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FORT ROYAL GOLDEN JUBILEE — 1st NOV, 1973

W.M., R.W.Prov.G.M., Bro. Warden, and Brethren; before I embark on my theme, you will understand, won't you, that this is the Lodge's Installation Meeting so that I must not take up more than a modest slice of your time. Some compression is therefore inevitable and you will perhaps forgive me for any omissions which seem to you glaring, unjust, or out of balance.

Today we celebrate the Lodge's Golden Jubilee; for it was consecrated on November 8th, 1923 at the old Masonic Hall, St. Nicholas Street, Worcester. This present Lodge Room is an accurate copy of the one in St. Nicholas Street.

At the end of the first World War there were only three Lodges in Worcester — Nos. 280, 529, and 3378, and as, with a general upsurge of interest in the Craft the membership of these Lodges increased, it became clear that the rate of advancement was very discouraging to new arrivals. So in 1922 the idea of forming a new Lodge in Worcester spread, and as most of the younger Brethren had served in the War, it was decided that it should be a Service

30th Lodge
in the
Province.

Lodge in which war-time friendships might be renewed and continued.

On the suggestion of W.Bro. Edward Franklin, a P.M. of 280, a circular was sent out to 48 ex-service Masons within the Southern Area to test support for the idea. The response was so favourable that 280 was asked to sponsor such a Lodge and readily agreed. Eventually a Petition, signed by 24 Members, was presented, and the name "Fort Royal" was the most happy and appropriate suggestion of W.Bro. Col. Blandford, the prime mover in the Lodge's formation, who had done all the preliminary secretarial work and became its first Secretary.

R.W.Bro. Sir Francis Davies, subsequently in 1936 Dep. Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge and Prov.G.M. of Worcs. since 1919 was asked and consented to become the first W.M. He also gave permission to the Lodge to use his armorial bearings and the motto "Deus Tuetur" on the Lodge banner and on the Founders' and Past Masters' jewels.

All the Officers below S.W. were filled by those Founders who had not yet passed the Chair of a Lodge.

The Lodge owed much to the calibre and enthusiasm of its Founders. Gen. Sir Francis Davies was outstanding. I remember being told that he was an excellent

linguist and this had greatly assisted his promotion in the Army, in which profession if he had not been a first rate general he would have made an excellent sergeant-major! His feats were legendary and prodigious! Here are a few:— On one day, unaided, he installed his Successors in Craft, Royal Arch, and Mark. One evening he worked all three Degrees in full, and they sat down to supper at 10.00 p.m.! He was known to have visited Lodges, and on arrival asked what the Ceremony was, and then said "I'll take it" and to have done so without a single prompt! I remember attending twice when he was present, but he was then past his prime, and he was indeed unlucky in the timing of his portrait which gives no hint of his alertness and energy. He was 84 when he died in 1948 and he never resigned!

W.Bro. the Revd. George Hough was the first Chaplain. R.W.Bro. Edward Bunting told me that it was he who had in the 1890s introduced the extended form of Installation into 280. After the controversy of 1925-26 and when Grand Lodge had lifted its embargo, he and W.Bro. Page, Dep.Prov. G.M. 1899-1933, put their heads together and contrived that Fort Royal should use this Working. They both coached W.Bro. Cecil Knight-Coutts who installed his Successor W.Bro. Bernard Cavenagh in this way, and the practice has continued ever since. W.Bro. Hough was also responsible

for instituting the "Draw" which is such a pleasant feature of our March Meeting.

1924

The Second W.M. was the Revd. H. Gathorne-Crabtree, M.C. He was reputed to have gained his decoration by bringing in a batch of German prisoners with his pipe held like a revolver!

1925

Col. L. J. Blandford came next. He was a delightful man, full of humour and the light touch. He died in 1944, and I shall never forget the letter his son wrote to the Lodge, when presenting a cup as a memorial to him. It was one which every father would be proud and glad to have written about him by a son. I am grateful to him for proposing me as a Joining Member.

1926

Capt. Cecil Knight-Coutts, M.C., was the 4th Master. I was told that up to the age of 12 K.C. (as he was always called) could not speak English, but only his native Gaelic; for he was born in the West of Scotland. He became Secretary in 1940 and held that Office for 29 years with complete dedication, and no less complete confidence in his own ability to manage the affairs of the Lodge. His influence throughout that long tenure was stimulating and paramount. He acted as an encouraging Mentor to a succession of W.M.s, and his wide knowledge and experience were put wholeheartedly at their disposal. In Lodge he was punctilious in detail and always respectful to the W.M. Behind the scenes he was

most anxious to help in training the Officers, encouraging the diffident, but an uninhibited critic of slackness or error, and no respecter of persons. He will be vividly and gratefully remembered by all who came in contact with him. He retired in 1969 and died in 1971, over 90 years of age.

1927

He was succeeded by Bernard Cavenagh, M.C., a noted surgeon in the City, who subsequently held office in the Lodge as A.D.C., D.C., and Chaplain for many years. By his example of keenness and modesty, and the genuine interest he always showed in the lives of his friends and Brethren, as well as by his thoughtful speeches at the festive board, he earned the respect and affection of all. Moreover, the presence of his two sons as Members of the Lodge will always keep his memory green.

1929

In 1929 Charles Carter was W.M., and at various times afterwards was D.C. for some 8 years. His Pickwickian figure and cheerful character endeared him to all.

1930

Dr. A. L. Sutcliffe became the 8th W.M. in 1930 and served the Lodge as Chaplain for 13 years from 1932.

1931

Dr. Edward Bunting, who had been the first Initiate of the Lodge in 1924, became the 9th W.M. in 1931. His career in Freemasonry was outstanding. In the Lodge, after his Mastership, he served as Secretary 1933-36, Chaplain 1944-45, and D.C. 1946-47. He was appointed Asst.Prov.G.M. in

1948, Dep.Prov.G.M. in 1950, and Prov. G.M. 1954-61. He was also Prov.Prior in K.T. 1957-59. His protrait is there for all to see, and is an excellent likeness. He was a man with many keen interests besides Masonry — cricket, fishing, and roses. As a man he was endowed with an unflappable temperament, massive sagacity and common sense, and a keen sense of humour. He was always ready to help younger Brethren by advice and encouragement, with time no object!, and was indeed ideally suited for the high Offices he held. At the end of his life he had a lot to bear, and for the last year or more illness sadly impaired his faculties. He was widely honoured and loved, and will ever be gratefully remembered. He died in 1962.

1932

W. Bro. Lt. Col. G. H. Goddard, D.S.O., was the 10th W.M. He had joined the R.A.M.C. in 1899, served in the Boer War and in the first World War, was awarded the D.S.O., and was four times mentioned in despatches. He joined the Lodge in 1925, after a previous extensive and distinguished career in Masonry becoming Dep.D.G.M. of Gibraltar in 1922 and shortly after being given the Rank of P.G.D. in Grand Lodge. In Fort Royal, and in the Province, his wise counsel and opinion were highly regarded. We rejoice that his son has followed in his father's footsteps and has been initiated in the Lodge.

Died 1948

1933 and 1934

Next followed the Deakin brothers, George and Stanley. They had been initiated, passed, and raised together in 1924 and 1925. The former was a farmer and was Vice-President of the National Farmers' Union when he was killed in a motor accident in 1943. His brother, Stanley, is I think still alive but he left Worcestershire some time ago to live in Lancashire.

1935

At the Installation of the next Master, Major Mason, all the surviving Past Masters were present. During his year an Emergency Meeting was held at the Guildhall when Bristol Brn. gave a demonstration of their First Degree Working. 212 Brn. were present.

1936

W.Bro. R. H. New came next. During his year the Lodge held an Emergency Meeting at Freemasons' Hall in London on 5th March, 1937, when Bro. F. W. Stallard was raised.

1937

W.Bro. F. L. Carter, Brother to C.F., was the 15th Master. On May 4th, 1938, another Emergency Meeting was held at Freemasons' Hall, when Col. Blandford's son was passed. W.Bro. Carter was Treasurer from 1940 till his death in 1956.

1938

W.Bro. Don Russell was installed as the 16th Master when 14 P.M.s were present. He was a member of the family which

owned the famous Lygon Arms Hotel at Broadway. Tall, handsome, of commanding presence, he wielded considerable influence in the Lodge out of all proportion to the Office of Chief Steward which he held from 1940-52. He was an admirable mentor to younger Brethren and an excellent speaker and raconteur. It was a great sorrow to his friends that a stroke impaired his faculties for the last years of his life.

At this point I come to the period when most of the W.M.s are still alive, and I feel that it is seemly to spare their blushes and leave their merits to some future historian, but I should make two exceptions. Generally speaking there has been a succession of strong W.M.s, and I single out first three Brethren — W.Bros. Paddy Martin, Bruce Milligan, and Keith Thompson — all Initiates and Past Masters of the Lodge. I do so because of the intense keenness with which they took to Masonry and grew up together in the Lodge, meeting regularly at each other's houses to learn, to study, to argue, and to perfect themselves in ritual and knowledge of the Craft. They succeeded each other as W.M.s in 1955, 1956, and 1957, and on the 26th April, 1956 — when Paddy Martin was W.M. — an unique Meeting took place.

All Offices
taken by
Brethren holding
Grand Rank.

Seven Subscribing P.M.s of the Lodge, all
of whom held Grand Rank, occupied the
following Chairs :—

- W.M. W.Bro. Eric Mitchell, P.A.G.D.C.
S.W. R.W.Bro. Edward Bunting, P.G.M.
J.W. W.Bro. J. W. Chitty, P.Dep.G.D.C.
D.C. W.Bro. C. F. Carter, P.A.G.Swd.B.
S.D. W.Bro. F. T. Goodman, P.A.G.St.B.
J.D. W.Bro. F. L. Carter, P.A.G.Swd.B.
I.G. W.Bro. C. Knight-Coutts,
P.A.G.Swd.B.

The Ceremony was an Initiation, the
Candidate being S/Ldr. R. T. Alkin who
has since died. The Initiation was carried
out by W.Bro. Mitchell, the Charge in the
N.E. was given by R.W.Bro. E. L. Bunting,
the W.T.s were presented by W.Bro. F. T.
Goodman, and the Charge to the Initiate
was given by W.Bro. J. W. Chitty, the
only survivor today.

Nor has the service to the Lodge of
these three Brethren ended there. W.Bros.
Martin and Milligan have both acted as
D.C., and W.Bro. Thompson is now our
Secretary. I call them to myself the "Three
Musketeers of the Lodge" — which is

which I leave to your choice! You will remember in the Dumas book there was another 'Musketeer, their devoted friend D'Artagnan, and at the end he realises his great ambition and receives the Baton of a Marechal de France. Similarly, Philip Mayne — W.M. in 1948 — has served the Lodge continuously ever since by precept and example in a variety of ways and, like D'Artagnan, has this year been rewarded with promotion to the Rank of P.G.D. — a reward that has delighted us all.

Statisticians may like to note that over the years in the Lodge there were :—

Prov. GM.s

Sir Francis Davies (1919-1948) and Dr. E. L. Hunting (1955-1961).

Acting Prov. Wardens.

Philip Mayne (1957) and Keith Thompson (1962).

Prov. G. Secs.

Eric Mitchell (1955-1958), Philip Mayne (1958-1961), and Charles Perks (1972-), who now sits firmly in that saddle with universal approbation.

Lewis.

Blandford, two Cavenaghs, Martin, Goddard, and Tetley.

The most recent Initiate was the 157th Member of the Lodge.

So much for these selected glimpses of the Past. May I now close by summing up this day's significance and appeal:—

Our Golden Jubilee is an anniversary when we Fort Royalists should be prompted to do three quite simple things:—

Firstly, to look back with gratitude for a notable succession of Brethren who have been ready to dedicate their ability, their enthusiasm, and their energy to the welfare of the Lodge.

Secondly, to take a cool, critical, and dispassionate look at ourselves as we are this day, and in so doing to find, one hopes, justification for a sober self-respect and an enduring loyalty to the ideals of our Founders, fortified by a renewal of our resolve worthily to uphold the standards and traditions, built up for us over the years by our Predecessors.

Thirdly, to look ahead to the future with the prayer and the hope that, as it has prospered in the past, so in the days to come Fort Royal will be blessed and enriched by the same diversity of gifts, nourished by the same spirit, and so

continue to flourish with its reputation bright, untarnished, and secure in the devoted service of its Members.

Leonard W. Greenwood,

P.G.D., Past Prov. G.M.

Secretary's Note.

With characteristic modesty W.Bro. Greenwood has omitted all reference to himself. He was invested P.P.S.G.W. in 1952, appointed acting J.G.D. in 1964, and was Asst.Prov.G.M. 1964-1969.

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