

THE LECHMERE LODGE.No. 1874.

The Consecration of this Lodge took place under the Banner of the Hope & Charity Lodge.No.377, at the Masonic Hall, Mill Street, on 23rd February,1881.

The Rt.Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, Sir E.A.H.Lechmere, Bart., had given his name to the Lodge and also granted permission for the Family Arms to be used as the Lodge Banner.

The Prov.G.Master performed the Ceremony of Consecration, and delivered a most impressive address on the principles of Masonry and an explanation of his Armorial Bearings which depict the Pelican, an antient symbol recognised as an emblem of Charity and Benevolence. (The antient family motto "Christus Pelicani")

The Founders intended Lechmere Lodge to be a class lodge. The membership was restricted by the By-laws to a total of 50, but as a fact it never exceeded 25. Membership was selected from Business and Professional gentlemen and I would suggest that as this rule was carried out the progress of the Lodge was slow and without doubt was the eventual cause of its downfall.

The Founders and first Officers were :-

W.Bro.Geo.Taylor	P.M.377	First W.M.
(connected with the Carpet Trade)		
W.Bro.Geo.W.Grosvenor	P.M.377 and 560	" S.W.
Carpet Manufacturer.		
W.Bro.G.W.Naylor	P.M.560	" J.W.
Carpet Manufacturer.		
W.Bro.E.Hammond	P.M.377	
<i>Wool Clothier</i>		
W.Bro.J.T.Meredith	P.M.560	" Sec.
Surveyor & Architect		
Bro.W.M.Roden	377	" I.G.
<i>Solicitor</i>		
<i>Doctor Son of G.W.Roden</i>		
Bro.F.Burcher	377	
Solicitor		
Bro.A.Cowell	377	" S.D.
Carpet Trade		
Bro.M.Tomkinson	377	" J.D.
Carpet Manufacturer		
Bro.J.J.Harvey	377	" Treasurer.
Director HARVEY'S Wines)		

In 1888 W.Bro.W.H.Falbot (Solicitor) was W.M. and during that year three Candidates were initiated but from then until 1894 (six years) only one initiation took place and the membership by that time had been greatly reduced.

It is recorded that on several occasions it was not possible to open the Lodge owing to insufficient numbers and when a candidate was proposed to the Secretary the proposer was advised that it was unfair to bring the name forward owing to the state of the Lodge.

A By-law which is rather unusual is XIX "Membership of this shall be forfeited ipso facto on any member being convicted of felony or misdemeanour, or on becoming bankrupt". There is no record of this law being applied.

The following Brethren occupied the Chair of Lechmere Lodge whilst at Kidderminster :-

		Initiates.
1881	G.Taylor	2 Secretary. Carpet Manufacturer.
1882	G.W.Grosvenor	3 Carpet Mfg. High Sheriff of Worcestershire, D.L. 5 times Mayor, P.M. 377 & 560.
1883	G.W.Naylor	0 Carpet Manufacturer
1884	W.N.Roden	5 Solicitor
1885	Rev.W.M.Timbrell	0
1886	J.Nossop	5 Auctioneer - Died China 1904
1887	T.H.Meredith	1 Architect P.M. 560 - 1878 & 1879
1888	W.H.Talbot	3 Solicitor
1889	G.R.Green	0 Carpet Manufacturer
1890	G.L.Webster	0 Doctor - Bewdley
1891	D.Dawes	1 Solicitor - partner Roden & Dawes.
1892	T.F.Bland	0 Architect
1893	J.E.Green	0 Barrister - Surbiton, Surrey.
1894	A.R.Waddell	0 Doctor - Bewdley.

In 1895 it was found impossible to continue to work the Lodge owing to lack of members and on many occasions the Lodge was not opened for this reason.

W.Bro.R.Edger was W.Master at the time and during his Mastership the work was carried out by brethren from the Warwickshire Volunteer Force. 31 Initiates and joining members were added to the roll.

During the year 1894 W.Bro.A.F.Godson attended the Lodge and suggested that it should be resuscitated by removal.

Certain members of the Warwickshire Force had for some time been trying to obtain a Warrant for the formation of a Military Lodge in that County, but their efforts were rejected by Provincial and Grand Lodge. W.Bro.G.Taylor (then Prov. Sec. of Worcestershire) with the assistance of W.Bro.C.D.Eaton obtained permission of the Masfield Lodge of Balsall Heath to share their rooms at the Institute if permission was granted for the transfer of Lechmere Lodge. Balsall Heath was at that time in the Province of Worcestershire. The transfer was duly obtained and the first meeting took place at Balsall Heath on 4th. September, 1895. W.Bro.Edgar opened the Lodge and the ceremony was conducted from then by W.Bro.Capt.Derrington. I quote from the records of that time "Every Candidate for initiation or joining shall be a member of the Regular Auxiliary, or Volunteer Forces, of not lower rank than Corporal, or ex-member". Permission was granted by Grand Lodge for the name of the Lodge to be changed to The Lechmere Volunteer Lodge No.1874.

The Installation date, which hitherto had been in March, was changed to October in order that Bro.C.D.Eaton could qualify for the Master's Chair.

So the Lechmere Lodge departed from Kidderminster, the town of its birth.

It should be noted that the name of W.Bro.J.E.Green (1893) hardly attended the Lodge during his year in the Chair, in fact on one occasion only three members were present (the S.W. and two others). The obvious lack of interest of W.Bro.J.E.Green sadly affected Kidderminster Masonry for he also took the Chair of Hope & Charity Chapter in 1896 and failed to keep the Chapter working; consequently the Chapter closed down until it was resuscitated in 1899.