

An extract from

'A History of Freemasonry in Kidderminster before 1900'

by

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*This paper was a reference to
the trouble which terminated
in W. Bro. Perrett's resignation
as W. Bro. Perrett, Master.*

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September 1972.

Royal Standard Lodge No: 730 (now 498).

I, like many others, have wondered why this Lodge was formed, especially when trade was at such a low ebb in Kidderminster and two Lodges were on the books of Grand Lodge. The Faithful Lodge which sponsored the Lodge of Hope and Charity was mixed with the mother Lodge and, in fact, quite a number of brethren were members of both. The early members were employed in the woollen industry and very low wages made it impossible for brethren to pay their dues to both Lodges. There are no records to show when the Faithful Lodge ceased to function, but it is obvious that the period would be about the end of the 1830's.

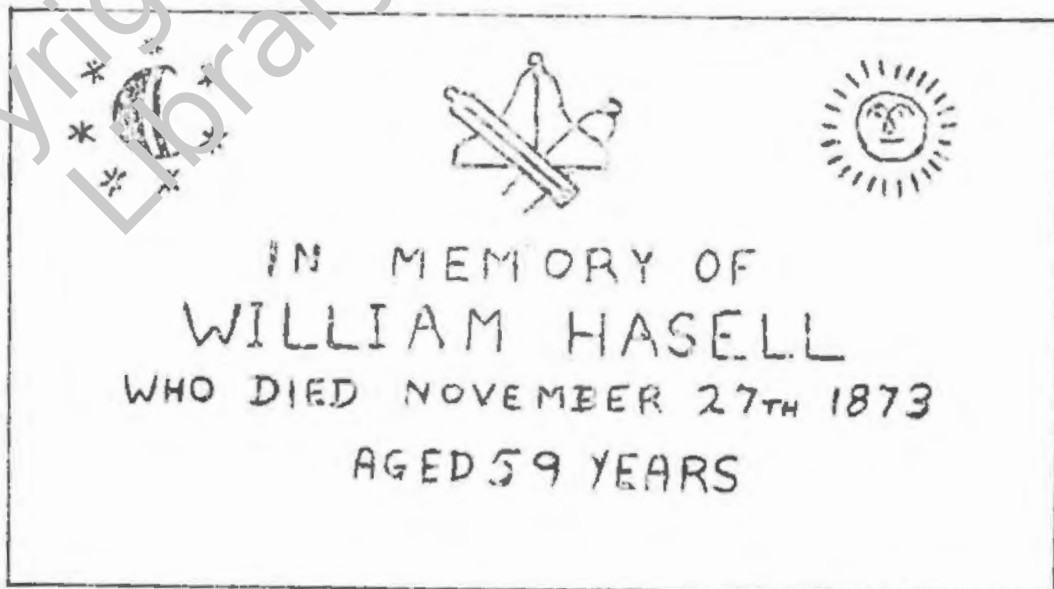
It was natural that Hope and Charity would have to encourage membership of gentlemen of the more opulent class and hence we find Professional gentlemen, Merchants of substance, some were Past Bailiffs and some were members of the Borough Council. But, why form another Lodge?

A study of the records shows that quite a number of the Lodge were members of the Chartist Movement and, without doubt, this must have caused some dissention with the strict Tory members, particularly when a large gathering of the movement held a meeting at the Freemasons' Arms in 1841. W. Bro. Pat. O'Leary a Past Master and for years Secretary of the Lodge was successful in a Chartist Ballot for which he was rewarded with a parcel of land in the Doreford region.

The proposed Founders of Royal Standard Lodge made a number of efforts to take over the warrant of the Faithful Lodge but it was lost, the Lodge having not met for some years, and it was eventually discovered in the possession of W. Bro. Samuel Hunt, W.M. of Hope and Charity in 1832, a grocer at that time in Worcester Street, Kidderminster and afterwards living in Birmingham. The Warrant was handed over to the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Warwickshire in 1844, but it was then too late for the proposed founders who were ordered by Grand Lodge to form a new Lodge.

Details of the meeting of the Founders is recorded in the Centenary Festival Souvenir 1844-1944, but I have tried to give some more information of the business and professional gentlemen who formed the Lodge together with some of the troubles which resulted in its eventual transfer to Dudley in 1851.

Some months ago I was instrumental in preventing a photograph of a tombstone with certain Masonic emblems engraved thereon appearing in the local press. This inspired me to find out more about this Brother who turned out to be the Chairman of the Founders Meeting.



William Has oll was a Pawnbroker and Tea Merchant of Blackwell Street, Kidderminster, a strong member of the Tory Party and afterwards became a member of the Borough Council. The art of Rhetoric was one of his outstanding qualifications and he was described as 'distinguished particularly by his patriarchal beard and venerated snuff-box'.

He acted as I.G. at the consecration of the Lodge and was appointed Steward at the Installation. There is no record of his attaining the Chair of his Mother Lodge or Royal Standard.

He was undoubtedly highly respected in Kidderminster Masonry for you will notice his tombstone which is situated in St. George's Churchyard has inscribed on it - The Sun, Moon and seven stars with the movable Jewels.

The Brother mainly responsible for the founding of Royal Standard Lodge was Brother William Roden, the S.W. of Hope and Charity, and he acted as Secretary of the Founders Meeting held on 4th March 1844 and during the first year of the Lodge acted as Lodge Secretary, afterwards taking the Chair from Bro. Simpson in 1845. His work in Masonry was short lived, but of very great importance to the Province of Worcestershire, for the foundation of which he was mainly responsible in 1847. Details of his Civic, Masonic and Professional activities I will give later for I consider them to be of great interest, but first I feel that the other first officers are worthy of note.

Thomas Clarke Roden, the first S.W. does not appear in the list of Hope and Charity Lodge or that of Faithful Lodge but one can only assume that he was related to Wm. Roden who was a native of Knowle, Warks. He occupied no further office but relinquished his promotion to W.M. to Dr. Wm. Roden.

James Heaton was a textile engineer and was the first W.M. of Hope and Charity Lodge in 1824, but for what reason there is no record except that the minutes of 16th August 1824 state that 'the W.M. sent word that he could not make it convenient to attend the duties of his office'. He was the first J.W. of Royal Standard.

Charles Collins (Treasurer) was in office of Hope and Charity at the time of the consecration of Royal Standard and took the chair of 523 in place of Dr. Roden in 1845.

Thomas Edward Crane (S.D.) was a carpet manufacturer and lived in Broomfield Cottage, Kidderminster. He also failed to occupy the Chair of K.S.

Charles Henry Saunders (J.D.) was an Auctioneer of Vicar Street and also Foregate Street, Worcester. He was a member of 523 and later of Worcester Lodge. His name occurs in a serious matter which I will mention later.

Charles Lionel Lucy (I.G.) was described in the Census of 1841 as a Wine and Spirit Merchant of Kidderminster, but he obviously left the district as he does not appear in later editions and took no further office in Royal Standard.

Lastly, but most important THE FIRST W. M. - John Simpson, was a Timber Merchant of Clonsmore, Kidderminster and Past Master of 523 having occupied the Chair in 1831. During his year in the Chair of 523, he was obliged on two occasions to emulate King Solomon in handling unfortunate incidents. He was a man of great ability and much respected. His reward in Provincial Grand Lodge was to be appointed Grand Registrar.

The Lodge was consecrated on Wednesday, 12th June 1844 by Bro. John O. Truman assisted by brethren of Lodges in Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire. The Lion Hotel was the place of this meeting, the proprietor being Bro. Brooks who was a member of the Lodge of Hope and Charity.

I have managed to procure a copy of a picture of High Street and the Lion Hotel taken about the time of the consecration for you will notice that Bro. Brooks' name appears above the entrance.

I will now proceed to the best of my ability to cover the main items of interest during the six year stay of Royal Standard Lodge in the town of its birth.

1844. The work of the Lodge was carried out without any incident of note with the exception of absence of some of the Officers.

1845. Dr. William Roden was installed and I feel that the following note taken from the Centenary Souvenir is worthy of attention. Bro. Brooks had made a heavy charge for refreshments and the brethren were unanimous that the holding of Lodges at Public Houses at all had been amply demonstrated in this town to be a great evil.

The Lodge was removed to the house of the W.M. Dr. Roden. (His house was situated at the Horsefair end of Dalley Street and is now a Pork Butchers shop).

Nov. 1846. The Lodge was removed to the Athenaeum Rooms in High Street. These rooms were afterwards named 'Market Chambers'. The building was demolished 8 years ago and is now occupied by the National Westminster Bank. At this meeting Bro. J. Colerick, I.P.M. of 523 was installed.

Feb. 12th 1847. The Lodge called a special meeting when the Masters and two brethren of Lodges 313 Dudley; 349 Worcester; 523 Kidderminster; and 772 Worcester attended to discuss the formation of a Provincial Grand Lodge for Worcestershire.

After a very lengthy discussion it was resolved to forward the application to the Grand Registrar.

The application was sanctioned by Grand Lodge and Dr. Roden was duly installed during that year as Deputy Provincial Grand Master.

Dr. William Marshall followed W. Bro. Colerick in the Chair. The year did not prove a happy one for Dr. Roden nor was it particularly so for Royal Standard.

Dr. William Marshall was a musician of great ability and was the first president of the Music Rooms of the Borough, (now known as the Town Hall).

Isaac Medley, a local historian, and also an organist of repute describes Dr. Marshall as follows:- 'Dr. Marshall was a man of very courtly deportment, but unfortunately had an irritable temper which appeared to make him unable to keep any society together for very long'. This description of him leads me to presume that this was why the Senior Warden, Bro. Micklewright, resigned his office on 25th August 1847. Bro. Micklewright later occupied the Chair of 523 in 1854.

Sept. 15th 1847. Notice was received from the W.M. that owing to increasing professional duties he was unable to attend Lodge in future.

These resignations had a very unfortunate effect on the working of the Lodge.

A study of the following Lodge notes will explain why this particular year was so disastrous to the members of the Lodge.

July 28th 1847. Thomas Hallen, Solicitor, Town Clerk of Kiddermminster was initiated.

August 25th 1847. He was passed to the Second Degree.

Sept. 28th 1847. Bro. Hallen acted as S.W. and was also raised to the sublime degree of a M.M.

June 14th 1848. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Dr. Roden, in the Chair Bro. T. Hallen was elected to occupy the W.M.'s Chair for the ensuing year.

July 19th 1848. Bro. T. Hallen was installed by the Dep. Prov. G. M. (the election of Master was rescinded and the installation minutes were not confirmed).

Sept. 13th 1848. The members were summoned to meet to receive a communication from the Grand Master of the Province. No brother attended so the Lodge was not opened.

Oct. 11th 1848. The Dep. Prov. G. M. acting as W.M. stated that the Prov. G. M. had pointed out that the election and installation of Bro. Hallen was irregular and that the proceedings of the matter should be rescinded. Bro. Hallen proposed that the minutes of the Installation be not confirmed. This was carried.

Nov. 8th 1848. Bro. Hallen again elected Master for the ensuing year.

Dec. 12th 1848. Bro. Hallen declined to be installed for many reasons.

Feb. 13th 1849. Dr. Roden appointed to continue as Master and Bro. Tilden invested as S.M.

June 25th 1849. Bro. H. W. Hodges was installed as W.M. Bro. Hodges was an Auctioneer with offices in the Athenaeum Rooms and was also a member of the Athenaeum Club. He was also Prov. G. Secretary and was re-elected as W.M. on June 11th 1850.

May 28th 1851. It was decided that recent events had made it impossible for the Lodge to be carried on with advantage in Kiddermminster and that transfer to the Dudley Arms Hotel, Dudley be made subject to the approval of the Provincial Grand Master. Then followed the election of seven brethren of Dudley as joining members.

July 2nd 1851. The first meeting took place at Dudley.

The meeting places of Royal Standard Lodge in Kiddermminster have nearly all disappeared:-

THE LION HOTEL. Now Woolworth's Stores.

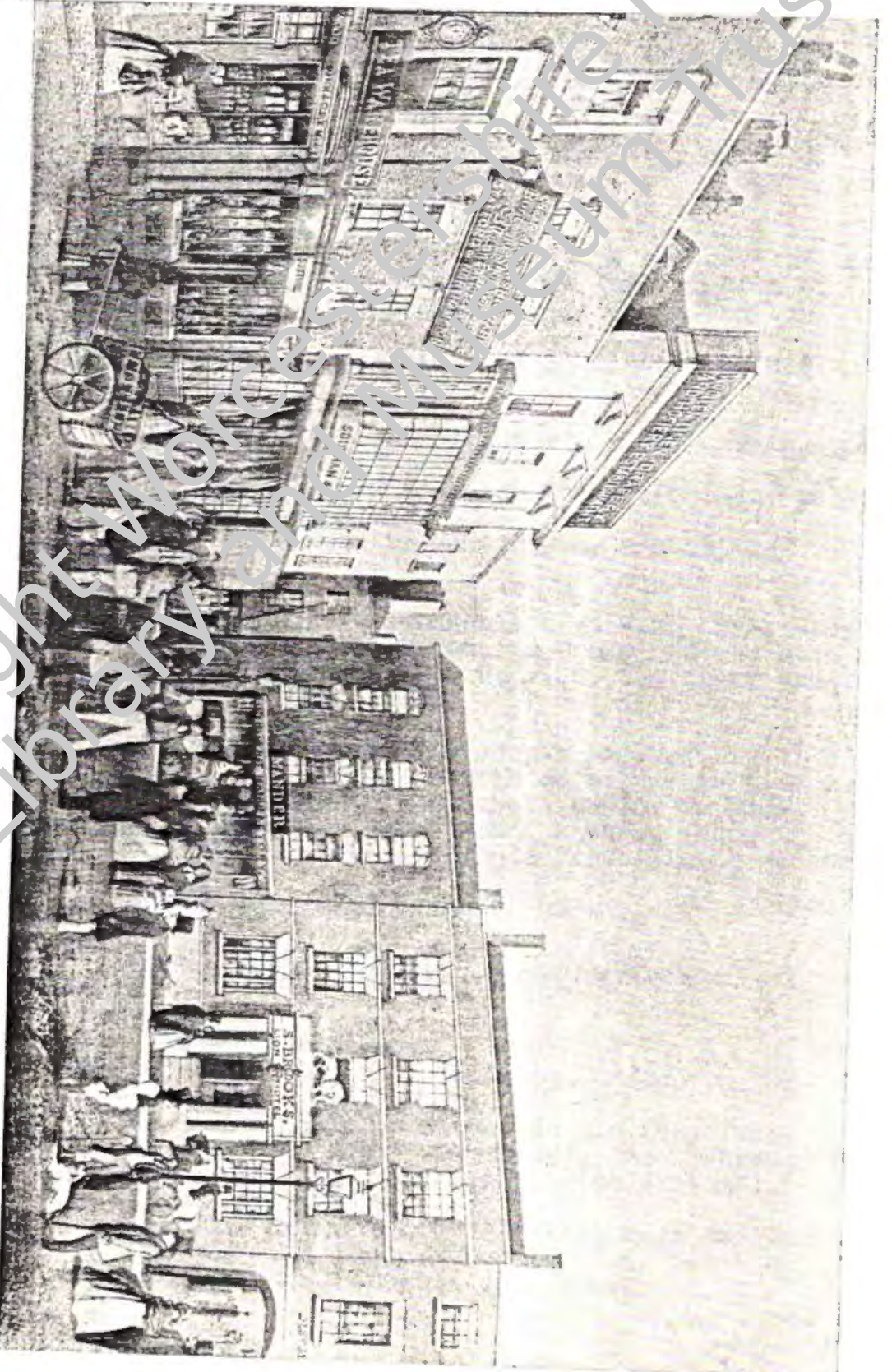
ASSEMBLY ROOMS. Now a Dance Hall at the new Post Office end of Mill Street.

Dr. Roden's House. Now a Pork Butcher's shop in the Horsefair.

ATHENAEUM ROOMS. Later re-named 'Market Chambers', demolished in 1964, and the site is now occupied by the National Westminster Bank.

MASONIC HALL. A room used in the old Guild Hall, High Street.

BLACK HORSE INN. This is the only place which remains, but I am told that it will shortly disappear.



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Brethren will wonder why Dr. Roden resigned the office of Deputy Provincial Grand Master after only two years.

W. Bro. J. C. Brooke of the Worcester Lodge recently gave a talk to his Lodge on certain happenings in 1848, (full details are in the Provincial Library); briefly it refers to a brother who had joined the Worcester Lodge. Bro. Charles Henry Saunders was the first J.D. of Royal Standard Lodge and at the time of his joining the Worcester Lodge he was in arrears of dues in both Royal Standard and Hope and Charity. No clearance certificate had been produced at his election. A number of letters were exchanged between Dr. Roden and the Worcester Lodge and Dr. Roden even issued a threat to have the Lodge erased. Although Dr. Roden was Dep. Prov. G. M., he was not IN CHARGE and the Worcester Lodge contended that the authority was the sole responsibility of the Grand Registrar. During this lengthy dispute Bro. Saunders fulfilled his obligations and paid his dues to both Lodges. This incident, without doubt, considerably upset Dr. Roden who, at the time, was fully engaged in Civil duties and his many duties at the Hospital and his own surgery.

At the meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge in August 1849 Dr. Wm. Roden announced his resignation as Deputy Provincial Grand Master. It is with regret that on the transfer of Royal Standard Lodge to Dudley he took very little interest in Masonry.

On 11th October 1884 the Doctor's son William Mason Roden (solicitor and secretary of the Borough Education Board) found his father in his much loved garden in a collapsed condition. He passed away that evening at the age of 70.

Note:- The son of the Doctor was a founder of the Lechmere Volunteer Lodge.

Dr. William Roden will be remembered in Masonry for his founding of one of the finest Lodges in the Province and for his being responsible for the fact that he was, without doubt, instrumental in the formation of Worcestershire as a separate Province.

DOCTOR WILLIAM RODEN. 1814 - 1884.

(photograph included).

William Roden came to Kidderminster at the age of 14 from Knowle, Warks.

He was articled to a Surgeon in the Horsefair.

He studied at Queens College, Birmingham and University College, London.

1836. He was appointed a Member of the Apothecaries' Company.

1842. He was awarded the degree of Master of Arts.

1844. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

1851. He was appointed a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.

Masonic Appointments.

Senior Warden of the Lodge of Hope and Charity No: 523.

Founding and first Secretary of Royal Standard Lodge No: 730.

W. M. of Royal Standard Lodge 1845 and 1849.

Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Worcestershire 1847 - 1849.

Civic Appointments.

Mayor of Kidderminster 1848, 1862, 1863 and 1864.