

HISTORY OF THE MASONIC HALL, IPSLEY STREET, REDDITCH.

On Tuesday the 23rd January, 1900, eight Brethren met at the offices of Mr. W. H. Tunbridge A.D.G.E. a Local Solicitor, to consider the advisability of forming a Freemasons Lodge in Redditch. It was unanimously agreed that it was desirable to form such a Lodge to be affiliated to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire. It was then agreed that Brother Thomas Evans be requested to negotiate an annual tenancy of the premises at Old Warwick Arms in Ipsley Street on such terms as he thought fit.

It was then proposed that the promoters of the Lodge should be Brothers Thomas Evans, W.S.Tunbridge, H.R.Lloyd, E.H. Godbold, B. Perrins, R.W.Smith, Edgar Warner, J. Peirce, A. Eadie, A.W.Perkins, H.W.Shrimpton, C.H.Edmonds, W.Woodfield, Harold E. Perkins and W.J.Taylor. Brother Evans was asked to be the Secretary. It was recorded that Brother Evans presented the Lodge with the furniture for the Lodge Rooms.

The next meeting was held on the 19th February, 1900 at the home of Brother Tunbridge when it was resolved that the Lodge be named the Seymour Lodge, Ipsley, Redditch, and that W.Bro. Lord Ernest Seymour be the first Worshipful Master. Brother Thomas Evans be the first Senior Warden, and Brother H. R. Lloyd be the first Junior Warden, and it was agreed that the Lodge meet at the Masonic Rooms, Ipsley, Redditch on the second Thursday in each month excepting the months of June, July, August and September.

It is perhaps interesting to note that on the 17th February, 1900 Lord Seymour wrote to Brother Tunbridge, in which he said that his masonic feelings had go the better of his private views, and that he had agreed to be the First Master with mixed feelings as in spite of the assurances that a Lodge in Redditch would make no difference to the Apollo Lodge, Lord Seymour felt morally certain that it would do so, and that if Masons could attend a Lodge on their own doorstep they are not likely to drive to Alcester, and he hoped that the Brethren of the Apollo Lodge who joined the new Lodge would prove to him that he was wrong. He

concluded by saying that he was highly honoured and flattered by his selection as the First Master.

Be that as it may, on the 23rd February, 1900 it was agreed that W.Bro. George Beech, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, be asked to perform the consecration and installation ceremony on May 10th or October, 11th 1900. It was further agreed that a fee of 5 guineas be charged to each founder of the Lodge. My Brokers Research Department tell me that a £1 held in 1900 is now worth £48.06p, so that in today's money the Founders fee would come to a little over £252. The promoters of the new Lodge wasted little time in finding a permanent home, because on the 28th April, 1900 it was agreed that a Masonic Hall and Club Buildings be erected in Ipsley Street, Redditch according to plans and specifications of Brother Lloyd, and that the Tender of Messrs. C.G. Huins and Sons of £953.2s.5d. for the Buildings and £225.0s.0d. for the land be accepted. There seems to be no evidence that Mr. C. G. Huins was on the square, but he was certainly well known in Redditch as a Builder at the turn of the century, and amongst other places, if you will look at the manhole covers outside the lodge you will see his name stamped on them. Again applying today's prices the cost of the Building would be £45,808 and the land £10,813.

It was then agreed that the annual subscription should be 2½ guineas, including all banquets but excepting wines, and in today's money that comes to £127.00. The funding was effected by Debeture Issue in Bonds of £5.00 each to be raised by the Brethren at a rate of interest of 5% per annum, and the following brothers agreed to take up Debentures, Lord Ernest Seymour £25, R.W.Smith £50, C.H.Edmonds £50, W.S.Tunbridge £50, A. Eadie £50, D.Pierce £25, W.Woodford £25, H.R.Lloyd £25, B. Perrins £15, Thomas Evans £100, E. Godbold £15. It was then agreed that the balance required to pay for the land and buildings be raised on mortgage by the Trustees.

The Social Club, Redditch apparently agreed to take up the tenancy of the Building at a rental

of £30 per annum, including rates and taxes, but inclusive of cleaning, firing and lighting on the basis that that Club gave up the rooms on the second Thursday in the months of October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May in each year.

The Lodge had a professional Tyler, because it was noted that Brother Lakeman was to be asked what fee he would require for acting as Tyler of the Lodge. Obviously Brother Lakeman did not want to take up the job of Tyler because on the 23rd October, 1900 it was agreed that Brother Prenton be engaged as caretaker of the Masonic Rooms and Tyler of the Lodge. It was also agreed that the Masonic Hall be insured for £1,000.

On the 23rd November, 1900 there was an interesting meeting dealing with details of the Masonic Rooms. It was agreed that there should be a green baize covered double door at the entrance to the Lodge. It was further agreed that the cost of wines be divided equally amongst all the Brethren present, abstainers not being included, and the Wine Committee were asked to purchase the Dinner Service and necessary utensils to the value of £30, and that the whole of the Members of the Lodge be invited to contribute £1 each towards their expense.

The Brethren certainly had in mind getting the Lodge Rooms apart from to the Social Club, because it was resolved that all matters relating to the hire of the Lodge Rooms be left in the hands of a Dining Committee. They also agreed to buy an organ at the cost of £8.10.s.0d. It was also agreed that the Lodge buildings be called The Masonic Rooms.

The Lodge was duly consecrated on Wednesday November, 14th 1900 but were called the New Masonic Rooms, Ipsley, Redditch, but the Brethren dined at the Warwick Arms Hotel.

To a certain extent ^{the paper deals with} they to the formation of the Ipsley Lodge rather than the history of the Lodge Rooms, although the two are inexplicably tied up.

I return now to the meeting held on the 28th April, 1900 when it was agreed that the eight largest subscribers to the Debenture Issue be Trustees of the land and building to be

purchased and erected for the Lodge, and on the 27th July, 1900 Thomas Huins and Frederick Charles Huins, both of Redditch in the County of Worcester, Builders, and their Mortgagees conveyed to Thomas Evans, of Redditch described as an Educational Publisher, and Emonds of Redditch, described as a Manufacturers Manager, Robert Walker Smith of Redditch, an Engineer, and William Woodfield of Redditch a Manufacturer, the price appears to have been reduced to £155. The land transferred is described as All That piece of land forming part of the Watery Park Estate situate at the junction of Ipsley Street and Smallwood Street, Redditch in the Parish of Ipsley in the County of Warwick, and containing by admeasurement 259 square yards or thereabouts which land was said to be bounded on the north west by Ipsley Street, to which it had a frontage of 36.ft.1" and on the south side by Smallwood Street to which it had a frontage of 60ft, and by the north east by the Warwick Arms and on the south east by other property of Thomas Huins and Frederick Charles Huins. On the 4th February, 1901 the purchasers mortgaged the property to Francis Reeve to secure a sum of £600. Private mortgages were common in those days, and this would merely have been an investment by Mr. Reeve who would have had no connection with the Masonic Hall, and was almost certainly a client of Mr. Tunbridge to prepared the mortgage.

In 1921 Herbert Richard Lloyd had died, as also had William Woodfield. The property was transferred to new Trustees, viz. the original Thomas Evans, Cyrus Herbert Edmonds, Robert Walker Smith, James Edward Pierce, Sydney Lloyd Huins, Andrew Hiam Haines, William George Thomas, Albert Victor Terry and Frank Walker Smith. Sydney Lloyd Huins had been a Boot Factor, Andrew Haines was a Tailor, William George Thomas a Solicitor Herbert Victor Terry a Manufacturer and Frank Walker Smith a Manufacturer. Following the description in the original conveyance the premises were described as All That messuage or building erected on the said piece of land or on some part thereof and known as the Masonic Rooms.

In 1922 the original loan was paid off and a fresh mortgage taken out with the Redditch Benefit Building Society to secure a borrowing of £8,000. There is no reference in the Minutes as to why these borrowings took place but presumably they were to carry out improvements to the building. This mortgage was paid off on the 29th January, 1952, the balance having been reduced to £294.14s.0d.

In 1957 a further £1,500 was borrowed and this was repaid on the 12th November, 1970 when various appointments of new Trustees following deaths and retirements, and except that there have been some internal alterations and refurbishment the Lodge rooms have remained unchanged in their present position since 1900.

Between May and October of 1902 the description of the Masonic Rooms seems to have been changed to the Masonic Hall. There is nothing in the Minutes to indicate why this change it just seems to have happened. There is also a detailed Agreement and Specifications between the Trustees and C.G.Huins for the building of the new Masonic Rooms or Hall to the Specifications of Herbert Richard Lloyd, a local Architect, at a price of £995. The Agreement is dated the 25th July, 1900, and provides for the whole building to be completed by the 20th September, 1900, with a penalty clause of £3.0s.0d. per week for each week of part week that the building was delayed.

CAPEL-CURE MYERS
CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Our ref: AVW/cjj

13th September 1995

E B Rogers Esq
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Dear Mr Rogers,

Further to your recent query, I would advise you that a £1 held in 1900 is now worth £48.06p.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Miss A V Worthington