

I often wonder whether the Brethren of our Lodge are really interested in the minutes of 100 years ago or whether they take them as a matter of course.

The ancient Minutes of Vernon Lodge should be of very great interest to all its members for the Brethren we read about are the ones we should thank for bringing Masonry to the town.

The Brethren who brought the Vernon Lodge to Stourport were of the Baldwin family with one exception. Shall we for a few moments run through the history of these Brethren.

George Pearce Baldwin who brought the Iron and tin plate industry to Stourport together with his father Thomas Baldwin in the later part of the 18th century soon took full advantage of the cheap transport provided by the River and newly opened Canal.

By the turn of the century they controlled E.P. & W. Baldwin and Baldwin Son & Co. of Stourport (the later being Spinners & Carpet Manufacturers) also a Carpet factory at Bridgnorth. George Pearce Baldwin married twice having two children by his first wife. His second wife Sarah Chalkley Stanley was the daughter of Rev. Jacob Stanley a Methodist Minister of Stourport. This marriage produced 9 Children, the ones we are interested in being, George, Stanley, Alfred and the husband of a daughter Eliza Baldwin the wife of Thomas Bond Worth.

The other Past Master on our board is Enoch Baldwin a cousin of the above. ALL initiated in Worcester Lodge 280 in 1863 & 1864 Edward Russell Lewty was associated with the Baldwins in the tin plate industry.

W. Bro. George Pitt of Dudley came with the Lodge to Stourport in 1866 and in 1867 handed the W.Ms collar over to George Baldwin who during the following 12 years proved to be the mainstay of the Lodge taking every office and giving many of the Lectures. In 1875 he initiated his son George Pearce Baldwin who was at the time 15 years and 10 months old. Special dispensation had to be obtained from Grand Lodge which was granted because the Candidate was proceeding overseas.

W. Bro. Stanley Baldwin was installed W.M. in 1868 and again in 1869 during which year he was also W.M. of the Worcester Lodge 280.

W. Bro. Enoch Baldwin was installed by his Cousin and was Master 100 years ago this year, he thus completed 4 years of Baldwin mastership of Vernon Lodge. He was for some years a constant attendant at Lodge until he became interested in politics. He was elected Liberal Member of Parliament for Bewdley in 1880. This career did not last long and he retired to live at The Mount, Hartlebury Rd. He died at Malvern in 1905 at the age of 83.

Bro. Thomas Bond Worth husband of Eliza Baldwin did not take Office in the Lodge and after a few years resigned. His daughter Margaret married Dr. E.S. Robinson who was Master of the Lodge in 1919, he died during the Second World War. He appears to be the last link with the Baldwin Masons.

Brother Edward Russell Lewty born in 1838 served the Lodge faithfully but died in October 1869 whilst occupying the S.W.'s Chair. His photograph and a copy of the letter of condolence is attached to the Minutes.

Brother Alfred Baldwin was born in June 1841 and shortly afterwards his father George Pearce Baldwin died of scarlet fever. Alfred was then 8 months old. Soon after leaving school he entered the family business and in 1870 he was able to buy his brothers out and to take full control of the then vast business. Till this time he had been living in Bewdley and in 1866 had married Louisa Macdonald daughter of the Rev. George Brown Macdonald who was at the time Methodist Minister at Stourport and also living in Bewdley.

Louisa Baldwin after the birth of her Son (Stanley) suffered severe illness and for a number of years was travelling from one Spa to another this was possibly the reason why Brother Alfred Baldwin did not progress far in Masonry. He reached the Office of J. Warden and at times took over other duties, but his interest in politics came second in his life but unlike his Cousin Enoch he changed his views and entered Parliament as Conservative M.P. for Bewdley.

Not only did Alfred change his political views but though like all his family and also his wife's family he had been brought a Methodist ~~but~~ he had changed to Church of England and after moving to Wilden House he built the Wilden Church and endowed it. He also built the Church House and Schools. Alfred Baldwin continued his membership of Vernon Lodge until his death in 1908. His wife Louisa lived to see her only child Stanley become Prime Minister.

Brother Rudyard Kipling has a family connection with our Lodge. I have mentioned that Louisa Baldwin was a daughter of the Rev. George Brown Macdonald other daughters were famous wives and mothers. Alice married John Lockwood Kipling and was mother of Rudyard Kipling whose Masonic and other poems are to be found in Lodge Rooms throughout the World. Georgiana married Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones likewise his pictures and murals are famous. Agnes married Sir Edward John Poynter P.C. (President of the Royal Academy). I enclose a copy of Kipling's "The Mother Lodge" which without doubt points out Masonry Universal.

Stained Glass Windows designed by Burne Jones may be seen in Wilden Church and I would particularly mention the Window in Ribbesford in memory of Rev. G. Brown Macdonald and his Wife Hannah who are Buried in the Churchyard.

Let us not forget the Baldwin Masons.

F.C. Perrett P.A.G.D.C.

The Mother Lodge by Rudyard Kipling

There was Rundle, Station Master,
 An' Beazeley of the Rail,
 An' Achman, Commissariat,
 An' Donkin o' the Jail:
 An' Blake, Conductor Sergeant—
 —Our master twice was he,
 With'im that kept the Europe shop,
 Old Framjee Eduljee.

Outside—"Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!"
 Inside "Brother" an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
 We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
 An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother Lodge out there.

There was Bola Nath, accountant,
 And Saul, the Aden Jew,
 An' Din Mohammed, draughtsman,
 Of the Sursey office, too.
 There was Balu Chicekerbitty,
 An' Amir Singh, the Sikh,
 An' Castro of the fittin'-sheds,
 A Roman Catholic.

We 'adn't good regalia,
 An' our Lodge was old an' bare,
 But we knew the Ancient Landmarks,
 An' we kept 'em to a hair.
 An' lookin' on it backwa'rs—
 It often strikes me thus—
 There aint such things as eathen
 Except, perhaps it's us.

For monthly after Labor
 We'd all sit down an' smoke,
 (We durstn't give no banquets,
 Lest a Brother's caste were broke),
 An' man on man got bukkip'
 Religion an' the rest,
 An' every man comparin'
 Of the God 'e knowed un' best.

So man on man got started
 An' not a beggar stirred,
 Till mornin' wakes the parsons,
 An' that 'adn' brain-fever for us,
 We'd say "twas crew cut us"
 An' we'd all go om' to bed
 With Mohammed, God an' Shira
 Changin' pickets in our 'ead.

Full oft on Government service
 This wanderin' fool 'ath pressed
 An' bore fraternal greetin's
 To the Lodges East and West,
 Accordin' as commanded,
 From Ko'at to Singapore,
 Bu' I wish that I might see them
 In my Mother Lodge once more.

I wish that I might see them,
 My Brethren white and brown,
 With the burlies smellin' pleasant
 An' the ag-dan passin' down,
 An' the old Khansannah snorin'
 On the bottle-Khana floor,
 Like a Brother in good standing
 With my Mother Lodge once more.

Outside—"Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!"
 Inside "Brother" an' it doesn't do no 'arm.
 We met upon the Level an' we parted on the Square,
 An' I was Junior Deacon in my Mother Lodge out there.