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Lodge No.9819

The Jersey Masonic Temple

*Written by
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The Temple building in Stopford Road, St.Helier, is one of the most attractive buildings of its type throughout the United Kingdom. It is constructed of brick and cement with granite facings in pure Corinthian style, classical in appearance and beautiful as regards detail. The principal facade on the North side of the building facing Stopford Road has a most imposing porch of four columns rising 20 feet high. There are two staircases leading to the main doors on the first floor, from the East and West.

The basement is decorated entirely with rusticated quoins above which runs a row of columns with Corinthian capitals. Immediately above these columns is a bold and chastely designed cornice surmounting this again with a parapet. Between each of the four columns is a large semicircular French window. The basement floor contains a dining room 50 feet by 28 feet, which can seat 120 people, a Provincial / Robing room, kitchen and auxiliary rooms.

In addition to the principal external staircase, access to the main floor is by means of a noble flight of stairs, the candidate's room being on the first landing. On the left of the principal entrance is the Common or Assembly room, whilst on the right is the ante room leading to the Temple itself. The

Common room is fitted with cupboards and drawers, in which Lodge warrants, furniture, regalia, and personal regalia are stored.

Carpeted throughout, the Temple measures 47 feet by 27 feet and 30 feet clear in height. The ceiling of this magnificent hall is semicircular or concave, beautifully moulded in panels surrounded by a Corinthian cornice, supported by Corinthian columns mounted on pedestals. There are four large splendid portraits mounted on the two end walls, painted by John St.Helier Lander, of the Provincial Grand Masters Col.E.C.Malet de Carteret, C.E.Malet de Carteret (who was also a Bailiff of Jersey), and Deputy Provincial Grand Masters Dr.J.Le Cronier and C.H.Wilson. Around the walls of the Temple are the Past Masters' boards of nine of the Lodges, with the Boards of the two newest Lodges in the Province being in the ante room to the Temple. Beneath the painting of Dr Le Cronier is the Board listing the Provincial Grand Masters. Banners of the various Craft Lodges adorn the walls.

Following Antients' practice, the Master's place is on a raised dais in the East reached by ascending three steps. On the floor of the Lodge room, some distance in front of him is a pedestal to which he descends when dealing with candidates. This is not

altogether too surprising, bearing in mind that the two oldest Lodges were warranted by Atholl Grand Lodge. On either side of the Master's chair are the standards of Provincial Grand Lodge, and of the Provincial Grand Master.

In the North East and South East corners of the room are the banners of Provincial Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Chapter bearing the arms of Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter on which are superimposed the arms of the Island of Jersey. This apparent spoiling of the arms of Grand Lodge was expressly permitted after the Second World War in recognition of the problems of Freemasons in the Island during and after the war, and in the restoration of the Temple.

The Master's chair and those used by the Immediate Past Master and the Provincial Grand Master (when attending Lodge meetings) although matching are of different centuries. W.Bro Thomas Orphan Lyte had made two chairs for the local Court of Foresters around 1840. They were obtained after the Occupation at an auction for the sum of £4 and a matching chair was commissioned from craftsmen working for A.de Gruchy & Co at a price of £100. The Wardens' chairs in the South and East were presented to the Masonic brethren of Jersey at the request of, and from the estate of W.Bro Vivian John Bailhache, (Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the Province 1947/1960). They were made to match the three chairs on the Master's dais.

The columns at the North West and South West corners of the chequered carpet, were presented just after the Liberation in 1945 by W.Bro S.L. Amy (Master of Yarborough Lodge in 1931). During the sacking of the Temple, the large attractive Carey's globes and stands that formerly stood either side of the Master's chair, had disappeared. W.Bro Amy had acquired a large four poster bed prior to the war and decided that the columns of this bed would be very suitable as furniture in the Temple. Two of these were mounted with globes on which are delineated maps of the celestial and terrestrial globes.

In the centre of the carpet is a mahogany cabinet housing the Tracing Boards. This had been acquired by the Duke of Normandy Lodge in 1855 during the Mastership of W.Bro T.O. Lyte. It was thought to have been taken from the Temple during the occupation but was discovered amongst a collection of rubbish in the building in December 1945, and the Lodge presented it to the Province so as to serve all the Lodges. The Tracing Boards were presented in February 1946 by W.Bro G.F. Thorpe. They were painted by a local artist Mr A.G. Wright. The console of the Compton electric organ stands in the South West corner and the sound box is located behind a handsomely carved grille in the North East.

In a display alcove at the top of the internal staircase, to the side of the main doors, is a Warden's column made of pink granite. This was designed and hand carved by Bro T.M. Carré of Yarborough Lodge No 244, and was presented by him at a special meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge on the 30th January 1991, marking the 50th Anniversary of the Sacking of the Temple.

A further staircase leads from the principal entrance to another storey containing a Rehearsal room, 27 feet by 21 feet, originally designed as a Royal Arch Chapter room. Opposite this room is the Jersey Masonic Library and Museum in which are displayed hundreds of Masonic books and many items of general, but principally local, Masonic interest. Amongst the items on show, are samples of the temporary aprons used by the brethren immediately after the Second World War, until new aprons could be obtained from the United Kingdom. The Library contains many rare books, including a First Edition of Anderson's book of Constitutions dated 1723.

The brethren of the Province of Jersey have a Temple of which they can be very proud, and they can praise the foresight of the brethren who at a Special meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge held on the 15th May 1851, decided that there should be a central meeting place for all Masonic activities in Jersey, to replace the various hotels, and inns that had been in use until that time. An attempt was made to purchase the Jewish Synagogue in Grove Place, but this met with strong objections from several Jewish brethren. However Bro Simeon Jewell acquired the property and opened it for use as a Masonic Hall in 1852/3. Five Lodges met there - Farmers, Mechanics, La Césarée, Royal Alfred and Prince of Wales.

In 1859 the brethren of Loge La Césarée made a move towards the purchase of a site in Victoria Street for a Masonic Temple. That purchase was not made, as a result of problems in raising sufficient money to erect the building. A second attempt involved the suggested purchase of the Independent Chapel at the Corner of Grove Street and Duhamel Place, (later the Oddfellows Hall) but contractual terms could not be agreed with the Trustees. However the impetus was growing and land was eventually found at the corner of Stopford Road and Oxford Road belonging to a Mr Brown, a bankrupt brewer.

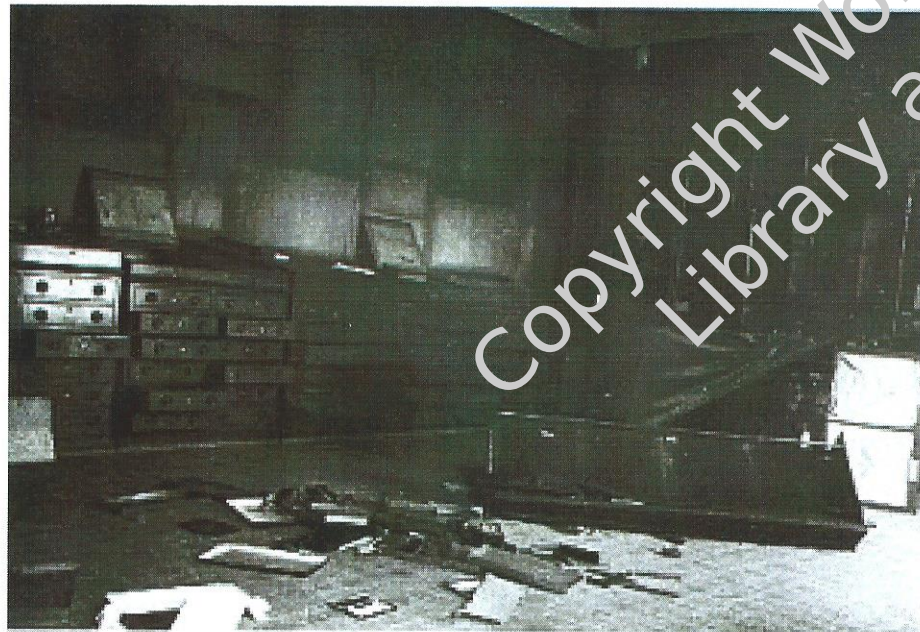
Loge La Césarée provided the architect Thomas Gallichan, (who was Director of Public Works of the States of Jersey). Messrs Philip De La Mare, Benest and Pirouet, were the building contractors, of whom De La Mare and Benest were Freemasons. They occupied the adjoining plot of land in Stopford Road, towards David Place.

On the 17th December 1862, a special meeting was held at the Hotel de Ville, Don Street, St. Helier for the purpose of laying the Foundation Stone of the Masonic Temple at Stopford Road. The Lodge was duly opened and present were some 300 brethren including deputations from Guernsey and Brittany and His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, Sir Robert Percy Douglas, Bart, who was also a Freemason. It was a brave move to hold such a procession in the midst of Winter, but the fateful morning dawned with a rising glass, and although the sky was dull, it did not rain or blow.

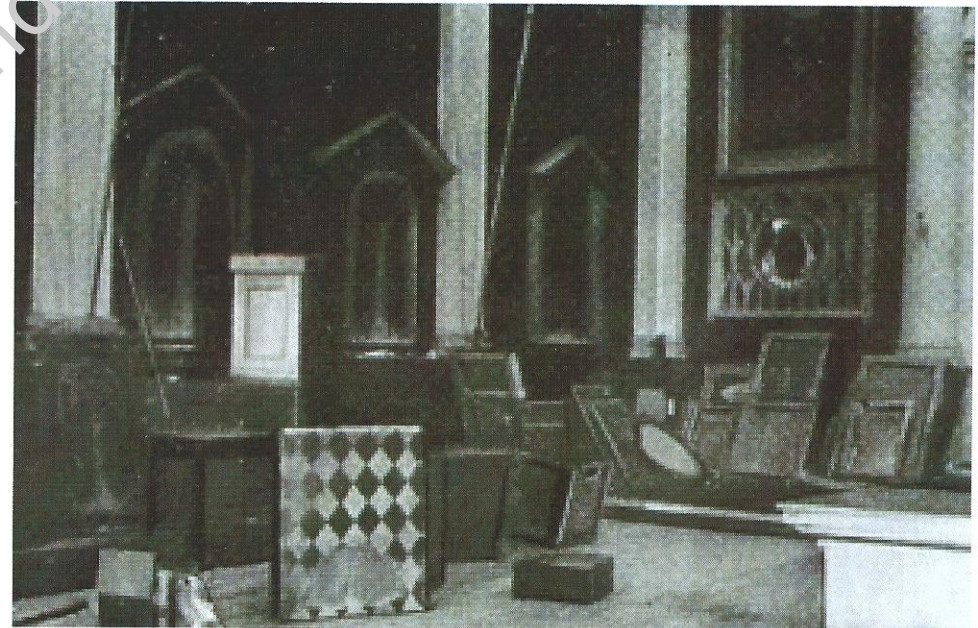
A procession was formed, headed by two Tylers with drawn swords, a military band, operative masons and visiting brethren two by two. Then followed The Justice Lodge No 34 (Irish



The Temple as a wine store



Library & Museum



Damaged Lodge Furniture

The Temple facing East today



Constitution) followed by Royal Alfred, La Césarée, Samarès, Royal Sussex, Mechanics and Yarborough Lodges; each Lodge preceded by its banner with the members walking two by two.

The procession consisting of 300 of the 400 Freemasons in Jersey at that time, went down Don Street, into King Street, through Brook Street, Library Place, Church Street into the Royal Square. On arrival at the Court House, the Bailiff of Jersey, Magistrates, the Dean of Jersey, Clergy, and heads of departments were invited to assist in the ceremony. It then moved to Stopford Road, accompanied by the Bands of the 18th Royal Irish Regiment and of the Town Battalion of the Royal Jersey Militia. Men of the Rifle Company of the Town Battalion formed a guard of honour. A choir of ladies accompanied the procession. Stopford Road had been closed off by the Chef de Police, and all ticket-holders for the ceremony had to be in their places before 11.00am.

The ceremony was certainly impressive, including the adjusting of the Foundation stone with Masonic implements. The contractor delivered the Mallet which was then knocked on the stone three times. The stone was consecrated with corn wine and oil. The Provincial Grand Master then delivered to the contractors the several implements that they would require for the construction work and the Architect presented the plans for approval which were then passed to the contractors. The Lt.Governor gave an address on the moral social and religious influence of Freemasonry.

The Jersey Masonic Temple Company Ltd was established on 29th November 1862 under the terms of the recently issued Law on Limited Liability, which enabled joint stock companies to be formed. The Capital was £1,800 in shares of £5 each, of which £3 per share was to be paid immediately, and a second call one month later for the balance. The founders of the Company were E.F.Le Couteur, P.Baudain, F.J.Le Maistre, C.Orange, P.Le Neveu, C.J.Hocquard, and J.Gibat.

Incredibly the building was completed in just eighteen months. The Dedication and Consecration of the Temple took place on the 25th May 1864. Provincial Grand Lodge met at the Prince of Wales Rooms, Minden Place, St.Helier, and then formed a procession to Stopford Road. The architect (and now Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works) BroT.Gallichan addressed the PGM:

"I have to thank you and the promoters of this Temple for the honour I have received in being entrusted with its erection. I trust that the work has been done to your perfect satisfaction, and having completed my task, I now surrender into your hands the implements which were delivered to me at its commencement".

The Provincial Grand Master then proceeded to scatter the corn, and pour the wine and oil in the East, South and West parts of the Temple. An oration was delivered by W.Bro Dr Henry Hopkins (acting Chaplain), which must have lasted in excess of forty minutes. After the ceremony was completed, the brethren returned to Minden Place. In the evening

a banquet was held at 6.00pm at the Pomme d'Or Hotel, St.Helier. 150 Brethren including visitors from France and Guernsey sat down to dine.

The completion of the building was regarded as significant, and full page articles appeared in the Morning Express on the 26th, 28th and 31st May 1864, clearly showing the considerable local interest in the construction of the edifice. It is clearly stated that it was the intention to add a third side to the building, to be used for non-Masonic purposes. This would provide a large room, 90ft by 36ft for general use, distinct from the Masonic portion, to be let out for concerts, balls, lectures, public meetings etc. To date it has not been added.

Loge La Césarée was allowed to be the first to hold their meetings in the new Temple as a mark of their initiative in the project but they had to delay the date of their regular meeting to the 26th May in order to do so. The first meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge in the new Temple was held on the 11th August 1864.

The monies raised from the brethren and Lodges were not sufficient to clear the debts and the Masonic Temple Company wrote to each Lodge in September 1865 seeking to dispose of all the forfeited or unsold shares. The committee also printed and issued a number of One Pound Notes, which they were fully entitled to do, under the Law of Jersey at that time. It is certain that the architects of the Law had not anticipated the somewhat dubious method of repayment that was promised on the face of the notes - "by application to the Sultan of Turkey and the Khedive of Egypt"! The notes were designed and engraved by W.Bro W.Adams, and included an engraving of the Temple in the left hand corner.

The committee organised a fete, exhibition and bazaar which was held on the 19th, 20th and 21st of December 1865. The bazaar was open each day from Noon and closed at 7.30pm on the first day and 7 O'clock on the other two days. On the first evening, Tuesday 19th, a soirée took place including entertainment from the Jersey Christy Minstrels. The programme states that during that evening "The curious will be afforded means of seeing WHEN, WHERE and HOW (*on dit*) COWANS become MASONS".

On the Wednesday evening "The Royal Caesarean Menagerie" was introduced for the first time, including unique animals, guaranteed not to bite! On the last evening a public auction took place to dispose of all unsold items from the bazaar, following which a concert was held, organised by Bro Lott (who incidentally was the Grand Organist from the UK). During the three days, a Post Office was established on the premises for the "accommodation of the thousands who are expected to attend". A Registry Office was also organised within the building for "young ladies and gentlemen desiring partners" with a large wedding cake at hand. Unfortunately no copies remain of the lithographed sheets used to publicise the event, but the Freemasons Magazine and Masonic Mirror of the 2nd May 1868 describes it as follows:

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We find Father Christmas decked out in Masonic costume, and wielding the traditional gridiron and poker, ready to brand and broil candidates for initiation to the Craft. Two persons with asinine characteristics are discussing the secrets of the Order, which they fancy they have discovered in a book; a daughter of Eve, worthy of her descent, is peeping through a keyhole in the hope of emulating the celebrated Miss St.Leger [the "female" Freemason]; a Jack Tar and a Red Indian are exchanging the signs recommended in one of Captain Marryatt's novels by placing the thumb at the end of the nose and extending the fingers; a doleful widow and two sad-looking children are appropriately seeking relief; a string of representatives of various nations are either fraternally dancing or singing the "Entered Apprentice's Song", while underneath are portraits of some thirty of the Jersey brethren, with the Grand Master in the centre. To add to the grotesqueness of the whole, one eminent Brother is represented as almost overpowered by the weight of an immense trowel, which he bears, whilst another musical Brother is exercising his abilities on a barrel organ.

Some time after the Temple was consecrated, a Masonic Reading Room and Library was established, and took over the Masonic Library belonging to the Temple and Loge La Césarée as a loan. The Reading Room was opened each day from 10.00am to 10.30pm and on Sundays from 6.00pm to 10.00pm. The object of the Society was to cultivate and promote a taste for Masonic literature, to associate and meet for recreation, conversation and reading, for which purposes Newspapers, Periodicals, etc were to be supplied. The Rules also stated that the Amusements would consist of cards, dominoes, chess and backgammon, and that gambling and betting would be strictly prohibited.

Originally there were no railings surrounding the front steps to the Temple. Following an unfortunate accident, in October 1867, when a Brother leaving the premises after a meeting of the Prince of Wales Lodge, fell on to the pavement below, the Masonic Temple Company decided to erect the handrail.

In 1912 some fifty years after the foundation stone was laid, the Temple Company still had 21 debentures, 360 ordinary shares and six one pound notes outstanding, giving a total liability of £2,016. Some £3,000 had been written off. Many of the original shares and debentures had passed into the possession of non-Masons, some by sale and some by the deaths of the first owners. Very few records had been kept of these transactions, so that the affairs of the company were almost impossible to straighten out. Eight years later this was to lead to the formation of the second Company.

There were legal difficulties in the existing ownership because under Jersey Law, property could only be held in trust for commerce, public utility or religion, and Freemasonry did not come under any of those headings. Freemasons, as a body, could not hold real estate in the Island. It was proposed that (1) the existing Company (Jersey Masonic Temple Co Ltd) be wound up. (2) a New

Company be formed (Jersey Masonic Temple Company [1920] Ltd) (3) That the Temple be let on a contract repairing lease to Provincial Grand Lodge at a rent sufficient to cover all the "running" costs. (4) that a committee be appointed by Provincial Grand Lodge to manage the building, and to set Lodge rents etc.

In 1940 when the Germans invaded and occupied the Channel Islands, the Temple, with the exception of the caretaker's living quarters, was locked, and the German authorities informed. They gave an undertaking that provided no Masonic activities were carried on, nothing would be done to interfere with the premises or its contents. Relying on this assurance, the Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro C.E.Malet de Carteret gave instructions that the premises were to remain locked and the contents were left inside. Unfortunately, this reliance was very much misplaced, and a squad of what can best be described as wreckers and looters, sent directly from Berlin, started the sack of the Temple on the 27th January 1941 and continued for two days.

The Nazis left very little in the Temple, just the paintings and Past Masters' boards, which were fixed on the walls. The warrants that had hung in the anteroom were all removed. Of the furniture, Regalia, Lodge books, etc, there was no sign. Much had been destroyed by the Germans in a bonfire in the park adjoining the Temple. What was of value to the Nazis politically, had been taken in vehicles to Berlin. The pair of Carey's Globes dating back to 1806 (Terrestrial) and 1799 (Celestial) were never recovered. These globes would now be worth in excess of £25,000. The boiler was left in a dangerous state and could not be used. The chequered carpet had been removed to Linden Court, St.Saviour, the accommodation used by Schumaker, the German Commandant, and he had taken it back to Germany with him, when he left Jersey.

During the Occupation, the German authorities had forced the States of Jersey to pass an Act to enable the property, both real and personal, to be transferred out of the hands of the Masonic authorities to themselves, and this led to some problems in gaining early access to the Temple after the Liberation of the Channel Islands. The negotiations with the civil and military authorities were lengthy and complicated, but by the 18th July 1945, W.Bro G. Knocker was able to regain access.

The condition of the building internally was terrible, as it had been used as a store for (amongst other things) bottles of wine. Much work had to be done to restore it to some semblance of order. As a result of considerable hard work, the Temple was restored, and you have witnessed the results.

A new company - The Jersey Masonic Temple Co (1945) Ltd was formed and is the present custodian of the building.

This information has been taken from the book "The story of Jersey Freemasonry" published in 1994 by W.Bro Colin R. Goss, (Librarian and Curator of the Jersey Masonic Library and Museum 1993/1995).