

Notes on the  
Formation of the  
Halas Abbey Lodge  
No. 5407.

Reprinted from the  
Minute Book.

With Compliments to  
Wor. Bro. Fred Rawson T.P.G.D. Cerms.  
12<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1934

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Being very keen to make progress in the wonderful work of masonry, and finding myself in the centre of a large and growing district which was without a Masonic Lodge, neither could I find a suitable building in the vicinity in which to meet. I approached a number of influential brethren of my own province of Warwickshire, including a number of the Past Masters of my own lodge, enquiring as to the chances of my forming a new lodge. Unfortunately I was unable to secure the support of anyone. Some saying and others thinking that I was too young a mason to take on such a big task, as I had not reached the fourth anniversary of my initiation into the craft. Some said that times were too bad to start such a project; naturally I was very disappointed at making no progress.

In discussing my difficulties with my wife, who is very keen about my work in masonry, she surprised me by saying "If you want a new lodge, form one yourself and build a temple to hold your meetings in." Well, that statement quietened me for a few days.

Believing this could be accomplished I next called on Worshipful Brother Henry Sowden, whom I had found to be a very sound man and an excellent mason, and invited him to become the first master of a new lodge that I was about to commence the formation of. After listening to my proposal he consented to stand. He asked "Where should we hold our meetings?" I replied "Build a place of our own." That statement quietened him for a time.

It was then decided that I should prepare plans for a suitable building. On the 9th of November, 1932 I sought an interview with the Secretary of the Lodge of Perseverance No. 576, this being the nearest Masonic Lodge. I found that the Secretary was a very distinguished mason, being Worshipful Brother W. D. Abbiss, Assistant Grand Standard Bearer England, Past Provincial Grand Warden and Secretary of the lodge for over twenty years. I told him my business was masonic. He made me very comfortable and said "Fire away." I told him that I was contemplating forming a new Masonic Lodge for the Quinton district and would like to know if arrangements could be made for the use of the lodge rooms at Halesowen for a period of say up to five years, during which time a building fund could be raised to commence the erection of a Masonic Temple at Quinton, on land that was in my possession. Worshipful Brother Abbiss was interested and helpful. He promised to lay the matter before the Past Masters and Officers of the lodge for their consideration; in the meantime he advised

me to see the treasurer of the Lodge, Very Worshipful Brother Seth S. Somers, Past Grand Treasurer, England, Past Provincial Grand Warden.

On November 10th I had an interview with him at the works at Halesowen. He received me in a very kindly manner, and after listening to my proposals he also promised his support.

On November 11th I reported progress to Worshipful Brother Sowden. On November 14th I called on Brother William Merrick and offered him the position of Senior Warden in the proposed new lodge, which he accepted, at the same time promising to make a handsome contribution to the building fund. I then decided to put myself in as Junior Warden.

In the meantime Worshipful Brother Sowden had approached Worshipful Brother Ernest Baildon, offering him the office of Secretary, which he accepted. On November 16th I reported progress to Worshipful Brother Abbiss, he expressed his pleasure on the progress I had made.

On November 17th I had an interview with Worshipful Brother H. V. Stanton, Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, Past Provincial Grand Warden, Provincial Grand Secretary of Worcestershire. After explaining the object of my visit he told me that he saw no reason why I should not proceed with the matter.

On November 18th I paid a visit to Brother A. Brown, The Master of the Lodge of Perseverance, asking for his support. Again I met with success on his promising to give the matter his support.

On November 19th Worshipful Brother Sowden introduced Brothers Leonard Howles and T. E. Boothby; they were appointed Senior and Junior Deacons.

On November 25th I received a letter from Worshipful Brother Abbiss informing that at a meeting of the Past Masters and Officers of the Lodge of Perseverance my proposals of November 8th had been favourably received and that they had unanimously decided to support my application for a new lodge.

On December 13th, in company with Worshipful Brother Sowden I attended a meeting of the Lodge of Perseverance and my proposals were discussed in a very able manner by various officers of the lodge. The full support of the lodge being secured, I received a letter from the Provincial Grand Secretary asking for an advance list of founders for the use of the Provincial Grand Master. At this stage I was able to send in a list of fifteen names.

On December 19th, as all space on the petition was filled, I had to make application to the Provincial Grand Secretary for another form of petition, which was duly received.

I paid a number of visits to Worshipful Brother Abbiss, who always made me very welcome and was very helpful in discussing various matters including the fee to be paid for the use of the lodge rooms at Halesowen. A meeting of founders was then called various matters were discussed including the name of the proposed lodge, and on the proposal of Brother Leonard Howles it was decided to name it "The Malas Abbey Lodge." Brother Shuter was given permission to carry on all necessary negotiations pending the next meeting of the founders.

January 9th saw the petition completed, which I then handed to the Secretary of the Lodge of Perseverance for his examination and approval.

January 10th this was one of the happiest days I had experienced since the commencement of the task of forming the Lodge. On this day Worshipful Brother Sowden and myself attended a full meeting of the Lodge of Perseverance. When the petition was explained to the brethren and the names of the founders were read out, the Worshipful Master and Officers spoke in favour of it; the proposition that it be signed was supported by all members present. To see all this done was very pleasing to myself. The petition was then signed by the Worshipful Master and the Wardens. The number of names on the petition was twenty-two.

On January 15th Worshipful Brother Abbiss and

myself had the pleasure of attending on Worshipful Brother Stanton, Provincial Grand Secretary, at his residence at Stourbridge, to hand over to him the petition and clearance certificates, also a letter to the Most Worshipful Grand Master, stating our reasons for the formation of the new lodge. Worshipful Brother Stanton examined and approved of same.

On January 19th I heard from the Provincial Grand Secretary to the effect that the Provincial Grand Master had approved the petition and had signed the same, and that it was his intention to forward the application to Grand Lodge; at this stage I wish to place on record the very dilatory action of some of the Secretaries of lodges for the way they treated the application, of some of the founders for their clearance certificates, which action caused me a great deal of unnecessary work.

On February 9th the Provincial Grand Secretary informed me that he had been advised that the petition had been submitted to the advisors of the Most Worshipful Grand Master and that we should hear the result in due course. He also enquired if I was acting as Secretary to the founders.

On February 23rd a meeting attended by the founders was held at Belle Vue. A report of progress was given by Brother Shuter, who also submitted alternative designs for the lodge banner and founders' jewels; these were approved subject to slight alterations.

A draft set of Bye-Laws for the lodge were also approved and on the proposal of Worshipful Brother J. T. Brockhouse, Provincial Senior Grand Deacon, Staffs., Brother Albert Shuter was elected Secretary and Treasurer to the founders and was given authority to do all that was necessary in completing the work in hand. Brother Leonard Howles was suitably thanked for placing the room at the disposal of the founders for the meeting.

On the 4th of March the Secretary to the founders received a communication from the Provincial Grand Secretary informing him that the petition for the new lodge had been approved and that the warrant would be issued in due course.

On the 13th of March the Provincial Grand Secretary informed me that the warrant was ready and could be had on payment of the usual fees to Grand Lodge.

March 16th I had an interview with the Provincial Grand Secretary to arrange a date for the consecration of the lodge and also had the pleasure of seeing the warrant. A meeting of founders was held on the 18th of March to receive the Secretary's report of progress.

Brother Leonard Howles was again thanked for the use of the room for the meeting.

On the 21st of March I was informed that the Provincial Grand Master had fixed May 11th, 1933 as



the date for the Consecration Ceremony. A further meeting of founders was then held and the Secretary to the founders was instructed to make the final arrangements for the luncheon and the Consecration Ceremony which was duly held at the Masonic Rooms at Halesowen on the 11th day of May, 1933.

I have been prompted to chronicle the events that occurred from the time that I was inspired to form the new Masonic Lodge, by a desire for a permanent record to be in existence for the benefit of those masons who will follow me and the brethren who rallied round me in the project, so that in years to come they will know what was and can be accomplished by determination, tenacity, and the will to succeed. My experience has also revealed that a very large percentage of the brethren of the majority of Masonic Lodges throughout the English constitution are ignorant of the circumstances which led up to the formation of their mother lodge for the simple reason that there is nothing recorded for their enlightenment. I sincerely hope that my humble effort will accomplish this purpose.

Yours Faithfully & Fraternaly  
Albert. Skuter

Initiated Lodge of Peace and Harmony No. 3929  
22nd day of December, 1928.