God's instructions to Moses at Sinai to construct an Ark to house His testimony, the Duke had a vision of what was a suitable repository into which the Articles of Union could likewise be retained. Soane's solution for what became known as the "Ark of the Masonic Covenant" was a pedestal, triangular in plan, designed to stand in front of the Throne for all

time to come. It was constructed over the Christmas of 1813 (not then a public holiday) and made ready in time for the Grand Assembly on the Festival of St John the Evangelist, the 27th December.

Soane became a Mason on the 25th November 1813, the same day as the Preliminary Articles of Union were agreed, signed and sealed by the two deputations, but strangely not in a lodge under the Duke of Sussex. It was, as it happened, at an Emergency meeting of the Grand Masters' Lodge No. 1 in the other Society held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand where, with several others, he was initiated, passed and raised in one day. On the 11th December, he was again bidden to an audience with the Duke of Sussex when he was offered and accepted the appointment of "Grand Superintendant (sic) of the Works" in the United Grand Lodge, an entirely new office with the rank of Worshipful Brother. He was never installed as Master, never went through the decried ceremony of "passing the Chair" and so far as I have been able to ascertain, he never did occupy the Chair of a Lodge, but he did wear the insignia of an Installed Master on his Grand Officer's apron.

## 5. THE HOLDERS OF THE OFFICE AND THE EDIFICES OF GRAND LODGE

**Sir John Soane R.A., F.R.S., F.S.A.** In 1815 the Grand Lodge went ahead and bought Nos 62 and 63 Great Queen Street with money largely borrowed from John Soane, but it was not until 1828 that the Temple, which he designed, was built in roughly that part of the Connaught Rooms occupied by the present Grand Staircase. Largely with the help of Soane's money it was completed in 1829. He died in 1837 aged 84, having been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1795; a Royal Academician in 1802; a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1821; and dubbed a Knight Bachelor in 1831. Sadly, he never quite got over the loss of his elder and favourite son in 1823. He was desperately unhappy in his domestic relations generally and managed to establish a life-long feud with his surviving son. It was said that he had gone so far as to refuse a Baronetcy simply because he was determined that the son should not inherit anything from him.

I mentioned earlier that Soane had been engaged on work at the Bank of England and there is a very strong resemblance between the form of dome over his Temple and that over his Banking Hall that can still be seen in what is now the Bank's museum in Bartholomew Lane. That form was adopted by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in his design for the roof of the G.P.O.'s famous red telephone boxes.

Sadly nothing now remains of Soane's work at Freemasons' Hall, but there is a scale model in his museum, of the roof lantern that gave light to his Temple and we have one or two of his drawings. His Ark of the Masonic Covenant, the symbol of the Union, was reduced to no more than a pile of

ash when engulfed by the tragic fire that virtually destroyed the interior and a large part of the roof of Sandby's Temple in 1883.

**Philip Hardwick R.A., F.R.S., F.S.A., V-P.R.I.B.A., M.I.C.E.** succeeded Soane as Grand Superintendent of Works having been one of his earlier pupils at the Royal Academy School of Architecture. His main contribution to the Building was to carry out an apsidal extension to the South end of Soane's Hall in 1838, but he was extremely critical of the work carried out under the direction of his former tutor. Hardwick was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture in 1854 and was a founder member of the Royal Institute of British Architects and its first Vice-President.

It was he who designed that famous Doric Propylaeum, the Euston Station Arch, which ultimately became the lost cause celebre of conservationists. It showed up again in the long summer drought of 1994 when its pieces were found lying at the bottom of a reservoir in the Lea Valley, having been dumped as hardcore to help stop a bad leak.

**Samuel Whitfield Daukes F.R.I.B.A.**, who succeeded Hardwick in 1856, was earlier responsible for recommending the adoption of what was considered by many to be a badly drained and otherwise unsuitable building site on the Moreland Estate at Croydon for the R.M.B.I. He subsequently designed the new Masonic Almshouses, which still stand, but are now under the management of Age Concern. He had considerable experience in hospital work including the famous lunatic asylum at Colney Hatch in Hertfordshire. After eight years in Office his term came to a sad end in 1863. By recommending the Croydon site to the R.M.B.I., Daukes had crossed swords with one of its new council members, W.Bro John Havers P.G.W. who, in 1862, was appointed Chairman of the newly established Hall Committee with powers similar to those then possessed by the Board of General Purposes, and charged not only to carry out the improvement and adaptation of the Grand Lodge Property in and near Great Queen Street, but to obtain the advice of any persons, architects, or others and to cause such plans and estimates to be prepared as may deem to them expedient for the purpose of adopting a complete scheme, subject to the approval of Grand Lodge.

The question of competition was long and carefully considered and in the opinion of the Committee, it was resolved that the competition should be thrown open to Architects in general, and not be confined only to those who were members of the Order.

However, the Book of Constitutions stated that:

*The Grand Superintendent of Works is to advise with the board of general purposes on all plans of building or edifices undertaken by the Grand Lodge, and furnish estimates; he is to superintend their construction, and see that they are conformable to the plans as approved. He is, at the first meeting of the board of general purposes in every year to report on the state of repair of the edifices of the Grand Lodge, and make such further reports, from time to time, as he may deem expedient*

and Brother Daukes made it clear by public announcement that the Committee was acting in contravention of the Rule.

What followed is a long and not very happy story but suffice to say that Daukes was bidden by Havers to write to the M.W. The Grand Master recommending that he refrain from filling the Office of Grand Superintendent of Works at the approaching Grand Festival: or at least to allow any appointment he might intend to make to stand over until the result of the competition was known. After a period of understandable procrastination, Bro. Daukes eventually complied with great dignity and he continued to attend the meetings of Grand Lodge. He died in 1880.

**Samuel Pepys Cockerell F.R.I.B.A.**, who had been a pupil of Philip Hardwick, won the Competition and duly appointed Grand Superintendent of Works to follow Daukes. In accordance with the terms of the Competition nothing other than Sandby's Great Hall was to be retained and all of Soane's and Hardwick's work was torn down between 1863 and 1865. A new Tavern, built on far more lavish lines than hitherto, took up the entire site of Nos 62 and 63 Great Queen Street and much of that building can still be seen to this day. In the meantime, Grand Lodge acquired Nos 59 and 60 to the West for the new Headquarters which, when built, incorporated Sandby's Hall, then renamed the Grand Temple and henceforth restricted to Masonic purposes only.

It is perhaps of interest to mention that it was Cockerell's design for the proposed Albert Memorial in Kensington Gardens that gained first prize in the national architectural competition, but Queen Victoria did not like it, preferring the Gothic design entered by George Gilbert Scott instead.

**John Gibson F.R.I.B.A.**, who followed Cockerell in 1879, was not called upon to do a lot to either Freemasons' Hall or the Tavern, which were still after all very new Buildings. He was arguably and probably remains the most prolific of all Bank Architects, and was long associated with buildings for the National Provincial including its Headquarters, which stands as a high grade listed building in Threadneedle Street. He was a fellow of the R.I.B.A. and was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture in 1890.

**Sir Horace Jones P.R.I.B.A., F.S.A.** came next in 1882. After twenty-four years practice in the City he was appointed Architect and Surveyor to the City of London, and was responsible for the markets at Smithfield, Billingsgate and Leadenhall; the Guildhall Free Library and Museum, the Temple Bar Memorial and its surmounting Griffin; and arguably, one of the most memorable of all London sights, Tower Bridge. He was President of the R.I.B.A. in 1882 and 1883.

It was a shattering blow to Sir Horace as indeed it must have been to the whole Craft to hear that in the early hours of the 3rd June 1883 a disastrous fire had broken out in Sandby's Temple resulting in the almost entire destruction of that time-honoured structure, and it was largely upon Jones' advice that Grand Lodge remained in Great Queen Street. With the coming of the Railways and the new terminus at Charing Cross, and a most desirable site becoming vacant in the nearby Adelphi with its good view of the

River Thames, there was a very strong lobby to get away from the Covent Garden Area, by then one of the very worst slums in London. Quite apart from the upheaval and the enormous expense of repairing the Temple, even after allowing for the benefit of a substantial insurance payment, the debate was ultimately disadvantaged when it was realised that the freehold of the Adelphi site was not up for sale.

The next seven appointments to the Office were all very short term. In 1888 **Col. Sir Robert Edis K.B.E., D.L., J.P., F.R.I.B.A., F.S.A.** was appointed to succeed Jones and among his many claims to fame were a number of commissions for King Edward VII, the Constitutional and Junior Constitutional Clubs; the Great Central Hotel; additions to the Inner Temple Library, and, not least, his twenty year command of the Artists Volunteer Corps.

**Charles Barry P.R.I.B.A., F.S.A., F.S.I.**, the son of Sir Charles, the Architect of the Palace of Westminster, was appointed in 1890. Amongst his many works were Dulwich College; the Piccadilly frontage of the Royal Academy; the Institute of Civil Engineers in George Street, and parts of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. He also did much of the drawing and detail work on the Palace of Westminster for his father. He was President of the R.I.B.A. in 1876, 1877 and 1878 and was awarded the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture in 1877.

**James Edmeston F.R.I.B.A., Pres.A.A., F.S.I.** was appointed in 1893. He was a founder of the Architectural Association, its President in 1853 and a Fellow of the Surveyors Institute. He was however the first of five who consecutively held office as Grand Superintendent of Works for only one year.

**Reginald St Aubyn Roumieu A.R.I.B.A.**, an Associate of the R.I.B.A., and a descendent of an old Huguenot family, followed in 1894. His Architect father Lewis had been responsible for the French Hospital at Hackney, in London, for which Reginald was later to be Honorary Architect for many years. He had a considerable practice as a London Surveyor and frequently acted as an official umpire in the High Court, and designed the Grosvenor Hospital for Women in Vincent Square. He was a founder of the Huguenot Lodge No. 2140, which celebrated its centenary in 1986.

**Herbert Thomas Steward F.S.I.** was appointed in 1895; he was the first Surveyor as such to hold the office. One of the earliest members of the Surveyors Institute founded in 1868, he became President in 1904. He was an ardent oarsman, chairman of the Management Committee of Henley Royal Regatta and a prominent member of Leander and the Amateur Rowing Association.

**Rowland Plumbe F.R.I.B.A., Pres.A.A.**, followed in 1896. He was a member of R.I.B.A. Council; President of the Architectural Association in 1871, and a Fellow of the Surveyors Institute. He was the District Surveyor for South Islington under the Metropolitan Board of Works, and for that District and West Hampstead under the newly formed London County Council. He was Master of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers in

1896, and probably best known for his work on hospitals, particularly mental asylums, and as a consultant for many of the Polytechnic Institutes when that great movement was in its infancy.

**Sir Alexander Rose Stenning F.R.I.B.A., Pres.S.I., J.P.** followed in 1897. He was later a Founder of the Guildhall Lodge No. 3116 in 1905, and in 1910, created a Knight Bachelor when he became President of the Surveyors Institution.

**Henry Florence V-P.R.I.B.A., Pres.A.A.,** a Vice-President of the R.I.B.A. and an R.I.B.A. "Soane Medallist", and to whom the main Hall at the R.I.B.A. London Headquarters in Portland Place is dedicated. He was appointed Grand Superintendent of Works in 1898 when Grand Lodge was again "bursting at the seams". He served for eight years and began the task of identifying all the ownerships of the properties to the West up to Wild Street. In 1889 Grand Lodge bought Nos 57 and 58 and Freemasons' Hall was extended further Westwards to house a new Library and Museum and some additional Lodge Rooms, as well as yet another new office suite for the Grand Secretary. Florence did much of the ground work that was subsequently passed on to his successor.

**Alexander Burnett Brown F.R.I.B.A., F.S.I.** followed Florence in 1906, and was soon involved in the modernisation of the Tavern which included the addition of two bays at the South end of the Grand Hall, and the large annexe at the side following the acquisition of adjoining land from the Wesleyan Church Authorities. When all the modernisation work to Freemasons' Tavern was completed in 1910 it was renamed the Connaught Rooms after the M.W. Grand Master. The newly furnished building also signalled a fundamental change from a tenancy over which Grand Lodge exercised considerable management control, to a long term lease.

By then, Burnett Brown was drawing up plans for the next extension in the development of Freemasons' Hall. It was to be built and dedicated in honour of His late Majesty King Edward VII, who had been the M.W. the Grand Master for twenty-seven years before his accession in 1901.

Numbers 55 and 56 to the West of Florence's Extension were acquired primarily to accommodate a new Library and Museum and more Lodge Rooms. Building work started in 1914 but, with the onset and continuation of the Great War, immense difficulties arose in procuring materials; far worse was the serious shortage of labour caused by the tragic losses in France. Eventually, after the new building had been made wind and watertight, all work was abandoned by Government Order in 1916, so that the men could be more gainfully employed in the construction of new munitions factories; but fate decreed that work on the King's Memorial would never be restarted or completed. By that time £28,500 had been spent out of the Building Fund of £40,000 that had been created since the turn of the Century by an annual levy on each member of the Craft, and the balance was then invested and allowed to accumulate.

By 1926 when Grand Lodge resolved to incorporate a memorial to King Edward VII in the proposed new Grand Temple, a total of £175,000 stood

to the credit of the Building Fund. Sadly that balance was completely swallowed up and all vestige thereof effaced in what became known as the Million Masonic Peace Memorial, an enterprise that started as a great dream and became not only a solid reality, but also the biggest building project ever undertaken by the Craft. Nevertheless, in spite of all the fine words that were uttered in Grand Lodge during several debates in the late 1920s, nowhere is there to be found any memorial to the late King in Freemasons' Hall, other than his copy portrait which hangs in Lodge Room No. 1, paid for out of the Building Fund.

## 6. THE MASONIC PEACE MEMORIAL BUILDING

The M.W. Grand Master, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, was not well enough to attend the Masonic Celebration of Peace at an Especial Grand Lodge held at the Albert Hall in London in June 1919, but he expressed his earnest hope, through the M.W. Pro Grand Master, Lord Ampthill:

*that the Craft, as a fitting sequel to the proceedings of today, will determine to create a perpetual memorial of its gratitude to Almighty God for the special blessings He has been pleased to confer upon us, both as Englishmen and as Masons, whereby we can render fitting honour to the many Brethren who fell during the War. I desire the question of a memorial be taken into early consideration as a direct outcome of this our Masonic Celebration of Peace. The great and continued growth of Freemasonry amongst us demands a central home; and I wish it to be considered whether the question of erecting that home in the Metropolis of the Empire, dedicated to the Most High and worthy of the great traditions of the United Grand Lodge of England, would not be the most fitting memorial.*

*In some ways, more particular, the Memorial Building would also be an abiding practical expression of gratitude to the Great Architect of the Universe for the preservation of so many Brethren and their safe restoration to their families.*

Immediate steps were then taken to set up a new fund that would provide for:

*the raising and furnishing of a superstructure perfect in its parts, and dedicated to the Most High, and the heroism of the many who fought and fell for the principles of Freemasonry.*

An appeal went out to the Craft to subscribe £1,000,000 to the Fund, and the Grand Master decided that special efforts would be recognised by issue of what became known as the Hall Stone Jewel to both individual Masons, Lodges, Provinces and Districts overseas.

The design of the new Building was the subject of a national architectural competition and the principal assessor appointed by the R.I.B.A. was Sir

Edwin Lutyens R.A., whose Cenotaph in Whitehall is arguably the most notable worldwide of all War memorials.

The winning design submitted by the architectural firm of Ashley and Newman was quite outstanding and the draughtsmanship displayed in the drawings, and later, to be reflected in the craftsmanship in the building, shone out even amongst the six who were selected from the original entries in the second stage of the competition.

The agonising decision having been taken to demolish all of Freemasons' Hall lying to the west of Sandby's Temple, that is those parts of the Building on the sites of Nos 60, 59, 58 and 57, and also the unfinished memorial extension on Nos 55 and 56, the task of acquiring the several parcels of land needed to complete the assembly of the new building site went ahead. The land between what we already owned and the boundaries formed by Great Queen Street on the North side, Wild Street on the West and Wild Court on the South, was occupied by a mixed bag of old, decayed and in some cases derelict tenements, small shops, workshops, stables, and stores, mostly let on weekly tenancies or short term leases; and not a few being used for purposes both environmentally and morally detrimental to Freemasons' Hall. Great care had to be taken not to inflate the value of the land and purchases were made quietly piece by piece and, for the most part, obtained at a fair price and favourable to the Craft.

It is perhaps worthy of mention that there was yet another attempt to move to the Adelphi by the Strand and near to Charing Cross Railway Station. Adelphi Terrace was up for sale and there was a very considerable lobby in favour of what was, undoubtedly, a more pleasant area overlooking the Embankment Gardens and the River, but those who opted for remaining at the old home won the day. The present site is after all located at the crossing of one of the main North-South and East-West axes of the Metropolis, and arguably more convenient to get to and fro and for those living outside London, particularly in the North East and West regions of the Country.

Throughout the construction period and until the work was completed, Burnett Brown remained Grand Superintendent of Works. After twenty-eight years in Office, he was succeeded by two Architects in quick succession; Ernest Major F.R.I.B.A. in 1934, and Alfred Mayell F.R.I.B.A. in 1935 and 1936, neither of whom made any great contribution to the brand new building.

With the very considerable additional accommodation being provided for private Lodges and Chapters in the new Building, Sir George Harvey who had acquired the Lease of the Tavern in 1910 and had been responsible for the modernisation and transformation of it into the Connaught Rooms, to become one of the foremost restaurants in London, foresaw the urgent need for additional dining rooms to serve the Craft once the new Hall was completed.

He entered into a new building lease agreement, to redevelop that part of the old Freemasons' Hall occupied by Sandby's Temple, by then in a sorry

and rapidly decaying state, and he took over all that remained of No. 61 Great Queen Street, vacated by Grand Lodge when the new Hall was completed.

"Ashley and Newman" were engaged to create new cloakrooms, lavatories and wine stores on the Ground Floor on top of Sandby's original basement wine cellars; the Balmoral and the Presidents Rooms on the First Floor; and the York and Kent; the Cambria, Denbigh and Ulster; and the Devon, Stafford and Essex Rooms respectively on three floors over.

**Henry Victor Ashley F.R.I.B.A.** was appointed Grand Superintendent of Works in 1937 and I would like to recall his words when the design for the new Peace Memorial Building submitted by him and his Partner, Winton Newman was accepted:

*The ideal, which we have to keep before us in this great building, is that it is a great Memorial to our Brethren who fell in the War, and wherever Freemasons foregather, we must never forget this, and as the Architects to this great enterprise we realise it first and foremost, as we also realise our responsibility to the Craft. No man of our generation has ever had a greater or nobler task to perform, and we are resolved that no effort on our part will be wanting to ensure the success of it, and I know we have the greatest support in this effort, both from Grand Lodge and the brethren generally.*

**Francis Winton Newman F.R.I.B.A.** took over when Ashley, his partner, died in 1945, and took on the task of clearing up after the ravages of the War. He remained in office until he died in 1953, but not before his Firm was engaged to design a further extension to the Connaught Rooms on the site of Nos 64 and 65, replacing the former Mark Masons' Hall, and in front of the annexe on the East side of the Grand Hall.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the style and the construction of the Extension was similar to Freemasons' Hall itself, but it had always been the intention to extend the facade of the Peace Memorial Building right through. From outside it may be seen that the East flank of Freemasons' Hall has been left "toothed and keyed" for building on, but it is unlikely that the elevation as originally designed will ever be completed.

Under the terms of the Lease, the Lessee of the Connaught Rooms is responsible for its repair and maintenance, and so far as Freemasons' Hall is concerned, the Office of Grand Superintendent of Works has become primarily one of a consultative nature. In the last few years it has been necessary for Grand Lodge to embark on some quite expensive amelioration work. No doubt there were many who thought that the excellence of the work of the original building would last for ever, needing little more than a lick of paint every few years. Unfortunately that was not and never will be the case. Nevertheless, it is a fact of life that Freemasons' Hall is a notable example of the very highest standard of building, none of the "utility" stuff which has become commonplace since the 1939-45 World

War. It is therefore not only expensive to repair but, at times, near impossible to do so without incurring the National Debt.

However I recall first, the words of Lord Ampthill when the Building was completed:

*The Peace Memorial Building was erected not only to commemorate the affection for the memory of those brethren who paid the supreme sacrifice in the Great War of 1914–1918, whose names are encapsulated in the Shrine in the vestibule outside the Grand Temple, but also to register their belief that it will ever remain an inspiration to the future generations of the Craft.*

and secondly, the words of His Majesty King George V who was not a freemason, in response to the loyal address sent to him by his uncle the M.W. the Grand Master, His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught K.G., when the new building was dedicated:

*The completion of the new Masonic Hall, of which you, as Grand Master, initiated the idea, must indeed be a cause of much satisfaction to you and your fellow Masons.*

*It is my earnest hope that this Hall may forever stand as a monument to that public spirit and comradeship, which united Freemasons to see that the names of their Brethren who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War should never be forgotten.*

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**NOTE:** During the period under review the spelling of 'superintendent' 'superintendant' was erratic.

## MASONIC PERSONALITIES AS SEEN THROUGH THE BYRON CONNECTION

### PART THREE

Right Worshipful Bro. Sir Frederick Gustavus Fowke, Bt.  
(1839-1850)

by W.Bro. A. David Herbert P.P.G.Std. B.

Freemasonry in Leicestershire continued at a low ebb. The brethren became apathetic. The situation regarding Lord Raneliffe, the absentee Provincial Grand Master, was still causing friction. Some members gave up and resigned. So much so that Bro. William Kelly who had been initiated on 7th November 1838 was appointed Junior Warden one year later in December 1839, Senior Warden the following year, and in 1841 was installed as Worshipful Master, a truly meteoric rise. The history of St John's Lodge tells us that only fifteen brethren were present at his Installation and three of those were visitors! Kelly was installed by Bro. Lawrence Thompson P.S.G.D. and Prestonian Lecturer, who, according to Kelly, was the only person available who could do the ceremony of Installation apart from Sir Frederick. He was a frequent visitor to Leicester and on his visits often stayed at Lowesby Hall with Sir Frederick with whom he seems to have been a good friend. He and Sir Frederick were both members of the *Lodge of Antiquity No. 2*.

One cannot pass by this period without mentioning the terrible economic conditions then prevailing in Leicester and the County, which must to some degree, have had an effect on Freemasonry in the Province. This period was known as "The Hungry Forties". Kelly's appointment as Master of St John's Lodge coincides with the period when Thomas Cooper was appointed Secretary of the Leicester Chartist movement. Signs of revolution were appearing everywhere and the authorities were very worried as to the outcome. This is of course outside the scope of this article, but I would urge anyone who is interested in this period to read the fascinating autobiography of Thomas Cooper which can be borrowed from the Central Library in Bishop Street. Incidentally, a man by the name of Thomas Cooper was initiated into the John of Gaunt Lodge in 1846 at the first meeting of the Lodge and is described as a druggist. This was at the time when the Chartist movement was at its height and it is essential not to confuse these two men.

As Kelly's year as Master of St John's was drawing to a close, the brethren did what they were in the habit of doing in a crisis, turning to Sir Frederick, and asking him to take on again the mastership of the Lodge. He wrote to Kelly on 9th November 1842 turning down the request. One of the reasons given was as follows:

*If as you say there is a tolerable certainty that a Masonic Hall will be erected in the course of the ensuing year, you must be aware that the Foundation Stone could not be laid with proper dignity and effect, unless*

*under the auspices of the P.G.M. or D.P.G.M., and as his Lordship, the P.G.M.'s attendance is so very uncertain here, I, in the event of his absence at such a moment, to be Master of St John's could not well act in two capacities, nor do I conceive it would be equally creditable to the Lodge, if one of its regular working members was the acting master on so important occasion.*

This Hall was to be at the corner of Wyclif Street and Millstone Lane but for some reason it was not proceeded with. Sir Frederick continues:

*Now I should propose to the Lodge that you should continue to preside another year, and as there are plenty of precedents of Masters ruling Lodges for two successive years no objection could be made to it, and I feel satisfied Bro. Hames (Senior Warden) will agree with me in thinking that a brother, who has been so efficient in the Chair, and so zealous and active in his endeavours to raise a fund for building a Hall should be WM at the ceremony of laying the Foundation Stone.*

It was however Bro. Joseph Hames who was duly installed as Master on St John's Day, 27th December 1842 and it is interesting to quote from the summons for that meeting:

*The festival of this Lodge will be holden at the Bell Hotel on Tuesday 27th December at 2 o'clock to pass Brother R.A. Lafargue and to install Bro. Joseph Hames as W.M. for the ensuing year.*

Some notes on the Summons are:

*Provincial Grand Lodge at 11 o'clock  
Royal Arch Chapter at 1 o'clock  
Installation and 2nd degree at 2 o'clock  
Dinner and Dessert at 5 o'clock.*

A very full day! Dining costs were five shillings and I think this helps us to understand why so many townfolk just could not afford the time or the money to participate in Freemasonry at this time, particularly in view of the prevailing economic conditions I have previously mentioned.

On 23rd November 1842 before Kelly's term as Master had come to an end, Sir Frederick wrote to him as follows:

*Your melancholy announcement of poor Musson's death has affected me deeply. I had a great respect for him. No one more richly deserves every respect we can show him, and he has expressed a wish, whenever his death should happen, that the Masonic funeral ceremony should take place. If there is no express declaration in his Will to this effect, we could not urge our attendance Masonically, unless with the sanction of his family.*

Apparently all was in order for this to take place and another letter from Sir Frederick to Kelly dated the 25th November shows that he was keen to comply with the wishes of the departed brother:

*I propose being at Leicester on Sunday afternoon. I will thank you to order a bed for me at the Bell, as it will be more convenient to me to sleep there that night than at the Crowns. I must leave the whole arrangement to yourself as I cannot be at Leicester to take my part in the preparation for the ceremony.*

Now a full account of this Masonic funeral is recorded in W. Bro. Walter Glover's excellent booklet entitled "*The Final Tribute*", the subject of which is Masonic funerals. Sir Frederick's contribution is covered in detail. It is however necessary here to record the letter from a relative of Bro. Musson to Sir Frederick dated 29th November 1842:

*Permit me to tender to you the grateful, the heartfelt thanks of a family which has been sustained and comforted whilst attending the remains of a near and dear relative to the grave, by the kind manner in which you, Sir Frederick, and the other Masonic Gentleman have complied, at much personal inconvenience, with his oft repeated request. Believe me, Sir, that whilst remembrance of this will ever remain engraved upon their hearts, they feel a double debt of gratitude is due to you for the solemn and, if it were not presumption, I would say fraternal feelings you displayed in the performance of the last sad rites.*

*I have the honour to remain, Sir Frederick,  
Your most humble servant,  
W. Musson*

I do have to mention here that at the time of carrying out this ceremony Sir Frederick was already sixty years of age. While this is not considered old by any means in this day and age, for those times the rigours of travel in an unheated coach on uneven roads for an hour or two, particularly if one suffered from the beginnings of arthritis or other ailments, would not be particularly welcome. In addition the frequent disputes which continued to affect the harmony of the Province and St John's Lodge would not have helped. On the 30th December he wrote:

*As I really do not think it fair that I should take the whole responsibility connected with the duties of Provincial Grand Master, I must beg that in the event of your not being satisfied with the apology and explanation of the offending Brother tomorrow, the case may be laid before Lord Rancliffe who will act as he thinks proper.*

It has to be remembered that Sir Frederick was three years older than Lord Rancliffe. We must also be aware that he had many other commitments involving his Lowesby estates. He was also a County Magistrate and a Deputy Lieutenant for Leicestershire as well as, and I quote from the *Leicester Journal*:

*Being a liberal supporter of our local charities, taking a warm interest in all philanthropic measures for promoting the public good, many of which*

*he advocated with his pen; while the active assistance which he rendered in former years both in purse and person in aid of various subscriptions and schemes for ameliorating the conditions of the framework knitters will be gratefully remembered by the poorer classes of our population.*

He is known to have given considerable help to estate workers and their dependents when they fell on hard times. My colleagues in the Lodge of Research tell me that one of the few things we know about the early life of William Kelly is that he went to school at Billesdon, where Sir Frederick had supported educational projects. Not only that but Sir Frederick held the title of Lord of the Manor of Billesdon. There is a strong possibility that Sir Frederick had known Kelly and encouraged his interest in Freemasonry. Kelly's family may even have been beneficiaries of Sir Frederick's charitable projects.

In a letter written to Kelly in August 1843, Sir Frederick informs him business commitments may well prevent him from attending to Royal Arch business, but he must ensure the attendance of at least two candidates. Kelly then informs Sir Frederick that he had prepared bye-laws for his consideration. Sir Frederick's next letter dated 10th September 1843 shows that problems were still affecting the Province:

*Perhaps Bro. Hames (Master of St John's) has shown you the letter I wrote to him respecting the conduct of Bros. Irvine & Martin in absenting themselves from the Chapter during the Exaltation of the candidates. I have taken the matter up in rather a more serious way than usual, for unless we take the bull by the horns, I foresee that certain discontented masons will be constantly giving themselves airs, and will frustrate all our united efforts to preserve order and regularity in both Lodge and Chapter.*

*I will never suffer the regularity of our proceedings to be interrupted either by brethren who prefer confusion to order or by those who cannot or will not work.*

Also in September 1843 a private meeting of the members of St John's Lodge and of the Chapter of Fortitude was held at the Bell Hotel on Tuesday 19th at 7 o'clock in the evening for the purpose of considering "the best means of marking their gratitude and respect to the R.W. Bro. Sir Frederick Gustavus Fowke, Baronet, P.S.G.W., D.P.G.M., P.M. Lodge 348, PZ etc. for his exertions during many years in the cause of Masonry in general in this Province and more especially for his constant attendance on, and performance of, the arduous duties of M.E.Z. of the Chapter of Fortitude". Earlier in 1843 on 21st April the Grand Master, the Duke of Sussex, died and the history of St John's Lodge tells us that the Brethren for the first time wore white gloves as a mark of respect. Previously they had worn black.

Nothing is heard of Sir Frederick now for about two years. Why this is I do not know. However if it had been through illness or other cause, then I

feel sure it would have been mentioned in letters sent either before the event or afterwards, which had been the practice on previous occasions. It was during this period that Kelly resigned from St John's Lodge and it could well be that any letters from this period were not retained for posterity due to their contents. The fact that we have any letters at all is due largely to Kelly's industry in preserving them for future generations. He was to live for another fifty years and he perhaps felt that such letters as were written contained matters personal to him and that there was nothing to be gained by preserving them. It was all a long time ago. He had become reconciled with St John's and harmony restored. When we hear from Sir Frederick again it is in connection with the proposed formation of the John of Gaunt Lodge, which he was happy to encourage and he gave it his full support. The events leading up to its consecration on 11th May 1846 and Sir Frederick's role in this are fully dealt with in the history of that Lodge. Suffice is to say that he was one of the petitioners and a founder member, and that he performed the ceremony of consecration and installed Bro. William Kelly as its first Master.

Sir Frederick's good nature shows through again when he tells Kelly:

*Don't despair of a good spirit between the two Lodges – I look forward to great unanimity, but still I fear a little wholesome chastisement on my part is necessary to secure it.*

He apparently carried out this threat at the consecration meeting because writing to Kelly three days afterwards, he let his true feelings be known:

*If the advice I gave on Monday from the Chair is slighted I shall retire from the Craft in disgust, under the conviction that all my honest endeavours to serve it either publicly or privately are of no avail – that the first principles of our order are forgotten and that the selfish principle now guides Masonry instead of that noble spirit.*

On Easter Sunday 1846 the serious beginnings of his recurring illness were become evident:

*Colonel T. requested me to take a post in The Grand Conclave for this year, which I did to oblige him, although I fear I must now be a very inefficient member of any Masonic Society. My day is over. I have so much domestic anxiety that I cannot give that attention which any prominent situation in our order requires. Still I am truly happy to be of use where it is in my power.*

Colonel T. was Colonel Tynte, Controller of the Household of the Duke of Sussex, and executor to his Will. He reports later that further illness prevented him attending any of its functions. His friend and fellow member of the *Lodge of Antiquity*, Bro. Lawrence Thompson, was also suffering from cataracts over both eyes and said he needed an operation.

By 2nd June he must have been feeling very ill as he writes:

*It is probable I may never be able to attend a Masonic meeting again – Bro. Conke (Provincial Grand Secretary) must take his instructions from Kelly or apply to Lord Rancliffe.*

This instruction was to prove rather awkward, to say the least, and would cause Sir Frederick much anguish in the months to follow. This was followed on 27th June by an even more disturbing letter:

*In terrible pain. Surgeon called from Melton Mowbray. Felt very hurt at the ungrateful conduct of certain members of St John's Lodge that I think seriously of sending in my resignation as D.P.G.M. I must finally bid adieu to the Craft.*

He did in fact resign from the *Lodge of Antiquity* this year but thankfully he never carried out his threat to resign his Leicester duties. His writing which had been fairly easy to read so far now becomes a bit of a scrawl as though he could be writing from his sick bed. His illness continued preventing him from taking any part in Masonic matters. Six months later he was rather annoyed to receive a summons from St John's Lodge saying the meeting would be held at the "Masonic Hall, Leicester." Apparently a room at the Bell Hotel had been set aside for the Lodge and had been accorded this designation.

He demanded to know if Lord Rancliffe had given his approval to this description, to which the Lodge replied that they had sent Lord Rancliffe a summons and he had not objected.

Sir Frederick was furious and tells Kelly he is writing to Lord Rancliffe. Kelly makes a diplomatic response saying that as he is Master of a rival Lodge that he ought not to get involved. Kelly proposes to Sir Frederick that the John of Gaunt Lodge should now have its own Chapter to which Sir Frederick replies:

*I don't think Grand Chapter would have appointed a Provincial Grand Superintendent with only one Chapter in the Province. They probably will if there are two. I remember the Duke of Sussex hinting at something of this kind to me several years ago.*

His health is now beginning to improve but from now on it does seem to fluctuate a lot. He is well enough on 12th December 1846 to write to Kelly:

*In case I feel myself sufficiently well on Monday next, I should like to take the opportunity of killing two birds with one stone on that day. Can you without inconvenience give me a mutton chop at 4 o'clock? I should have much pleasure in accompanying you afterwards to the Lodge and to the Literary and Philosophical Society.*

Sadly he writes two days later to say that he has a cold and "the painful headpains" have returned therefore he will have to cancel the Monday meeting. On New Years Eve 1846, Kelly was going to London and Sir Frederick asks him to call on Bro. White, Grand Secretary, to whom he has

written four times receiving no reply, on the subject of the Ivanhoe Lodge Warrant. This Lodge was consecrated in 1836 at Ashby and ceased working in 1841.

Kelly now wrote to him to remind him of his subscriptions. In somewhat of a confused state Sir Frederick replied that he owed Chapter of Fortitude ten shillings. He thought he owed John of Gaunt Lodge and he had not received any application from St John's, adding that treasurers ought to write and not allow subscriptions to accumulate, and stating that it is likely to be many months before he is well enough again to attend any function. In February 1847 he is writing of "*the total want of brotherly feeling evinced towards me by St John's Lodge*". Also in this letter he tells Kelly that the time is approaching for the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting and comments:

*Lord Rancliffe is as well if not better able to attend than I am but I feel he will not do so. As Senior Grand Warden you must preside when the Lodge is held.*

The year 1847 was a very disruptive one for the Brethren of the Province of Leicestershire. The perceived animosity as shown by certain brethren of St John's led by Bro. Cooke was still very much in evidence and the controversy over the use of the term "Masonic Hall" hardened their attitude against Sir Frederick, already soured by what they wrongly believed to be his support of Kelly and the John of Gaunt Lodge to the detriment of their own Lodge. In a letter of 15th June 1847, he says he is going to London to consult Dr Chambers and also to take his daughter to see an Aurist (an ear specialist). In this letter he says that he will attend Provincial Grand Lodge, but festivals and dining are out in his present condition.

If one reads the history of St John's Lodge then you would believe that ill-feeling between the new and old Lodges was eliminated in true fashion in 1846 immediately after the consecration of the John of Gaunt Lodge. Indeed in February 1847 a Masonic Ball was held supported by members of the two Lodges. No doubt many members of both Lodges accepted the new order without any concern. However certain members of St John's Lodge were still making trouble for Sir Frederick who not only disapproved of the conduct of some of them that he commented in one letter that they were not fit to be called by the name of "Brother".

Matters came to a head in August when he received a notice from the Provincial Grand Secretary, Bro. Cooke that there would be a meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge on 30th August 1847. Sir Frederick wrote to Kelly and presumably to Cooke as follows:

*With regard to Provincial Grand Lodge this is the first time one has been held without a previous intimation to myself on the subject to know what time would be convenient for me to attend. Now as I have hitherto done all the work of Provincial Grand Master it is not my intention to play second fiddle to his Lordship without even being asked if it is my intention to*

*attend in my place as Deputy Provincial Grand Master. I consider this omission an impertinence on his part. I am not sorry for it and can now resign with more propriety in office in consequence of the self importance and treatment of some members of St John's Lodge. I shall not attend and I can only hope all will go well under the sole superintendence of the Provincial Grand Master.*

The above letter is the one he wrote to Kelly but he must have written in a similar manner to Cooke, which was about the worst thing he could have done. Cooke now had all the ammunition to get his own way. Letters were being written in haste by all concerned, some crossing in the post and some not surviving for us to peruse. Bro. Cooke was the most hostile to the formation of the John of Gaunt Lodge and those whom he held responsible i.e. Kelly supported by Sir Frederick.

Cooke though had really acted quite properly on this matter when viewed in isolation. He had already had Sir Frederick's authority to refer matters directly to Lord Rancliffe, which is just what he had done. He wrote to him about the Provincial Grand Lodge to ask if 25th August was appropriate for the Lodge to be held informing the Provincial Grand Master that Sir Frederick had tendered his resignation and that he would not be attending. Lord Rancliffe wrote back to Cooke to request that Provincial Grand Lodge should be held on the 30th August rather than the 25th suggesting or agreeing that Bro. Lawrence Thompson should be notified to occupy the Chair. Lord Rancliffe informed Cooke that he would attend. Cooke did not convey this information to Sir Frederick or Kelly, which in effect meant that they did not fully appreciate the situation. The letters from Cooke to Lord Rancliffe and his reply do not survive but the letters quoted below make the position very clear. Sir Frederick was wrong in his assumption that the Lodge would be under the "*sole superintendence of the Provincial Grand Master*".

It has to be remembered that Cooke was appointed Secretary back in 1833 at the time that Sir Frederick became D.P.G.M. He had been initiated into the Lodge back in 1818 and was Master in 1823. Kelly was only three years old when Cooke was initiated into Freemasonry so he probably reasoned that this young upstart had no business starting a new Lodge which he perceived as a rival and a threat to his own beloved Lodge. The fact that Kelly had also resigned from St John's because he disapproved of the behaviour of certain members strongly counted against him in Cooke's eyes in particular.

The Provincial Grand Lodge meeting duly took place at the Bell Hotel on 30th August 1847. Kelly wrote a short letter to Sir Frederick the following day and then followed it on 2nd September with a much longer letter summarizing what took place. I feel this letter is so important to our understanding of the situation that I now give it in full:

*I addressed a few hasty lines to you on 31st ultimo at which time I was undecided whether I should acquaint you with what took place at the*

*Provincial Grand Lodge on the previous day, or not. On further consideration although it relates in some degree to myself personally I think it right that you should know it. On going to the Bell at 3 o'clock, (the time appointed for the meeting) I found that Earl Howe was there to visit the Lodge – that Lord Rancliffe had arrived but had gone out to pay a short visit to some friend, as he declined presiding in (Provincial) Grand Lodge, and that Bro. Lawrence Thompson had been specially sent for from London to preside evidently for the sole purpose of keeping me out of the Chair. Now although as Senior Grand Warden I was clearly entitled to take the Chair in the absence of yourself and the Provincial Grand Master I did not think it worth the trouble to take notice of this paltry spite against me but allowed Bro. Thompson to preside.*

*I however wrote to Bro. Thompson on the subject, a copy of which I enclose. Well, the (Provincial) Grand Lodge was opened – Lord Howe admitted, and Bro. Thompson called upon the Secretary to read the list of Provincial Grand Lodge appointments. The Secretary read the list, previsiting it by the very unimportant announcement that it had not been seen by his Lordship. As might be expected Bro. Wheeler (W.M. of St. John's Lodge) stood at the head of the list as my successor in the office of Senior Grand Warden. Bro. Williamson (W.M. of John of Gaunt Lodge) as Junior Grand Warden etc. It is quite clear from Bro. Cooke's admission that the list was drawn up by Bro. Wheeler and himself, and although, as far as I recollect the offices are divided nearly equally between St John's Lodge and our own, still they might have the modesty to lay the list before his Lordship before the investiture took place. It was certainly the worst managed affair I have ever witnessed, for at least a quarter of an hour not a word was said – altogether it must have impressed Lord Howe with a very high opinion of Leicester masonry. After the Lodge was closed and Lord Rancliffe had arrived, a few members of St John's Lodge were closeted with him, but I believe no introductions of other members of the Craft took place, and good care was taken that he should only hear one party. Lord Howe was at the dinner at which the Provincial Grand Master presided. Early in the evening Lord Howe left, and soon afterwards I came away myself. I understand that Bro. Williamson gave his opinion pretty plainly, and that Bro. Allen of Nottinghamshire took his Lordship and others to task for a circumstance which occurred which if intended was certainly most unmasonic but which as I was not present, I will not further allude to. The fact however is clear that every effort has been used to prejudice the Provincial Grand Master's mind, and to obtain the sole arrangement of all Provincial affairs by Bro. Cooke etc. It must of course be unpleasant to you to be annoyed by such unmasonic proceedings, but let us earnestly beg for the sake of the John of Gaunt Lodge and the general welfare of the Craft in the Province, that you will retain your office and not carry out your resolution of resigning – as in that case I believe Bro. Wheeler or Bro. Cooke will be appointed to succeed you! You*

*may imagine what will be the result of such a proceeding. One thing is certain it would not be quietly submitted to. There can be no doubt whatever that jealousy of the prospect of John of Gaunt Lodge is really the prime cause of it all. We now have forty members – a greater number I believe than they have at St John's and there are more candidates coming forward. I hope my letter to Bro. Thompson will induce him to assist in counteracting what is taking place.*

Now Kelly still did not appear to know the full facts when he wrote the above letter. Sir Frederick was also in ignorance, relying on Kelly for information. It became a lot clearer when Sir Frederick received the following notification from Cooke:

*Leicester, 31st August 1847*

*Dear Sir and Brother,*

*I have received your letter of 28th inst. And have laid the same before the Provincial Grand Master, Lord Rancliffe, and his Lordship desires me to announce his acceptance of your resignation.*

Sir Frederick must have been absolutely furious that his letter, or the contents thereof, addressed to the Secretary had been communicated to Lord Rancliffe without his knowledge. He replied to Kelly as follows:

*How Bro. Thompson can have been prevailed upon to commit himself in the way he has done by so improperly presiding in the Chair of Provincial Grand Lodge without consulting you, and stating to the Brethren that in the event of the Provincial Grand Master declining to take the Chair it was your duty as P.S.G.W. to preside I cannot imagine? There is much behind the curtain of which we are both ignorant.*

How very true! He says Lord Howe is to be informed. He is writing to Lord Rancliffe and Bro. Thompson. Writing to Lord Rancliffe, Sir Frederick tells him of the bitterness and hostility he has had to endure from Cooke stating:

*I have been his friend through life and I have given him proof of my sincerity on various occasions both as a magistrate, a neighbour and a friend.*

The problem was of course that Cooke had revealed all and Sir Frederick now had to try and explain away some of the comments he had made to Cooke, particularly the comments he had made concerning Lord Rancliffe himself. What Cooke had revealed, when to quote Kelly “*members of St John's Lodge were closeted with him*” has to be left to the imagination.

Sir Frederick ends the letter to Rancliffe by saying:

*If however you consider that letter (that is the one to Cooke which he appears to have revealed to Rancliffe) as my resignation of the post of*

*Deputy Provincial Grand Master so let it be, and whether in or out of office it will still be my anxious wish to retain the privilege of your friendship.*

Now Cooke had perhaps overlooked the fact that he was dealing with two titled gentlemen and it would have been unthinkable in those days for a matter such as this to have been settled through a third party. Sir Frederick was to have some more surprises however. Bro. Lawrence Thompson was far from happy with the approach taken by Sir Frederick and Kelly, after all he would never have travelled down from London just to attend Provincial Grand Lodge. He came because he had been asked by Cooke with the sanction of Rancliffe to chair the meeting. After all he had been doing this to help the Province for over twenty-five years!

All did however become clear when Sir Frederick received a reply to his letter to Lord Rancliffe. It is extremely important because such letters from his Lordship are a rarity.

*My dear Fowke,*

*3rd September 1847*

*I thank you for your kind and friendly letter which I did not get until yesterday ....*

*I wrote to Cooke as soon as I got home not to take any further steps but I find he did not get my letter in time but had written to you, ten days notice or more it was, in contemplation to hold the meeting on the 25th inst. I had it put off until 30th to allow time for the circular to be sent. No one can regret more than I do that there should have been this disagreement. I am most anxious they should be put an end to, that everything should be forgotten and forgiven and that we all go on and act as Masons in perfect confidence and good feelings towards each other.*

*It appears to me that under all circumstances you should withdraw that letter, no doubt then ill feeling would be put an end to, and be then as if it never occurred and sometime later we might all meet together at Leicester in the Bond of Friendship. I have heard from Cooke this morning and I am certain he feels inclined to have that reconciliation which is most desirable. I therefore hope you will write me a letter that will tend to put an end to all this unpleasant business. I hope this will find you well. I wish I could tempt you to come here,*

*Believe me*

*My dear Fowke*

*Rancliffe*

This situation caused Sir Frederick much anxiety because, while he would have agreed with the sentiments of the Provincial Grand Master, he had taken a stand on an issue where Bro. Cooke had acted for the most part quite properly, and could without difficulty defend himself. Had Sir Frederick been active and well then of course none of this would have happened,

particularly the dissatisfaction expressed against Lord Rancliffe and his friend Bro. Lawrence Thompson. On 5th September he writes to Kelly that he had received *"a kind and friendly reply from Lord Rancliffe so that a certain brother's scheme to get rid of me has failed"*.

On 18th September he writes again to Kelly revealing his bitterness, explaining that he had been told by Bro. Lawrence Thompson that he should not have accused Cooke of *"impertinence"*. He said that Cooke had availed himself of his illness and that no one really appreciated the full position, that of being *"accused of acting with supposed hostility towards an old and favourite Lodge ... for the paltry gratification of establishing another in opposition to them"*. On 25th September he writes to Kelly as follows:

*Brother Lawrence Thompson is to head an investigation. I cannot positively pledge myself to abide by his decision as respects my future connection with the Craft as Deputy Provincial Grand Master and as a member of St John's Lodge, but I will so far agree to his fiat as to drop the subject altogether, and bury the past transactions in oblivion.*

He adds: *My daughter went to see Newstead Abbey a week ago with some friends of mine, when Col. Wildman was particularly kind and attentive to her. Possibly he was more desirous of showing this attention at the present moment, having been made acquainted with the treatment I had received from certain brothers.*

On 3rd October Bro. Thompson arrives to stay with Sir Frederick at Lowesby and Kelly is invited to join them. No doubt a full and frank discussion took place and almost certainly he then went on to Leicester to achieve reconciliation with the brethren there. His visit seems to have had the desired effect for on 28th October Sir Frederick writes to Kelly:

*I have received a letter from Lord Rancliffe this morning full of joy that all these differences are at an end.*

adding in another letter:

*For I want nothing but a common sympathy on the part of the brethren and this if joined in by both Lodges I could not object to, as I should feel more happy when I again appear in either of the Leicester Lodges – my head is again a good deal affected and I feel that I must keep myself quiet for the moment.*

He also mentions the fact that *"Incubus"* is undermining his health and that he must visit the surgeon in London as he *"can go on no longer"*. Incubus is a medical name for *"nightmares"* and this probably indicates that he was being prescribed laudanum to relieve his continual pain. Laudanum was a popular drug of the time, and is best described as a *"tincture of opium"* which of course is a narcotic drug. It stimulates mental activity at times and inactivity at others and may well account for his nightmares and hence his

reasoning to some extent at this time. This is extremely important I think in understanding the happenings of the years 1846/47.

To wind up this very traumatic year on a pleasant note he writes to Kelly on 28th December 1847 from "Springfield Hill, Lowesby", sending his apologies for not being able to attend the Festival of St John's Lodge tomorrow adding:

*I really quite rejoice to think that there is now every prospect of comfort and happiness to the members of St John's Lodge, the welfare and prosperity of which will ever be a matter of deepest interest to me.*

He did however manage to attend on 27th December together with Lord Rancliffe according to the "*History of St John's Lodge*" which probably prompted the above comment. The following year we read a comment in that history that "*the Lodge continued to improve in tone*". It really does seem that all parties, in true Masonic spirit, worked hard to achieve a unity of purpose and brotherly love and harmony. One thing is certain: that the expansion of the Province through the formation of the John of Gaunt Lodge was an outstanding success, and it created a precedent for the future expansion of Freemasonry in Leicestershire and later in Rutland. The uncertainties of life however revealed themselves insofar as Sir Frederick began to recover partially from his serious illness, while from this point in time the health of Lord Rancliffe deteriorated. Perhaps Lord Rancliffe had in the end made a vital contribution to Freemasonry in this Province.

By June of 1848 Sir Frederick is writing that his health is much better. However he now is very worried because he has not received any news for sometime from his son Gustavus who is serving with Field Marshal Radeski. Apparently his son's commander Prince Lichtenstein had been wounded and several officers and men killed. He remarks in a letter "*We are in total ignorance of the fate of our beloved son*". The editor of the *Morning Chronicle* was trying to obtain news of him. On 10th July he finally receives a letter from his son which said he was well and in good spirits in spite of being in the midst of war and turmoil and that he had been sleeping on the ground for the past three months.

On 13th July he writes to Kelly:

*I have written to Brother Cooke to propose that the Masters and Past Masters of both Lodges should lay their heads together and try to be ready with names for each office in Provincial Grand Lodge for the ensuing year, on Wednesday 26th July. I shall have no objection to give the Mystical Lecture at the Chapter meeting.*

Earl Howe wrote to him in September saying that if he could hold a Chapter some evening when the Yeomanry were out, he should very much like to attend St Augustine's Chapter. In April 1849 he is writing on paper with a black border as a mark of respect on hearing of the death of his son with the army in Austria. Gustavus was Sir Frederick's second son. His eldest son

Frederick Thomas was a barrister. He quoted Alexander Pope's famous lines on this subject:

*By foreign hands his dying eyes were closed,  
By foreign hands his decent limbs composed:  
By foreign hands his humble grave adorned,  
By strangers honoured and by strangers mourned.*

He writes to Kelly this month:

*I have just seen in the paper your appointment to the office of Accountant for the Borough. In the midst of the gloom which hangs around me, this news is a glean of sunshine to me. The salary is small but I know your talent and industry will soon compel them to manage it.*

This letter I think shows the affection which Sir Frederick had for Kelly. In July he says that he is trying to summon up sufficient strength to attend the opening of the Museum on Tuesday. This museum is of course the present one in New Walk. This is followed by another letter to Kelly saying:

*I feel quite easy in being the almost nominal M.E.Z. of St Augustine's Chapter, having yourself as my kind and able representative so long as I am incapacitated from taking the Chair. It is true that I have the honour to be the Most Eminent Provincial Grand Commander of Knights Templars for Leicestershire, but it has hitherto been an honour in a mist there being no working Encampment of Knights in the County .... The Grand Conclave will give every facility to the exertions of all who are disposed to become members of this order of Christian Masonry. Pray give my kind regards to the Companions on 2nd August and express to them my sorrow of being prevented from taking the Chair.*

Probably this was one of the very few occasions when Sir Frederick could enjoy the luxury of having someone act for him. Ever since he joined St John's back in 1817 he had on numerous occasions deputized for brethren who could not or would not carry out their duties. On 29th August he writes:

*It was my intention to be at Leicester to attend the anniversary of the Incorporated Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel and Promoting Christian Knowledge. But I have had a bad night and am in no mood to leave home and take part in matters of a public nature, which I must have done had I been present at the meeting today. I fear the Chapter has erred in nominating me again as First Principal, for I really feel myself now disqualified to discharge its duties, and I am an enemy of sinecures. At the same time I cannot refuse acceding to your and their wishes if you are of the opinion my so doing will be useful. You will I hope soon come over here when we can talk over these matters.*

Writing again on 6th March 1850,

*My youngest daughter aged 20 has had a most violent attack of inflammatory rheumatism and her cries have been most distressing. Lady Fowke has never left her afflicted daughter night or day the whole time. I think however the worst is over and that she may now be pronounced convalescing.*

On the 14th April he is preparing for his Installation as ME Provincial Grand Commander of Knights Templars for Leicestershire mentioned in a previous letter for he writes:

*notwithstanding my rather precarious health and present difficulties perhaps it is better that the Dose should be all at once taken. I am therefore going to Town tomorrow to arrange my clothing etc., but I fear there will not be sufficient time to make it all complete. I have written to Brother Lawrence Thompson to meet me at my son's chambers, Lincoln's Inn, to assist me in this matter.*

*I shall also see the Grand Secretary and take his advice as to performing the ceremony of Installation. He means to attend and I believe some other Grand Officers. I confess myself nervous about it and shall require much support from the Brethren.*

Whether this Installation took place at Leicester or elsewhere is not clear. Sir Frederick however adds an interesting historical PS:

*My farms have been advertised several times without any name attached to the advertisement except that of the Referee, but with no good result. I am certainly a conspicuous victim of this sad and hateful legislation as to Free Trade. It was a most rash measure by that apostolate Sir Robert Peel; and rely on it you will ere long see its disastrous tendency throughout the whole Kingdom and amongst all classes.*

Peel went down in history for his Act to repeal the Corn Laws. In the face of serious opposition the Act to reduce or abolish the duty on imported corn was passed in 1846, which brought down the price of bread. This was welcomed by the disfranchised poor but of course it hit farmers like Sir Frederick hard in the pocket. Some things never change.

Lord Rancliffe departed this life on the 1st November 1850 and the Lodges went into mourning. Whether Sir Frederick was called to London or just happened to be there with his barrister son we do not know, but on 15th November he writes to Kelly as follows:

*6 Stone Buildings  
Lincoln's Inn*

*I am much gratified and flattered by the good opinion and wishes of the Brethren of the John of Gaunt Lodge, and I am sure you will be equally gratified to hear that the Grand Master has in the handsomest manner and quite unsolicited offered for my acceptance the vacant office of Provincial Grand Master for Leicestershire.*

*I had an interview with the Grand Secretary yesterday on the subject and found that I had reasons for not at once accepting the offer from his representative. I could not well refuse it!*

*I shall have much to say on the subject when we meet. You will see that there is no necessity for an application to the Grand Master, indeed Bro. White says that such interference always does mischief.*

*I have written an explanatory letter to Bro. Cooke which he will perhaps show to you. The Installation need not be for two or three months. It is of course pleasant if my appointment is approved at Leicester, to fill an office which was held so many years ago by my father.*

*With every good wish, and many thanks to you all.*

*Believe me,*

*My dear Sir and Brother,*

*Yours sincerely and fraternally.*

Sir Frederick, now in his sixty-ninth year and in relatively poor health, had achieved the highest office in the Province. He would rule for five years approximately before he succumbed to his final illness. He had however still to perform one more spectacular ceremony, which appropriately combined his role as head of the Masonic Province of Leicester and his civil role as a leading person of the town. It would be the culmination of his Masonic career. His period as Provincial Grand Master will be the subject of Part IV.

## **“REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR”**

**W.Bro. Rev. Canon M. Wilson, P.A.G. Chap., P.P.G. Chap.,  
P.P.G. Swd.B. (R.A.)**

**LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND CHAPTER OF INSTALLED  
FIRST PRINCIPALS No. 7896**

**Thursday 27 September 2001**

I speak to you this evening with some diffidence. It is not the business of Craft and Royal Arch Freemasonry to offer any systematic theological perspective. And I agree with that. We are *“not all operative Masons, but rather free and accepted or speculative”*. This means that as brethren and companions we are united on the basis of recognising and valuing each other’s complete individuality as well as common humanity in every aspect. We always meet together conscious of God our Creator and of one another and ourselves in our “creatureliness”. Freemasonry has the genius of uniting us deeply in our differences. And long may Freemasonry be a reproach to those who live to demonise others.

The book “Ecclesiastes”, “Qoheleth”, the Book of the Preacher or Conductor of an assembly or school (or it could be an assembler of sayings) has occasioned many reproaches due to its mildly maverick nature. Ascribed to a sage, a teacher and a skilled writer, it is the work of an inveterate thinker daring to speak his debates out loud. He ponders the meaning of human existence, whether the changes and chances of nature and this mortal life are apparent or actual, and refuses to give glib comfort. Subject always to controversy, this book became part of the Hebrew Canon of Scripture in 90 A.D. The author claims to be *“the son of David, king in Jerusalem”* and was held to be King Solomon. The book evidences sponsorship by influential “wise men”. Chapter 2 speaks of building enterprises, wealth and wisdom. But many sections speak of the “Preacher” as a man of moderate means, without his own royal authority and at times trenchantly critical of monarchs. Here is a son of the middle classes, perhaps, who wants to prove he has “been around”. He is someone portraying himself as cosmopolitan, and having tasted fully of the world, is somewhat jaded and has frankly had enough. None of this is typical of the Hebrew Scriptures, which makes it all the more interesting. The inclusion of an orthodox postscript after the text we all know is held to redeem the controversial aspects of debate by showing the religious position in the light of which everything else is to be understood. The book ends with the caution that when all this has been heard, do not let yourself be turned away from belief and obedience.

Ecclesiastes is one of the latest Hebrew Testament books. It emerged in the Hellenistic period but before the Maccabean Revolt in 168 B.C. that attempted to free Judaea from Syrian domination. This provinance means that the “Preacher’s” alleged intellectual and spiritual “disconnectedness”, hitherto highlighted by critics down the ages, has to be treated with new

respect. For the "Preacher" is heir to profound scholarly wisdom with massive intellectual equipment at his disposal. He had detailed familiarity with the entire Jewish religious tradition allied to the Hebrew Scriptures virtually in their final form, much as we have received them today. In partnership with the narrative, poetic, legal and prophetic genres there sparkles Hebrew wisdom which has four basic functions. It seeks to establish facts that belong inseparably together. Then wisdom seeks to order them, give admonition by virtue of what is discerned and also question what is perceived. "Qoheleth", the "Preacher", strives to fulfil this fourfold task.

Elements and experiences of earthly life are sifted and debated, social order and the world order even, in a quest for sense and motivation. Chapter 12 of Ecclesiastes contains the basic presupposition from which all wisdom thinking argues: that a person's behaviour and his fate belong inseparably together.

*"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."*

In earlier wisdom writings the person who fits into the world order will be upheld by it. The one who behaves well will do well – and vice versa. But the "Preacher" in Ecclesiastes questions this axiom. These assumptions become debate, even objects of attack. He finds

*"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd."*

Despite asking those questions about life and death that cannot be fully answered from human experience this side of the grave, the "Preacher" sees his own and others' researches and sayings as stimulating goads towards further fascination and knowledge. Seemingly contradictory or inconsistent at times, nevertheless they are as nails firmly driven home, and their breadth of expression as from the one Shepherd, God himself. This echoes the memorable petition for the love, guidance, protection and discipline of God in the Psalms: "*Hear, O Thou Shepherd of Israel: Thou that leadeth Joseph like a sheep.*" This encapsulates what wisdom was chiefly about for Israel – a striving for human order in the knowledge and fear of God. This "Preacher" had distinctive methods of argument not found anywhere else in the Hebrew writings. His radical questioning of traditional attitudes and accumulated beliefs might be attributable to the turbulent spirit of the times he may have experienced.

The book Ecclesiastes commands more professional study now than for many years past. It is now generally recognised that whatever inconsistencies of thought there may be, some are deliberate paradoxes on the part of a sole author, the "Preacher" himself. Modern interpreters believe that this is not a unitary treatise, but a collection of notes and separate thoughts penned by the writer at different times in connection with his public teaching and lectures. Editors have largely stayed their hand, though not

entirely, from modifying the material into some imposed but artificial unity. The "Preacher" says it as he sees it, and we as Masons are regularly brought face to face with one of his radical nuggets of wisdom: "*Remember now thy creator.*" This is a consistent little poem or meditation, but couched in mysterious and more than ambiguous imagery, so what are we to make of it?

It is clear the "Preacher" envisages the closing sequences of an individual's earthly existence. He meditates on life as a fleeting breath, on the ageing and dying processes of the human creature. But there is a framework. Human mortality is encompassed by knowledge of the ever-living creator God. This is paradox. Because he looked deeply and bluntly into the fabric of life and found it connected inextricably to inevitable death, it only takes a little change in the Hebrew text to read: "Remember thy grave in the days of your youth". Another minor change in orthography would bring out: "Remember your wife in the days of your youth." These words are "*goads*" to set us running and "*nails*" to tether us firmly "*given from one shepherd*", the TALGMH. It is the counsel of muted rapture when cherished culture is in decline, when the human order is under threat. It advises resignation to a life of limited contentment in a hostile environment. It poses the question: "Is this all there is to it?" It challenges us to have "the courage to be" without fear or fantasy.

**ORATION AT THE CONSECRATION OF LUTTERWORTH  
COUNCIL, No. 234, 25th June 2001  
(Order of Royal and Select Masters)**

**III. Comp. Rev. P.J. Swindells, Dep. G. Chap., District Grand Chaplain**

Most Illustrious Grand Master and Companions. Almost the only instruction I have in the ritual about this oration is that it should last no more than ten minutes. I rely on you, Most Illustrious Grand Master, to gavel should I exceed that time; in this way you can be assured you will win the undying loyalty and gratitude of all the companions.

Do we ever ask ourselves at a ceremony like this: "What on earth do we think we're doing?" It is certainly a question the uninstructed and popular world asks. In answer I would suggest three benefits in what we are doing; two of which apply to Freemasonry in general, and the third to this order in particular.

First, Freemasonry provides us with landmarks. I am not now referring to what are called the "landmarks of the order", for no-one seems to know for certain what these are. I refer to landmarks, or boundaries, for living. We live in a world increasingly devoid of boundaries or landmarks. You make up your rules for living as you go along. On the whole they are primarily what suits you rather than what suits your neighbour. They have no reference to any Supreme Being, for belief in such a being is a superstition with which we have happily dispensed. And yet people wonder why there is confusion and chaos; violence in society, breakdown in family life, apathy among voters. In particular they wonder why young people drift; yet it is because we have not provided them with the security of landmarks. Some of our religious leaders express their joy at the current increase in interest in what is vaguely called "spirituality"; yet this can be totally without landmarks, and as such far removed from true religion. I suggest that we as Masons can use our influence, mainly by example, to show that there are boundaries which enhance the life of all of us, boundaries of morality, of courtesy, of love of neighbour, of belief in God. Of course we shall all push beyond the boundaries at times, what Christians call sin, but that makes the boundaries all the more important.

Secondly, Freemasonry provides us with a balance of authority and equality. "*Such is the nature of our constitution that as some must of necessity rule and teach, so others must of course learn, submit and obey*". Due authority is necessary in any society of people. That on the one hand. On the other hand we are all equal as brother masons. That was very obvious in the days of the military travelling lodges, when a sergeant might be the Master of a lodge where the colonel was the newest Entered Apprentice; but both were brothers. It has recently been expressed in another Masonic order where the instruction has come down from H.Q. that we are to speak of "The Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master", but refer to him by name as "Brother Smith" or whatever. It underlines our equality before

God. This tension, between authority and equality, we can carry into the world which sorely needs it. The world lamentably fails to give due respect to authority causing many ills. There was a series of T.V. programmes about the 1960s generation, in which the presenter was rejoicing that the 1960s saw "the end of deference"; we can sympathise with what she was saying to some extent, but has it not all gone too far? Again the world seems keen enough on one person being as good as another; but in fact grades people for all the wrong reasons; the size of their bank balance, office desk, car or ego. Again let us lead by example, having learnt from our Masonry this vital balance between authority and equality.

Thirdly, as a benefit of our order in particular. One of the things we all learnt gradually as we progressed in Masonry is how frankly illogical much of it is as a story, or as a system of symbolism. Only up to a point can we distinguish and appreciate the connection of our whole system, and the relative dependency of its several parts. To a tidy mind like mine, this can be irritating, although I would agree that too much logic can be sterile. So I look for clues to make sense of it all. I was delighted when I joined this order to find that, since it fills up the gap between the craft and the Royal Arch, it does help to make Freemasonry a coherent system. To give just one example. When I was exalted into the Royal Arch I was greatly puzzled by the Scribes reporting to the First Principal "*Correct, Most Excellent, in every particular*". If the Word had been lost for nearly five hundred years, how on earth did they know it was correct? But of course in our Royal Master degree it is said: "*That it might, when found, be known and distinguished as the Master Word, they placed on the top of the Ark of the Covenant, the three Grand Masters' jewels, inscribed one in each language knowing that the descriptions thereof would be handed down to latest posterity.*" All is made clear.

In a world hostile not only to Freemasonry but to much of what we stand for we need encouragement. I hope what I have offered to you this morning will be of encouragement. Have courage my companions, for we have a priceless treasure which it is our calling to share by example with the world around us.

**ORATION AT THE CONSECRATION OF IVANHOE CONCLAVE  
No. 458 (Order of the Secret Monitor)**

**Wy. Bro. Rev. Trevor J. Walker, Prov. G. Chaplain**

**28th June 2001**

*"As the arrow shot by the unerring hand of a skilful archer speeds straight to its destined mark, so the Brethren and Officers of this Conclave, each in his particular sphere, will strive, we trust, with single mind and clear intention to carry out the commands of their Supreme Ruler, to render to each other comfort and aid, and to fulfill the great ends for which God has placed us here on earth."*

Brethren I am certain that you will recognise those words from the first-degree ceremony that are spoken to the new member on his induction. These words are also pertinent to the occasion on which we meet today. This grand gathering here in Leicester is to consecrate the Ivanhoe Conclave No. 458 of the Order of the Secret Monitor or Brotherhood of David and Jonathan. My instructions as chaplain are to give an oration on the nature and purpose of the institution, and that, it could be said, I have already done with my opening words. The quotation from the explanation of the weapons does contain those principles, but I should fail in my duty if I was not to elaborate a little further upon them. However, brethren, my brief also contained an injunction not to exceed ten minutes so I shall endeavour to be faithful to that duty also.

Worthy Brother Stanley Harriman, our Deputy Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler, recently prepared a paper to explain this Order to new members. It contains a reference to another oration given on 15th April 1895 by Judge F.A. Philbrick at the consecration of Champion Conclave No. 26. If it is not considered, "cribbing", I should like to quote those words.

*"A Society framed upon the principles of self sacrifice, of mutual trust, watchful brotherly care, of compulsory warning in time of danger, official solace in time of sorrow, and skilful and effective, though unostentatious advice in every circumstance in life, is a Society that meets a great and crying need in human affairs, and is calculated to benefit those who act up to its tenets. Such a Society is that of the Secret Monitor. If a Brother be in sorrow, the Conclave will afford him sympathy; if in danger his Brethren will give him assistance; if in distress the Visiting Deacons will bring him consolation; if in poverty he will find aid.*

*Moreover at every turn of life, at every crisis of fate, he may look and he will not look in vain, to the experienced among his Brethren who have pledged themselves to give him caution, to prompt him to good actions, to warn him of doubtful ones, and generally to watch over him, support him and cherish him so long as he may need their care and prove himself*

*worthy of the confidence reposed in him. Such, my Brethren, are the principles of our Order."*

These words, brethren, apply equally today as they did one hundred and six years ago, and of what wonderful principles they remind us.

The origins of our Order go back a further one hundred and thirty years. A record in the catalogue of the National Library of Paris refers to "A Compendium of the Laws and Constitutions of the Order of Jonathan founded in honour of the Holy Providence in 1762." Another document dated 1773 found in Amsterdam refers to "The Statutes, Constitution and Ceremonies of the Order of David and Jonathan and Jesus Christ." These old documents give credence to the theory of this Order being some two hundred and fifty years old and being taken to America by Dutch settlers said to be of Jewish descent. The Order did develop in America and in 1831 a ritual of the Degree of Secret Monitor was published by Avery Allyn. It was from America that Isaachar Zacharie brought the Order to Britain in 1875. Finally he established the Grand Council of the Secret Monitor in 1887. From that time, as we know, brethren, the Order has continued to prosper because of the principles of friendship on which it is founded.

It is something of a coincidence that the Old Testament readings set for morning and evening prayer for the month of June in the Church of England, are from the First Book of Samuel. It is here that the story of David and Jonathan is recorded. This story is the basis of much of our ritual. David was a relatively obscure shepherd who came to prominence after his defeat of the Philistine champion Goliath. Saul, the King, was so indebted to David for this victory that he even pressed David to marry one of his daughters and be his son-in-law. Saul's son, Jonathan, immediately warmed to David and welcomed him even as a brother, offering David gifts including his own bow. However the warm welcome from Saul soon changes. As David's success in battle multiplies and he gains the adulation of the people, so Saul becomes jealous of David. The Book of Samuel tells of the skirmishes between David and Saul growing to the extent that Saul tries to kill David who is forced to flee the king's house. In spite of his father's plots, Jonathan remains a devoted friend to David. It is Jonathan who warns David of danger from Saul and Jonathan who helps David to escape and provides him with all he needs. Jonathan does all this even though it creates a rift in his own relationship with Saul, and even though it means David will one day be king and not himself. Here is the supreme example of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

The Consecration of this Conclave reminds us of another character, Ivanhoe. Sir Walter Scott's novel is set over two thousand years after the time of David and Jonathan, and again we have kings and battles. There are also tensions and jealousies. This time the tension is between the Norman and the Saxon in mediaeval England. Ivanhoe is a Saxon Knight who is loyal to King Richard I (1189-1199) and the Normans. This loyalty even sets Ivanhoe at odds with his Saxon family. Yet in spite of this difficult

situation Ivanhoe is a loyal and devoted friend to King Richard. We can easily see a parallel with David and Jonathan. Our Order teaches this same friendship. It is good to think it was founded by settlers of Jewish descent going to the New World of America. That reminds us of the friendships between people of different nations and faiths that we enjoy through being Secret Monitors. The unique way our conclaves are governed, and the work of the Visiting Deacons, teaches the very special friendship that exists between members; and the duty of care we have for each other.

Brethren we all wish the Ivanhoe Conclave No. 458 success and prosperity in the years ahead. We rejoice even more that the singular principles of our Order will reach ever further because of the work of this new Conclave. May the nature and principles upon which the Order is founded, Friendship, long prevail. I finish with some very slightly altered words from the Ceremony of Induction prayer:

*Vouchsafe unto us, O merciful Lord, that the Conclave now about to be consecrated may be endued with the graces meet to merit and appreciate true friendship. May its life and ours henceforth be more fully devoted to Thy service; and do Thou so increase and multiply upon us Thy mercy, that, Thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may in such wise pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal.*

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Past Provincial Grand Chaplain, Leicestershire and Rutland

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*by* R.W.Bro. Brig. C.B.S. Morley, Provincial Grand Master

(A history of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Leicestershire and Rutland from 1739 to 1961, with epilogue to 1971, with explanations of the symbolism in the decoration of the Lodge Rooms at Freemasons' Hall, Leicester) £1 per copy. (inc. postage)

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## **NOTE ON TRANSACTIONS**

Each year we try to include in Transactions, in addition to the three addresses at the regular meetings, articles on topics of general masonic interest; and from time to time we have been able to add the title of Miscellanea, a section dealing with answers to questions submitted by the Brethren, short news items, and so on.

It will be appreciated that the continuation of this policy depends on the good will and enthusiasm of the members of the Lodge and of the Correspondence Circle, and we appeal for the co-operation of the Brethren in helping us to create a pool of material for future consideration.

While we cannot promise to publish every contribution, we have no doubt that any effort in this direction must add to a Brother's delight in engaging in lines of masonic research for which our Lodge was established, and possibly provide both pleasure and instruction for his fellow-members.

## **THE 17th REGIMENT OF FOOT THE 17th or LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT**

The Lodge of Research No. 2429 and the Provincial Library and Museum have a continuous research project into Masonic activity in the Regiment.

The Editor, on behalf of the above, would like to be informed of the whereabouts of any original material either for purchasing, photographing, or copying. Any gifts would also be gratefully received.

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