

St. Helena Conclave
No. 312

Division of North & East Lancashire

The Masonic & Military Order
of the
Red Cross of Constantine
and the
Orders of the Holy Sepulchre
and of
St. John the Evangelist.

A Celebration of 25 years of
Christian Masonry

St Helena Conclave 312

Twenty-five years ago, Very Illustrious Knight, Major Eddy Glover consecrated St Helena Conclave 312. Unlike in the Craft & Royal Arch where custom dictates the meeting is held at Provincial Headquarters, St Helena was done at Stanley House, Audenshaw Masonic Club, and the original meeting place of the Conclave.

17 Founders assembled along with 14 Consecrating officers and 11 visitors at 5 pm on 15th December 1976.

It is pleasing to note that 4 of those founders are still members as we enter the 21st Century. The founders were:

T Albert Lloyd
Basil W Rhodes
Sid Law
Alan Medlicott
Cliff Hardman
Albert L Lunn
Ken S Howarth
Roy Bennett
Grant Finney

Maj Thomas E Leech
Harry P Hunter
Frank Garterth
Thomas E Saint
Ralph Eaves
Malcolm R Bloor
Gordon Goodwin
Harry Lewis

There being no other Conclave at Stanley House it was naturally necessary that all the furnishings had to be acquired, built or purloined. A list was drawn up and each item needed was listed. In the original notes there are some 50 plus items indicated and without any of them the conclave could not have conducted the ceremonies.

The more visible hardware, the base and the superstructure on the altar were made by Frank Garterth & Sid Law. Clearly they built quality in the 1970's, given the durability of their nandy work. On the master list the founders took it upon themselves to acquire the rest of the furnishings, robes etc. between themselves.

The wives of some of the founders also contributed their skills. Mrs Leech (Toms Daughter in Law) donated the transparency; Mrs Lewis made the Sovereigns robe, Mrs Hulme the Standard and Mrs Goodwin the Emblems on the Pillars. Letters of thanks from the founders are attached to the minute book.

The summons for the Consecration was a substantial document printed in customary red on a hard embossed card cover. The ceremony was detailed into 34 sections and the officers were then invested.

The Masonic and Military Order of the
 Red Cross of Constantine
 and the Orders of the Holy Sepulchre
 and of St. John the Evangelist
 DIVISION OF NORTH AND EAST LANCASHIRE



CONSECRATION
 DEDICATION & CONSTITUTION
 OF

St. Helena Conclave

No. 312

AUDENSHAW MASONIC CLUB
 STANLEY HOUSE
 MANCHESTER ROAD
 AUDENSHAW, MANCHESTER
 15th DECEMBER, 1978
 at 5-00 p.m.
 DARK MORNING DRESS

The First Sovereign & Viceroy were Ill. Kt. T Albert Lloyd and E. Kt. Maj. Thomas E Leech. Albert was by this time a Past Grand Chancellor and Tom was already recognised at Division as he was the Deputy Divisional Marshall, not bad for an Eminent knight. The Immediate Past Sovereign was Basil Rhodes. Alan Medicott took on the role of Treasurer, a position he held for many years until 2000 when he finally hung up his abacus. Harry Lewis was presented with the new proclamation scroll and became Herald. The full list of officers is shown below along with the customary mistakes.

Red Cross		K.H.S. & St.J.
M.P.Sovereign	Ill.Kt. T. H. LOYD, P.G.Ch.	Rt. Rev. Prelate & M.E. Commander
Viceroy	Em.Kt. Major T. E. LEECH, Dep. Div. Marshal	Seneschal
Sen. General	W.Kt. H. P. HUNTER	Captain of Guard
Jun. General	W.Kt. S. LAW	Prior
High Prelate	W.Kt. F. GARFORTH	Sub. Prior
Treasurer	W.Kt. A. MEDICOTT	Treasurer
Recorder	W.Kt. T. E. SAINT	Registrar
Attorney	W.Kt. C. HARDMAN	Guardian of S.V.
Marshal	V.Ill.Kt. R. EAVES, P.G.H.A.	Marshal
Dep. Marshal	M.P.Kt. A. L. LUNN	Dep. Marshal
Orator	W.Kt. M. R. BLOOR	Verger
Std. Bearer	W.Kt. K. S. HOWARTH	1st Lieut.
Prefect	W.Kt. G. GOODWIN	2nd Lieut.
1st Aide-de-camp	Ill.Kt. R. BENNETT, P.G.Chamb.	Harbinger
2nd Aide-de-camp		Torch Bearer
Organist		Organist
Herald	W.Kt. H. LEWIS	Warder
Sentinel	W.Kt. G. FINNEY, J.P.	Beadle
I.P.S.	M.P.Kt. B. W. RHODES	

Following a successful Consecration the Knights assembled for a celebratory dinner. I have no price for it but the menu was:

- Melon Wedges
- Tomato Soup
- Roast Chicken
- Omelette surprise
- Cheese & Biscuits followed by Coffee.

The main toast was given to Brigadier C B S Morley, CBE, TD, DL, GCC the Most Illustrious Grand Sovereign and of course to Major Glover the Intendent General. The first proper meeting was held on Wednesday 12th January 1977.

The meeting dates were, 2nd Wednesday in January, 4th Tuesday in May & 1st Thursday in September this being the Enthronement meeting.

The fees were:

- Conferment of Red Cross £5,
- KHS & K St J E £1.
- Joining & Re Joining members £3

and an annual subscription of £5 being due in January. The founders also had a breast jewel made to celebrate the founding. Shown is a copy of the one worn by Harry Hunter. Grant Finney kindly sponsored each of the founders to have a jewel.



(Harry Hunters Jewel)

The Conclave therefore got off to a good start and set the standard for the years ahead.

The first meeting saw 7 new knights installed as Knights Companion of the Red Cross. These Knights were given the Oration of the Order by Major Leech. If it was given then as we still receive it 25 years later, those candidates must surely have been impressed. 5 of these Knights were then admitted to the KHS & St J the E at the following meeting in February 1976. The Conclave also saw its first Honorary Members, Dr Glover & Arnold Moreton.

Other candidates followed, notably Roy Grimshaw & Fred Markham, both of whom held a long affinity with the Conclave. The Conclaves first dispensation was given in June 1977 permitting Major leech to become Sovereign 'notwithstanding he is in the Chair of another Conclave'.

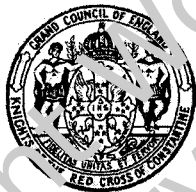
The Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine,
and the Orders of the Holy Sepulchre and St. John the Evangelist.

To the Sovereign, Viceroy, and Knights of the
Conclave No. 312 held at

You having represented to the Most Illustrious
Grand Sovereign that having regularly elected P.M. Thomas Ernest Leech
be Sovereign of your Conclave for the ensuing year, you are desirous of installing him
accordingly, notwithstanding that he is at present in the Chair of another Conclave,
and have requested a Dispensation for that purpose.

The Most Illustrious Grand Sovereign has taken
the subject into consideration and is pleased to accede to your request.

You will cause this Dispensation to be read in your
Conclave and recorded in the Minutes.



Given at the Masons Hall, London,
this 21st day of June 1977

By Command of His Most Excellent Majesty,
M.M. Grand Sovereign

W. J. Leake #
Grand Recorder

No. _____

Ceremonies of the Appendant orders followed and Candidates continued to join. A well-known face at Stanley House still, Keith Clayton joined in May 1978.

A further dispensation was granted in 1978 in order that the regular meeting that would have been held in May could be moved to June. Along with the dispensation was a letter from the Divisional Recorder requesting the sum of £1 for the dispensation and also reminding the members of the fact that he hadn't been receiving the proper summonses.

The Conclave recorded its first bereavement in 1979. At that meeting it was reported that Very Illustrious Knight Ralph Eaves, Past Grand High Almoner had passed away.

The first meeting to be held in 1979 in January was held by dispensation at Middleton Masonic Hall. No reason is recorded in the minutes as to why the move was made,

however the Sovereign at the time, Tom Saint lived in Middleton area as did the Intendant General Major Glover. By May of 1979 the membership of the conclave stood at 25 members.

The first meeting to be held in January of 1980 saw one of our current members, William Pickersgill join along with Jack Screen, another active member still meeting at Audenshaw. Attendance at the meetings had remained steady since the consecration and the average attendance at each meeting was about 20 members. 1980 also saw the death of another Knight companion of great importance to the conclave. Right Illustrious Knight Arnold Morton the Past Intendant General for the division of West Lancashire died on 17 November 1980.

At the meeting held on Tuesday 25 May 1981 inflation finally caught up with the conclave and an amendment to the by-laws was made that put the subscription up to £8, Conferment of the Order up to £10 and joining and re-joining members up to £5. At the same meeting a further three Knights were admitted to the Order. Despite having to put up the annual fees the conclave was in a financially sound situation as it made a donation of £100 from the charity fund to be donated to the North and East Lancashire divisional charity fund. By January of 1982 these increases in the subscription were clearly not enough as a Notice of Motion was given that the annual subscription be increased to £12.

The meeting that was held in September of 1982 saw Harry Lewis installed as Viceroy and Alan Medicott installed as Sovereign. The conclave seems to have had steady progress with candidates for the next two years. Given the average attendance at the meetings of between 15 and 20 members the minutes record charity donations in May of 1985 as £8.35. As we now put £1 coins in the charity plate it would seem 50 pence pieces were expected in 1985. 1985 also recorded the sad death of Harry Hunter a founder of the conclave.

The May meeting in 1987 had 2 candidates for admission into the Red Cross, one of them still being a member, Brian Bichenough. According to the summons issued for the May meeting a Notice was appended to it reminding companions that subscriptions were now overdue for both 1986 and 1987.

1988 saw the first indications of a move to Ashton Masonic Hall there being granted a dispensation to hold the May meeting of 1988 at Ashton. The dispensation being signed by our current Intendant General Colin Williams who was at the time the Divisional Recorder. The meeting date and also the venue were clearly now causing problems to the companions. Expense was also a major part in moving venue. The Summons for 20 May 1988 has several motions on it. The first being a proposition that the regular meeting of the conclave would be held at Albert House, Aston Masonic Hall and the second that the meeting dates be made more regular and should become the third Friday in October, February and May.

Having reference to the minutes of that meeting, it appears that the main concern of the members present was the ever-increasing cost of membership. It was also hoped that by moving to Ashton further members would be attracted to the Order. It was also at the top of the priority list to cut down on the cost of paperwork & summonses. At this time they achieved at least one of these items. The then recorder, Harry Lewis stopped having their summonses printed by commercial printers and instead typed his own summonses out for the benefit of the companions. Dispensation was given for the next three meetings until the new by-laws had been ratified.

By the February meeting of 1990 membership was becoming an issue and several of the offices of the Conclave were left unfilled at the Installation Meeting that year. One of the founders of the conclave who is still a member, Basil Rhodes proposed the names of four members of Pennine Lodge 8798 to be admitted to the Order. These members were admitted and boosted the membership by about 20%. The charity plate must now have been getting pound coins as the charity plate amounted to £17 from an attendance of fifteen people.

These new members quickly progressed to office; this prevented the Conclave having to recycle people who had already been in the Sovereigns chair. A further Member was brought into the order, Robert Mitchell who also bolstered the number of newer companions to the Order. In 1993 one of the members Dean Memory had acquired a new toy, a personal computer. He prepared and presented a printed Summons which was type set but which was photocopied in order to keep the cost down.

1992 saw one of our members, Major Leech appointed as Divisional Vicerey, an honour not only to Tom but also to the Conclave. Further members continued to be attracted to the Order and in October of 1993 three companions were admitted to the order. Two of these Tony Nuttall and Les Berry are still members and active supporters of the conclave.

Membership continued at about the same level with new members joining and older ones resigning for a variety of reasons. By 1994 the conclave had quite a legal theme to its membership. Several of the members were either serving or retired Police Officers, one member was a Magistrate and the conclave also had a member of the Special Constabulary.

Sadly in 1995 the conclave was informed of the death of Fred Markham. Fred had been virtually blind for several years but had always attended meetings and was also, given his sight problems, an excellent ritualist. Fred had an illuminated magnifying glass, which he used when learning new ritual, an inspiration to us all. Also in 1995 a further member who has been an active supporter of the Conclave since then, Eric Hankinson joined us.

The Conclave seldom just held a business meeting. The Minutes for 1995 and 1996 record several papers presented to the members, these being not just specific to the Red Cross but also of more general Masonic interest. Our current Sovereign Brian Groves joined in 1997, a good choice for the conclave as several members retired from the Conclave at this time due to both ill health and moving out of the area.

In 1996 the conclave was glad that Tony Nuttall had joined as he was enthroned as Sovereign an office he held for two consecutive years. Tony was followed into the chair by Les Berry. A change of Marshals saw in 1997 with Paul Brooke appointed to the office, which he has held since. The Installation Meeting held in October of 1999 saw Eric Hankinson installed as Sovereign, this was by dispensation, as Eric had not served the qualifying period for one complete year as Viceroy. A glutton for punishment, Eric also did two consecutive years as Sovereign. By February of 2000 the members of the conclave had been informed of the grave illness of Roy Grimshaw and Harry Lewis proposed that he be made an honorary member of the Conclave. The members passed this but sadly Roy died shortly afterwards.

In May of 2000 another of our conclave members Dean Memory became the second of the Conclave members to be appointed as Divisional Viceroy. Another of our members Robert Mitchell had also achieved high office in the Division and was appointed as Divisional Marshal.

By October of 2000, the Conclave had a steady membership. Eric Hankinson kindly offered to do a second term.

When having no ceremonies to perform, the Conclave continued to receive papers of relevance to the order and in February of 2001 Stephen Terry presented a paper, which gave the history and origins of the Order. 2001 also saw our long-serving Treasurer stand down from a position he had held virtually since the conclave was founded in 1976.

The conclave has served the Division well and has been well recognised by the honours conferred upon its members, another member of the Conclave is to be honoured by being appointed as Divisional Viceroy in May of 2002, Illustrious Knight Robert Mitchell. A fitting tribute to 25 years of Christian Masonry celebrated by the members of St. Helena Conclave.

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