

The following is a copy of a short Paper written by
W.Br. F.C. Perrett, P.A.G.D.C.:-

Dear W. Master,

At your request I have pleasure to present a short Historical review of Freemasonry in Stourport from 1866 to the present day.

VERNON, the Mother Lodge of Stourport, celebrated its Centenary in 1949 having been consecrated as the CLIVE LODGE at Bromsgrove on 11th. June 1849 by the Dep. Prov. G. Master, W.Br. W. Roden, a Founder Past Master of the Royal Standard Lodge which was consecrated in Kidderminster in 1844 before moving to Dudley. W.Br. Roden was distinguished in public life in Kidderminster for he was elected Mayor on four occasions.

The Founders of the Clive Lodge were mostly members of St. Johns Lodge No. 279, of Leicester, (~~after xxxxxxxx years~~) and followed the occupation of Coachbuilders. They were, without doubt, employed at the Railway Carriage Works at Bromsgrove and it is recorded that they had been attending Lodge meetings at Worcester.

After a few years the Founders seemed to drop out having, no doubt, been obliged to move to other parts of the country on the closure of the Carriage Works. (? date)

By 1855 interest had declined to such an extent that the Lodge was faced with the prospect of either returning its Warrant to Grand Lodge or permitting its removal to Dudley which course was adopted in 1856 and the Lodge was then renamed VERNON No. 319 (after the then Prov. G. Master, Rt.W.Br. H.C. Vernon).

The Vernon sojourn in Dudley lasted just ten years during which time the Lodge moved from the Old Town Hall to the Wesleyan Schools and, finally, to the Freemasons' Tavern by which time membership had declined to such an extent that they were again faced with closure.

The Lodge was again saved by six Brethren of the Worcester Lodge No. 280 who became joining members with the intention of moving the Lodge to Stourport. Rt. W.Br. H.C. Vernon, the Prov. G. Master, gave sanction to its removal. A Lodge of Emergency was held at Stourport on 17th. May 1865 with W.Br. George Pitt in the Chair, the main business being the appointment of a new Master and proposed officers.

A further meeting was held at the Swan Hotel on the 3rd. October when Mr. Thomas Wheeldon, bookseller of Stourport, was balloted for and initiated. Interleaved in the old Minute Book are letters from the Prov. G. Master and the Grand Secretary regarding the authenticity of the move from Dudley. It appears that Grand Lodge sanction had not been given. In consequence, two meetings were held in Dudley, one on the 16th. February 1866 and the other on the 16th. March, when the correct procedure was carried out according to the Book of Constitutions. Approval of Grand Lodge having been obtained at the first official meeting of Vernon Lodge was held at the Swan Hotel, Stourport on the 3rd. May 1866 when Mr. Thomas Wheeldon was again balloted for and Initiated. It is worthy of mention that the Brethren who brought Vernon Lodge to Stourport were:-

Br. Geo. Baldwin (Ironmaster)	These Brethren were initiated in Worcester L. No. 280 on 3rd. Dec. 1863.
Br. Stanley Baldwin (Ironmaster)	
Br. Alfred Baldwin (Ironmaster)	
Br. Enoch Baldwin (Ironmaster)	
Br. Edward Lewty (Ironmaster)	} both initiated in Worcester L. No. 280 in 1864.
Br. Thomas Bond Worth (Spinner)	

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