

## THE "ROYAL GLOUCESTER" ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER, SOUTHAMPTON, 1783-1883.

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The Royal Gloucester Lodge, No. 130, then No. 174, was formally constituted on April 22, 1772, at Southampton, by Grand Secretary Dickey, of the "Atholl" Grand Lodge. The regular Grand Lodge, however, had warranted the Lodge of Concord, in the same town, in 1776, and through the intervention of the R.W. Bro. Thomas Dunckerley, the members of the Atholl or Ancient Lodge decided to join the regular or Modern Grand Lodge, a warrant being issued to them in 1792 as No. 503. Both lodges were called by the same name (i.e. 174 and 503), and were each worked according to the fancy of the members, who in 1798 decided to "drop" the "Modern" Constitution, and only to support the "Ancient" warrant. In 1802, however, two sets of "Returns" were made, so as to conciliate both Grand Lodges; in June of the following year it was agreed to continue the "Atholl" Constitution only; but in September the action was reversed, and so they went on, evidently determined to have "two strings to their bow," until the consummation of the Union of December 1813, when it was finally decided to hold fast to the "Atholl" charter of 1772, by which stroke of policy the lodge was numbered 212 on the roll, whereas the "Modern" warrant would have only obtained the number 537.

The Lodge of Concord was not allowed to work the Royal Arch Degree, but some of its members obtained a warrant from the Grand Chapter of the "Moderns" in 1777, the number being 13, and the meetings were held in the Guildhall, its name being also the "Concord." Possibly the constitution of this chapter led the "Atholl" Masons of the "Royal Gloucester" Lodge to act up to their privileges, for in 1783 they determined to have a chapter formed in connection with No. 174, the "Ancients" having the right to meet in "Chapters," to work the Royal Arch by virtue of their Craft warrants.

The Minute Book before me (*small quarto*, in its original boards and leather back) recites the transactions of the chapter for some 50 years, the subsequent meetings being duly narrated in later volumes. On writing my last work, entitled "Origin of the English Rite of Freemasonry" (1884), I was not aware of any other chapter of the "Ancients" of which separate minutes were preserved; but my friend, Bro. James Newton, of Bolton, tells me, No. 196 (now No. 146), of that town, also kept independent records of Royal Arch Chapter.

The minutes of No. 174 Chapter commence as follows:

The 7th day of October, 1783.

Bro. Archibald Macdonald, of Lodge No. 74, under the Irish Registry, having this evening (assisted by Bros. Macklin, Jones, and Graves, Arch Masons), at the request of the brethren of the lodge, held a chapter for the purpose of raising several brothers to this Sublime Degree in order to their holding a chapter in Southampton, the following brethren were accordingly raised, viz.: Bros. Antram, Cox, Blackman, Wylds, Flindell, and Budd.

Hence the chapter dates from October 7th, 1783, so far as this minute book is concerned, but I think it more than likely that earlier meetings were held, though informally, the members of "Atholl" Lodges having, as I have stated, the right to hold chapters of the Royal Arch according to certain prescribed rules. The next minute is to the following effect:

October 7th, 1783.  
 Bro. Macklin, Z. Bro. Antram. }  
 „ Jones, H. „ Wylds. } Sc.  
 „ Graves, J. „ Budd. }  
 Exalted Bro. Wood and Bro. Collins.

Granted a certificate to Bro. Wood, he being about to leave this town.

On August 4th, 1784, "A Lecture received from his Excellency (i.e., the presiding Z.) These Lectures were frequently delivered by Bro. Thomas Macklin, who was the First Principal for a great many years. On Sep. 1, 1784, Bro. J. Macklin, P.M. 174, was exalted, the fee being a guinea "as usual," and at the Chapter held on Oct. 6th, a visitor was present from a "R.A.C. Portsmouth." The date, "Nov. 3, 1784," occurs, but no minutes, neither are there any for Dec. 1, 1784, though one was held, eleven members being present, according to the account of the members' payments at end of the volume. The constitutional number of six companions were present on Jan. 5, 1785, but "Br. Budd being out of Town with the Keys, no Chapter was held." For the information of modern absentees, I should like to add that Bro. Budd was fined two shillings. The officers apparently were named "Z., H., J.," three Scribes and three Sojourners; there being also a Treasurer. Bro. J. Gatti is noted as being present from No. 53, Liverpool, on Nov. 7, 1785. This Lodge, warranted in 1775, and again in 1775, of Liverpool, was erased in 1807, according to Bro. Gould's "Atholl Lodges," p. 14. The first joining members seem to have been elected on Nov. 2, 1785. The degree was doubtless chiefly conferred upon Past Masters, but not invariably so, and brethren were passed through the chair nominally, to qualify for the Royal Arch, if otherwise eligible. Still, the degree was originally intended for those who had been actual Masters of Lodges, and that particular feature of the early minutes was commented on by D. Dassigny, in 1744. The third Sunday was fixed for the monthly meeting, on Nov. 19, 1786, as with many other chapters, the "day of rest" being considered then a most appropriate day for the ceremony, but such a fancy has long since been exploded. A warrant was adopted from Jan. 7, 1790. Brother D. McNorton, P.M. 79 (Gosport), was exalted on June 24, 1787. This was an "Ancient" Lodge, chartered in 1759, and again re-issued in 1780, at Gosport, where there was no "Modern" Chapter held; there was, however, one held at Portsmouth, No. 3, of 1769 (one of the earliest in England), another at Southampton, No. 13, of 1777, as noted before, and the trio was completed for Hampshire, under the "Moderns" (until after the "Union") by the accession of "Mount Horeb" Chapter, No. 178, Portsea, of 1812.

On August 17, 1788, the Chapter was favoured by having "Br. Laurence Dermott, late Deputy G.M.," as a visitor, thirteen companions being present, which was an unusual number for that period, the meetings being poorly attended until March 1st, 1790, when, at an emergency chapter, fifteen companions were present, and three brethren "exalted to the Sublime Degree of Royal Arch Masons."

The visitor's fee at the Chapter was fixed at sixpence each on Oct. 3rd, 1792. On March 20th, 1793, three brethren were proposed for exaltation, and "no objection being raised, they were unanimously approved of, and to under go the Painfull task at the ensuing Chapter, or first Convenient time." On April 3rd, the ceremony took place, one of the trio being Bro. Jacobs, who was first of all proposed on July 1st, 1792, but the decision was deferred "for 3 months." It was agreed that "Every Br. (of this Society) to pay Sixpence, every R.A. Night, wether they attend the duty of the Lodge or Not." Several "Chapters" were not held owing to the indisposition of the Z. (Bro. Thos. Macklin) and sometimes because he was "from Home," all tending to show he was the chief worker, and the brother on whom the members depended for the Ceremony, for many years. Bro. Longbotham, "of Lodge No. 266, Scarborough, was raised to the Sub-

lime Degree of a R.A.M.," on Aug. 7, 1793. The number is quoted in error for No. 267, the present "Old Globe" Lodge, No. 200, warranted in 1791.

On March 5th, 1794, it is recorded that "Br. Macklin paid to the Ancient Grand Lodge by Order 2.2.0." The lamented Bro. J. R. Stebbing, D. Prov. G.M., considered that this sum was for dues owing by Lodge No. 174, and there is much in favour of the supposition, as at the time it is probable the brethren were ostensibly in favour of the "Modern" Warrant of 503, and did not want the Treasurer's accounts to record such a use of the Funds. There were four visitors at the Chapter held on May 7th, 1794, two from Ireland, one from Scotland, and the other from No. 20, Liverpool. This number for the Lodge was bought by some members of 276, Liverpool, in 1792.\*

Four brethren were proposed "to be made Ext., Supr., Ext. R.A. Masons" on Dec. 3rd, 1794. "Each new Br. pay for the 3 Degrees, 1.11.6." This is their first mention in the volume, but they are often referred to afterwards. The first two were preliminary to the Royal Arch Degree, or at all events usually were so, but there are exceptions to this rule. We meet with these Degrees so early as 1763.†

A curious entry occurs under date January 7th, 1795—

"Paid Mr. Young for four Evangelists' arms, 2.2.0."

B. Cox was exalted at the chapter held February 26th, 1795, on recommendation of "Robt. Leslie, Esq., Grand Secy." The sum of £11s. was sent to the "Antient G. Lodge" on May 6th, 1795, which may have been for certificates and registration of members. The two visitors from No. 90, "E.R.," present at the meeting of September 2nd were probably connected with the lodge held in the 33rd Regiment, on the "English Registry" ("Ancients.") There were numerous visitors present at subsequent meetings hailing from Ireland, Scotland, and also the "Ancients." In the "Chest on May 4th," 1796, was the sum of £15. 5d., and more still was announced soon afterwards, as there was abundance of work.

Sixteen members agreed to the suspension of a companion on April 5th, 1797, for conduct unbecoming a man, "more particularly a Brother."

Evidently the companions helped the lodge financially from time to time, for on August 8th, 1798, "the desk in the Lodge" was paid for out of the R. A. Fund, and so with other sums, and often it was a good use of the money.

"This day (September 4th, 1799) Cash Recd., 2/6, Cash Paid, 1/-, the K. H. W. D. at the A. H. o. acmpt. of 24 Dutch Men of War being Taken by the English fleet." ‡

It is remarkable to note the number of brethren who were exalted, though members far removed from Southampton, such as 257, Belfast; 287, Jersey; 35, 10th Batt. R. A., in 1799, and others from long distances.

The sum of one guinea was paid on February 5th, 1800, "to help pay their passage home" of "16 men cast away."

The chapter was again in plenty of funds, so they were utilised to pay certain dues on behalf of both the 174, "Ancient," and 503, "Modern," lodges, on June 3rd, 1801, the rate of £5 5s. per half year appears to have been occasionally paid, which amount surely included the occupancy by the Craft lodge, with the two warrants. Cash was also lent Lodge 174 on February 7th, 1810, viz., £15s. 8½d., a note being made that the net amount was 4s. less as the same was "short" that amount, and on 11th March, 1811, occurs the entry "Paid the K. T. 9/8½." This doubtless relates to the "Royal Gloucester Encampment of Knights Templars" held at Southampton a few years early last century. On February 5th, 1812, the large balance of one penny is noted as being in hand, and as the exaltation were but few, the meetings were less frequently held; but the chapter had in no sense ceased to work at any time, and in 1815 a fresh lease was taken, doubtless consequent on the "Union" of the two rival Grand Lodges in December, 1813, though neither that event, nor the formation of the "United Grand Chapter," is alluded to in the records; the fee was raised to two guineas, the attendance improved, and in a few months the funds rapidly increased. Remittances to Companions White and Harper are duly noted on 7th June, 1818, in which year the chapter signified its intention to be attached to the "Royal Gloucester Lodge," according to the revised Royal Arch Regulations of 1817. Phillip Nicolli and Saml. Le Feuvre were exalted on November 4th, 1810, and each paid three guineas, so that the fee had been again raised, though not stated in the minutes, and it was agreed at the same meeting that the balance in hand of £4 13s. be "carried to the lodge fund." Nine were exalted on January 28th, 1822, so that the Treasurer's coffers were rapidly replenished, and at the same meeting the installation of the "Three Principals" is carefully chronicled. Sir William De Crespigny, Bart., who was present on November 4th, 1819, and January 5th, 1824, was the Grand Superintendent of the province, and was Prov. G.M. June, 1819. Brothers G. Cook and Wm. Le Feuvre were exalted February 10th, 1824, the latter paying £4 12s. 6d., the sum including a guinea fee for the "dispensation." Nearly £80 in hand represented the state of the finances on February 10th, 1824, when £50 were paid to N. Lewis for clothing (robes, &c.), the further sum of £36 16s. being remitted on January 2nd, 1826, though the companions do not seem to have been pleased with their purchases.

"The birthday of the Grand Patron of the Order" [George IV.] was celebrated by the members dining together, the expenses being about double the amount of the subscription tickets. In order to carry on the chapter in due form, certain companions united to guarantee a loan of £100, in moieties of £10 each, when £30 15s. were remitted for "registering fees and certificates" for 41 companions.

The fee, inclusive of registration, was four guineas in 1825, so that the exaltation ceremony was again raised. A deal of trouble arose in 1830 through the strange conduct of the First Principal; but the friendly offices of some companions led to the difficulties being adjusted, after which settlement no less than 12 candidates for the Royal Arch were proposed at the following chapter, the working of the ceremony on the occasion of their reception on November 11th, 1831, concluding the records in volume one. Other meetings must have been held, though they are not in the minute book, as the second volume of the transactions does not begin until February 27th, 1834.

The chapter has lately obtained a centenary jewel warrant from the Grand Chapter, hence my writing this short sketch of the records, kindly sent me for persual by Bro. John E. Le Feuvre, Deputy Provincial Grand Master of Hants, who takes a special interest in all that concerns the welfare of the chapter, and the interests of the Province.

\* "Atholl Lodges," p. 52.

† See my "Origin of English Rite," Chapter VI.

‡ "A. H." means Audit House. What the other letters refer to I cannot at present determine.

§ Samuel and William Le Feuvre were uncle and father, respectively, to my esteemed friend, John E. Le Feuvre, late Prov. Grand Secretary and now Deputy Prov. Grand Master Hants.

|| This was not a mere formal pledge, for the brethren were called upon to pay their subscriptions as a loan.