

HISTORY OF THE LODGE OF St GEORGE No 5691

Fifty years of existence in a harsh environment is without question a matter of achievement and a cause for pride and celebration for all involved and so it is for all members of the Lodge of St. George who come to celebrate its Golden Jubilee.

However, in order really to take pride in that achievement it is first necessary to understand something of the origins of the Lodge, the difficulties that have had to be faced and overcome, and to gain an appreciation of the Founders and Members all of whom have contributed so much in giving the Lodge its unique character and personality.

Sadly none of the Founders are with us now, all having ascended to the Grand Lodge above so we no longer have any "eye witnesses" to call upon to give us the inside story of its formation and so we have had to rely on the rather sterile documentary evidence held in the archives of Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge and the Lodge's Minute books to provide the available information. However, the writer has been greatly assisted by W/Bro. T.W.Grounsell P.G.St.B., the Provincial Librarian for his excellent interpretive advice concerning the circumstances of the times.

One question asked of every parent at some stage is "Why was I born?", and the Members of the Lodge of St George are entitled to ask why it came into existence.

It appears that the mixing of classes during the trauma of the First World War had served to popularise Freemasonry, and this movement forward had been given a further boost by the interest taken in the in the Craft by the new King who had just ascended the Throne. By 1937, the year of Consecration, Britain had begun to emerge from the depression and as a result, in the Province of Worcestershire alone, the number of Lodges had already virtually doubled the number existing at the end of the Great War. In spite of the increase in numbers of Lodges many had become so large that the chances of young Masons progressing to high office had become severely limited.

This appeared to be the situation which confronted our Founders as the Letter of Petition dated 3rd June 1937, addressed to the Worshipful Master of our Mother Lodge and signed by the Secretary Designate, which is copied in full below bears out.

"Dear Worshipful Brother Stanton,

For some time now, a circle of masonic friends who are members of different Lodges, have desired to form a new Lodge so that they could meet together on a particular evening. Being, in most cases, members of big Lodges and there being no prospect of getting into active office for a considerable time, it was felt that new interest would be created by the formation of a new Lodge by giving young Masons an opportunity to show their zeal for all that Membership

implies, to the ultimate benefit of the new Lodge and the Craft in General.

We sincerely hope that our Petition will receive the approval of the Provincial Grand Master and Grand Lodge. I shall be glad to hear at the earliest possible date that this is so thereby enabling us to complete the many necessary details for its successful accomplishment

I am,

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

H. E. Hearne

Sec Designate"

Fortunately for us, the Provincial Grand Master did grant his approval, and thus the Lodge was conceived.

Next on the priority list was the selection of a suitable name for the new Lodge.

W. Bro Brian F. Page, Deputy Librarian and Curator, of the Library and Museum of The United Grand Lodge, very kindly provided the writer with a photostat of the original Petition to form the Lodge. This showed that the original name entered on the Petition for a new Lodge document was "King George ". However, this had been crossed out and replaced by the title "The Lodge of St George". Unfortunately no correspondence appears to exist either at Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodge, or within the Lodge files as to the reason for the change, However, W/Bro. Grounsell's view is that, particularly following on the Abdication, it ~~simply~~ would not have been allowed for a new Lodge to bear the name of the Monarch. *not have been* Nevertheless, as at the time the Petition was drawn up, the mood of the Country was intensely patriotic, and considering the new King's well known interest in active masonry, it was understandable that young and zealous masons would seek to identify their new Lodge with him.

As the sponsoring Lodge for the Petition was St Laurence Lodge No. 2724, it is possible that honour was satisfied by adopting the "Saint" part of its name in place of the "King" which had appeared on the original Petition.

Certainly by the time the design for the Banner was submitted to Grand Lodge, which naturally bore the new name, the matter had obviously been happily resolved for the records show it was approved without comment.

Meanwhile, what of our Founders? Whilst in a later section we include a "Roll of Honour" giving details of their names and the ranks they eventually aspired to in the Province, it is of interest to know something about the backgrounds of the people who assembled themselves under the new Banner.

We know that W. Bro. J. R. Long, the first Worshipful Master, was a Municipal Officer, that W. R. Cummings, his senior Warden was a Commercial Traveller, and that R. Davis his Junior Warden was a Company Director.

Amongst the other Bretheren were another Municipal Officer, a Solicitor, a Pharmacist, a Steamship Agent, a Merchant, a Funeral Director, a Haulage Contractor, a Sales Manager, two Butchers and a Catering Manager. Clearly the new Lodge had many of the ideal skills and resources necessary to face the difficult and testing times that were to come.

The Consecration of the new Lodge was carried out Saturday 9th October 1937 by The Rt. W. Bro. General Sir Francis Davis, K.C.B. K.C.M.G. K.C.V.O. Deputy Grand Master, Provincial Grand Master, assisted by W. Bro Alfred Allen P.G.D. Deputy Prov. Grand Master. Also present were two Past Assistant Grand Directors of Ceremony and two Past Grand Standard Bearers as well as 15 Past and present members of Provincial Grand Lodge, and 30 Past Masters and Bretheren.

W. Bro. J.R. Long was duly installed as first Worshipful Master.

In these days we might be excused for feeling a little envious of the fact that at this first meeting no fewer than seven candidates were proposed for initiation, a rate maintained well into the second year.

The Charity box contained the sum of £6-15-0, equivalent to £155 by to-day's value, and this sum was voted to contribute towards 1940 Festival of the Royal Masonic Institute for Girls.

The meal following the Ceremony was obviously rather special for the dining fee was ten shillings and sixpence and therefore fairly expensive by to-day's standards when we considers that then the average wage was less than £2 per week.

Expenditure on the new Lodge including the cost of equipment and Founders and Consecrating Officers Jewels amounted to £124-14-0.

The popularity of the new Lodge obviously carried over into its subsequent meetings for there were no less than nineteen guests at the first Regular Meeting which was to see the first candidate, Mr S. J. Smith initiated.

There was no October Meeting in 1939 and Brother R. Davis had to wait until the November meeting before being installed as the Lodge's third Worshipful Master.

On the 24th Regular Meeting held on 19th May 1941, a deputation was received headed by W/Bro. A. W. Tenby P.G. Treas. which requested the Lodge to consider the presentation of a Petition for a new Lodge to be called Frankley Beeches Lodge.

After due consideration by the members, the then Worshipful Master, Bro W. Morris said that it had been unanimously agreed to support the Petition and that furthermore the Lodge of St George would present the new Lodge with a cushion to be placed under Volume of Sacred Law whenever the new Lodge met. Frankley Beeches Lodge No. 5846 was duly consecrated on 30th April 1942

The tail end of the war in 1945 brought forth an influx of many worthy initiates who were later to turnout as stalwarts of the Lodge and known by many current members They included Horace G. Seal initiated in March, and later his brother Albert, Sid Wright initiated in June, and Earnest Darlaston initiated in November.

7th May 1946 saw the Consecration of the Lodge of Endeavour No. 6267 with the Lodge of St. George acting as sponsor.

Our present senior Past Master, W.Bro C. Eric Taylor P. Prov. S.S.W. was initiated in November 1947.

The 4th September 1968 saw the Consecration of the third Lodge sponsored by the Lodge of St. George, namely that of Frankley St. George No 8212.

In 1971 the Chapter of St. George No. 5691 was founded with C. E. Taylor as its first M.E.Z.

Along with the general trend throughout Masonry, recent years have seen a diminution in the rate of new members coming forward to join the Lodge. Nevertheless most years have seen the addition of two which appears to compare favourably with many other Lodges during this time.

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FOUNDERS ROLL OF HONOUR

W. Bro.	J. R Long	P. Prov G. W.
W. Bro.	R. McKenzie	
W. Bro.	A. H. Seale	P. Prov J. G. D 1941, P. Prov S. G. W. 1958
W. Bro.	J. M. Pratt	P. Prov J. G. D.
Bro.	W. H. Cummings	P. Prov S. G. D. 1944 P. Prov S. G. W. 1965
Bro.	R. Davis	P. Prov S. G. D. 1944 P. Prov S. G. W. 1965
Bro.	W. J. Gane	
Bro.	H. E. Hearne	Prov G. D. C. 1945/47/53 P. A. G. D. C. 1952
Bro.	W. C. Taylor	P. Prov A. G. St. B. 1956
Bro.	S. Burbery	
Bro.	W. C. Jackson	P. Prov G. Stud.
Bro.	D. Andrews	
Bro.	E. T. Willets	Prov A. G. D. C 1950 P. Prov J. G. W. 1959
Bro.	A. H. Turner	
Bro.	G. Purkis	
Bro.	W. Morris	