

Notes on the early History of  
Masonry in England. (from the  
 complete Freemason, date about 1763,  
 and also from the Freemason's  
Pocket Companion. -

Larcius having been sent  
 Anno. Domini 287 by Dioclesian and  
 Maximilian, joint emperors, against  
 the Saxon Pirates, he made the  
 emperor of the British Isle, and  
 being a great lover of art and  
 science, appointed Albanus, grand  
 master of Masons, who employed the  
 fraternity in building the palace of  
 Verulam, now called St. Alban.  
 Albanus was afterwards converted to  
 the Christian faith, and was the first  
 who suffered martyrdom in Great  
 Britain, about 303. St. Alban

obtained from the King a charter  
for the Freemasons to hold a general  
Council, at which regulations were made  
for their pay. In 303, Constantine  
Chlorus, succeeded the emperor, and  
resided at York. He died in the  
third year of his reign, and his  
empress Helene surrounded the city of  
London with a stone wall.  
306. Constantine the Great succeeded.  
He was born at York. His reign was  
a peaceful and prosperous one.  
Valentinian Gratian, another Constantine, Honor-  
-ius, and Valentinian the 3<sup>rd</sup> succeeded  
each other in the government of Britain.  
Then came the various <sup>Anglo</sup> Saxon kings  
until the time of Ethelbert, Anno 564

When Augustine was sent by Gregory 1st  
with 40 monks into Britain. The king  
was converted and baptized. Churches,  
monasteries, and castles were built, and  
artists were sent for from abroad, who upon  
their arrival, formed themselves into  
academies of sages according to the  
ancient use of that fraternity, and  
were patronized by Augustine, grandmaster  
of Masons, who was afterwards made first  
Bishop of Canterbury, and under his  
direction the craft was employed to build  
The Cathedral of Canterbury Ann. Dom. 600  
The Cathedral of Rochester 602.  
The Cathedral of London 604  
The Cathedral of Westminster 605.

At knowing how to construct the plod

Architecture, they followed the Gothic style. The clergy found it convenient to study geometry and architecture, as well as divinity, and came to be very expert masters, and great designers, and the lodges or assemblies of the Freemasons, were always kept in monasteries, which at that time were only built of wood. Till the reign of Henry, A.D. 680, when Bennett, abbot of Monks was grand master, and introduced the use of stone and bricks. Henry sent to Charles Martel the right worshipful grand master of France, father of King Pepin, who had been educated by Brother Minus Speer. He sent from them some expert masons, to teach the Saxons those laws and ways of the craft that had been preserved from the honor of the Goths, but not the Augustan

style, for that was buried in  
it's own ruins, in the West.

Alfred the Great in 872 is styled Grand  
Master of England. He fortified &  
re-built many towns and founded the  
University of Oxford. He had about  
him the best architects, & employed the  
fellow crafts wholly in brick and  
stone. His successor, Edward placed  
his brother Ethelward at the head of  
the fraternity, and he founded that  
university of Cambridge.

In 925, Athelstan succeeded, and appointed  
his brother Edin grand master.  
He built (Athelstan) many great works, and  
encouraged many masons from France  
who were appointed officers thereof, and  
brought with them the charges, and

regulations of the lodges, preserved since  
the Roman times, who also prevailed  
with the King to improve the constitution  
of English lodges, according to the foreign  
model, and to increase the wages of the  
working masons. Edwin purchased a  
charter for the fraternity, enabling them  
to hold their yearly assemblies, and  
quarterly communications, and a power  
to regulate and correct among themselves  
whatever might be found amiss. He  
then summoned all the Freemasons in  
the realm, to meet him at York  
and to bring with them all the ancient  
records of masonry they were able to  
collect. Accordingly in the year  
926, King Edwin at a grand lodge held  
at York, gathered all the old records  
that were extant, some in Greek, some

in Latin, some in French, and other  
languages, and from the contents thereof  
that assembly framed the constitution &  
charges of an English Lodge, which were  
strictly observed by the Lodges. —  
Good King Ederic, died two years  
before the King, to the great grief  
of the Fraternity, though his memory  
is honourably mentioned in all the  
old constitutions. in 959 King Edgar appointed  
St Dunstan G. M. of Masons, to  
build many pieps houses.  
Ederic, the Confessor in 1042 appointed  
Leofric, Earl of Coventry, G. M. of Masons.  
He built the Abbey of Coventry, and  
many pieps houses. The King re-built  
Westminster Abbey.  
William the Conqueror, in 1067 appointed  
Roger Montgomery Earl of Arundel; Gundulf  
Bishop of Rochester, with other good archi-  
tects, at the head of the fellow crafts, to

built the Tower of London, Battle Abbey, near Hastings, St. Saviour's Church Southwark, the Castle of Dover, York, Exeter, Winchester, Warwick, Hereford, Stafford, Durham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, besides five Cathedrals, and numerous parish houses. -

William 2<sup>d</sup>'s reign, many more expert masons came from foreign parts, and together with his father's architects, were employed in building London Bridge, the wall round the Tower of London, the Palace of Westminster, and Westminster Hall. -

King Stephen, in 1135, appointed Gilbert de Clare, Esq. to build 11,00 castles. He also built 6 religious houses, and the Chapel of St. Stephen, Westminster Palace.

During the reign of Henry 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Knights Templars established their society, and built their Temple in Fleet Street



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In the reign of King John, three Grand masters were appointed Peter de Colechurch, William Almain, and Peter de Rufibus, Bishop of Winchester. Henry 3<sup>rd</sup> being a minor on his accession to the crown, Peter de Rufibus, the last Grandmaster, was the King's guardian, and laid the first stone of that hall called Solomon's porch, at Westminster Abbey.

In the reign of Edward 1<sup>st</sup> the following G. M's succeeded each other.

Walter Gifford, Archbishop of York  
Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and  
Mortain, Lord of Mount Hermer.

In the reign of Edward 2<sup>nd</sup> Walter Stapleton Bishop of Exeter, was Grand Master.

Edward 3<sup>rd</sup> patronized the Freemasons as their royal Grandmaster, and re-built the Castle & Palace of Windsor. After that he appointed the following G. M's.

John de Spousee, to re-build St. George's  
Chapel, for installing the Knights of the  
Garter. William a Wickham, at the  
head of 400 Freemason, to re-build Windsor  
Castle. Robert a Barnham, at the head  
of 250 Freemason, to finish St. George's  
great hall at the Castle. Henry Nevell  
called the King's Freemason, to build the  
London Charter House, King's Hall, Lam-  
bridge, Greenbrough Cith, and to re-build  
St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster: Simon  
Langham to repair the body of Westminster  
Abbey, as it now stands.

Edward 3<sup>rd</sup> was the patron of arts and  
sciences, and on account of the great increase  
of lodges, the Grand Lodge with consent of  
the lords of the realm, then generally Freemasons  
obtained many good and wholesome laws  
for the better regulating and conducting the  
affairs of the fraternity. Their regulations

one to be found Page 76. of Freemason's  
Companion. - Edinburgh - 1761. -

Richard 2<sup>d</sup> in 1377, appointed William  
of Wickham, Bishop of Winchester, G. M.  
to re-build Westminster Hall, as it now  
stands, and William of Wickham, who  
at his own cost built New College Oxford,  
and founded Winchester College.

Henry 4<sup>th</sup> appointed Thomas Fitz Alan  
Grand Master, to build the Abbey of  
Bressingham, and another at Potheringay.

Henry 5<sup>th</sup> appointed Henry Chicheley,  
Archbishop of Canterbury, G. M. to  
rebuild the Castle & Abbey of Sheen,  
now called Richmond upon Thames.

Henry 6<sup>th</sup> being a minor on his accession,  
the G. M. Chicheley continued at the  
head of the Lodges. In the third year  
of this King's reign, the Parliament  
was empowered to disturb the Lodges by an act

entitled, "Masons shall not confederate  
in Chapters or Congregations." See Freeman's  
Pocket Companion. P. 78. - This act did not  
frighten, the fee, accepted, or operation  
masons, from meeting in their well formed  
lodges, to cement under their own Grand-  
-master, according to their ancient custom.  
Neither did they ever desire, any of  
their eminent, and noble brethren  
to get this act repealed, as they meddled  
not, with any affairs of state. In the  
minority of this very King, a lodge was  
held at Canterbury, in the year 1429  
under Grand master Chickley, as  
appears from the Latin register of  
William Molant, Prior of Canterbury,  
in manuscript in which, are mentioned  
Thomas Stapylton, the Master, John  
Morris, "Custos de la lodge Sathom-  
-um" or "Warden of the lodge of Masons."

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with fifteen fellow crafts, and three entered apprentices, who are all named. - Chicheley, moreover, being employed in building the colleges of All Souls and Barnard, now called St. John's College, he never desisted from holding a lodge at the City of Oxford, till he died in A.D. 1445. - Before the troubles of this unfortunate King the masons were everywhere in great esteem and much employed. A record of the 15th year of his reign says, "that the charges and laws of the freemasons, have been seen and perused by our late sovereign, King Henry 6th and by the lords of his most honourable council, who have allowed them, and declared that they be right, good, and reasonable to be holden, as they have been chaun out, and collected

from the records of ancient times."—  
The same record describes a coat of arms,  
much the same with that of the  
London Company of freeman masons.  
It is generally believed that the said  
company is descended from the ancient  
fraternity, and that in former times, no  
man was made free of that company  
until he was installed in some lodge  
of free and accepted masons, as a necessary  
qualification. The King, appointed William  
Waynflete Bishop of Winchester, G. M.  
to build St. John's College, King's and  
Christ's colleges at Cambridge, afterwards  
finished by the Countess of Richmond.  
His Queen, also founded Queen's  
College, Cambridge, while our ingenious  
Grand Master, built at his own  
cost, Magdalen College, at Oxford.

It is said, that in the year 1442  
~~the~~ King Henry himself was made a mason  
and that his example was followed by  
many lords and gentlemen of the court.  
In consequence of this time the craft suffered a great  
fall by the bloody wars of the houses of  
York and Lancaster. Edward 4<sup>th</sup> in 1461  
employed Richard Beauchamp, Bishop  
of Sarum, G.M. to see all the ruins of  
a long war repaired. Henry 7<sup>th</sup> was  
chosen Protector of the Order of St. John  
at Rhodes (now at Malta) by the G.M.  
and fellow of their grand Lodge.  
A.D. 1500. In 1502 King Henry 7<sup>th</sup> as  
royal G.M. summoned a lodge of  
Masters, and laid the foot stone  
of his favourite famous Chapel at West-  
minster, which was completely finished in  
1507 whilst a great number of the  
fraternity were employed to build many  
stately palaces for the King & Queen.

The College of Brasenose at Oxford, &  
of Jesus, & St. John's, Cambridge. In 1509  
Henry 8<sup>th</sup> appointed Cardinal Wolsey  
G. M. who built Hampton Court, White-  
hall, the College of Christ Church, O.  
Oxford, and many more good edifices,  
which upon his disgrace were forfeited to  
the Crown A. D. 1530. - Queen Elizabeth  
hearing that the Masons had some  
secrets they could not, or would not  
reveal, she became jealous of their assemblies  
and sent an armed force, to break up  
their annual communication at York, on  
St. John's day, Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> 1567, but Sir  
Thomas Partridge who was then G. M.  
took care to send some of the great  
officers of the Queen who were Masons,  
who then joining their assembly, made  
so honourable a report to the Queen  
that she ever after esteemed the Frater.



cultivated peace and friendship,  
 brotherly love, and arts and sciences  
 without meddling in the affairs of  
 Church or State. Sir Thomas Sachwell  
 was succeeded in the Grand Mastership  
 by "Sir Thomas Gresham G.M. 1567"  
 "Charles Howard, Lord Higham G.M. [1590]"  
 "George Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon G.M. [1588]"  
 James 1<sup>st</sup> being a freemason, patronized  
 the fraternity, and bore their royal  
 G.M.; (his abd. crowned heads are  
 of masons, by prerogative, although they  
 appoint some noble or eminent Bro: to  
 act as G.M. under them). This was the  
 case with King James, who, upon finding  
 Bro: Inigo Jones worthy of that high  
 office, appointed him G.M. and general  
 surveyor of all his works in England.  
 During the Grand Mastership of Inigo Jones,  
 the best craftsmen from all parts  
 resorted to him. He established excellent

bye laws in the lodges, and made  
them like the schools, or academies of  
designers in Italy. He also held the  
quarterly communication of the Grand  
Lodge of Masters and Wardens, and the  
annual general Assembly and feast on  
St. John's day, when he was annually  
rechosen till 1618 when William  
Earl of Pembroke was chosen G. M., and  
being approved by the King, he appointed  
Inigo Jones, his P. G. M. -