

Rhodesia has been much in the news of late, so let me tell you a little about this lovely country, its ancient crafts, mysterious legends and its inhabitants, and in particular an insight into the Masonic fraternity and how it has developed.

Let us make a lightening tour of this glorious country in mythical "Darkest Africa". I lived in Gwelo, a small industrial town in the Midlands of Rhodesia only 100 miles from Bulawayo.. (The Place of Killing) so named by King Lobengula during the Matabele Wars, and 170 miles from Salisbury the capitol, where the Pioneer Column first hoisted the Union Jack in 1890 on a spot which today is a colourful park with flower sellers, fountains, and jacaranda trees overlooked by majestic skyscrapers.

Rhodesia thrives on industry, with the manufacture of shoes, motor vehicles, foodstuffs, beverages, clothing, glass, steel, abestos products, building materials, furniture and cigarettes to mention but a few of its products. Its mineral wealth is fabulous and agriculture most successful.

Exotic flowers bloom all the year round, and within a radius of a few hundred miles there exists many places of interest - The Eastern Highlands overlooking the Portuguese Africa border, so rich in breathtaking scenic drives, magnificent waterfalls which cascade hundreds of feet to the gorges below, and ancient stone ruins of a forgotten people who once inhabited these parts.

A drive will take you to the Kariba Dam with its 420 ft high wall carrying a 40 ft wide road across its 2,025 ft. length. Six flood gates are opened at intervals during the year to allow the flow of water to the lower reaches of the river - the great Zambesi. The lake 203 X 22 miles in expanse, is justifiably claimed to be the worlds largest artificial lake, famous for its fishing and beauty. **WANKIE NATIONAL PARK**

A days journey from Kariba is the Victoria Falls - the worlds mightest curtain of water falling 384 ft. and over a mile wide. Unchallenged and unsurpassed the Falls are one of the most beautiful sights in Africa,

/ Africa, possibly in the world.

A visit to the Zimbabwe Ruins and the Matopos Hills is of great interest for here magnificent granite ranges, rivers, and lakes challenge the fascination of the ancient ruins and bushman paintings. Clear evidence has been found of five periods of occupation - one dating as far back as 300 BC. One theory is that gold taken from these parts by the Egyptians was used for King Solomons Temple, and in the Queen of Shebas jewels....

This now brings me to tell you a little about the Mesonic development in the country, you have very kindly given me a wide field and in the time we have available I will endeavour to show you that in this day and age, we in Britain are very fortunate in having our Temples, rituals and ceremonies all tailor made, at times I have wondered if the genuine secrets have been transmitted pure and un-polluted... we all believe ours is right.

During my stay in Africa which was close on 25 years, I have visited The English, Irish, Scottish, Netherlantic, in many parts of the world and this has helped me to form this opinion..... such lovely names come to mind. Cecil John Rhodes, Highway, Umvoti, Fort Jameson, Umbogintwini. Manica, Selukwe etc..

OFFICIAL VISITS.... DISTRICT GRAND OFFICIAL SUPPORT(S.A.) VIC FALLS, WANKIE.. TEMP... JOHANNESBURG... CAPETOWN.. PROVINCES... ENTERTAINMENT & FESTIVE BOARD... AFRICAN GREETINGS.... TEMPLES... CEREMONIES... DISTANCES MASONIC HOUSING SUPPORTING SENIOR CITIZENS..... JEANNIE BOGGIE (MAJOR) organ Scottish EX P.M. IAN SMITH... JOCK, REGALIA PERSONALITY (IRISH) ST. KITTS FUNERAL

Time Permitting extracts from the First Ten Years, see separate cover.....

1. MEETINGS - TAKING FOOD - RIVERS, FLOODS, FARMS
2. MASONIC PROJECTS - HOMES - BOWLS, GOLF, - NO CURRENCY UK

THE FIRST TEN YEARS (RHODESIA)

As we all well know Cecil John Rhodes was responsible for many things in this country, but of particular interest for us tonight, is the fact, Rhodesia Lodge 2479 E.C. Bulawayo of which he was a member, had interested himself in the provision of the first Temple, and in turn, and from the information which is available, it may be claimed that Rhodesia owes its name to the Lodge which first designated itself at a preliminary meeting held on 3rd October 1891.

It was on the 20th September 1891 that the first meeting of Masons was convened - to appoint the sub committee, it was the work of this committee to wait upon the officials of the British South Africa Company and to apply for (4) four stands for the purpose of erecting a Masonic Temple.

The minutes of a meeting held on the 3rd October 1891 show that (10) ten brethren attended including Bro. Hugo am Ende, who proposed that the Lodge be named RHODESIA. A draft of the bye laws of the Lodge was approved and co-operation of the Sister Constitutions Lodges was invited. It would seem in January 1892 difficulty was experienced in some brethren getting clearance so that the application to Grand Lodge for a Charter could be properly supported.

At one meeting only (5) brethren had their papers in order, so business was postponed for another 3 months, whilst plans went ahead for the building of the Temple. At a meeting in April of the same year 1892, it is recorded that Cecil John Rhodes would present the furniture. In October 10 members were present at a meeting, each subscribed 5/- for a minute book and towards current expenses, a minute book appears to have been purchased for 15/- but its fate is unknown.

For the first 6 months of 1893 no record is available of any business transacted. It would appear the first Charter was lost with other mails in a flooded river, the new Charter was eventually received dated the 3rd July 1893 and was addressed to Bro. Rev. Geo. H. Eva Lodge 2479 - the first intimation of the number of the Lodge in the Registrar of the Grand Lodge of England. Thus it was over 2½ years since Bro. am Ende first set movements afoot to establish the Lodge. The Warrant is signed by H.R.H. Prince of Wales King Edward VII.

The next 6 months records, tenders for the Temple, the raising of mortgages, the provision of a canvas roof, as there was no wood in the town, the clearing of vegetation and the provision of fencing. The first Temple it seems has now been completed, the main structure was of brick walls, with dagga plaster, brick floor, and limbo ceiling. The Matabele Rebellion no doubt interfered to some extent with regular Lodge Meetings. A Brother Kennedy apparantly returned from the front in 1894, and at a meeting announced his departure to England on furlough, and gave an under-taking that he would call on the Grand Lodge Secretary and explain that the reason which was not concntrated was due mainly to the unsettled conditions in Mashonaland. In December 1894 it was decided to concentrate the Lodge, this being a Sunday morning at 11. o'clock..One letter records " I regret that Sunday should be chosen for this purpose and do protest that Freemasonry should set itself up as a rival to the Church. The writer adds " I am glad to say that I am not alone in holding this opinion, and that other brethren will protest by being absent from the meeting ".

At long last the Dedication ceremony was held Saturday 12th January 1895, the record in its preamble reads, " After an unavoidable delay of nearly 2 years chiefly owing to circumstances which have influenced the whole of the territories, some 26 men of the Masonic fraternity met to be present etc. The first regular meeting of the Rhodesia Lodge 2479 was held immediately afterwards. The Charter was read, and no business transacted.

The success of the Lodge and its regular working seems to be now well established, at its second meeting 15 candidates were duly elected for initiation. Salisbury as it was in 1895 had little to offer, and they made an offer for the use of the Temple building for (£100) one hundred pounds including a retiring room for one night each month for twelve months provided the same be floored, lighting, and made fit for dancing. This was approved for the said dances on nights which there was no Masonic meeting. A reference to mail delays seems worthy of mention, an invitation to an Installation ceremony in South Africa was received in February 1895 and it took 25 days to travel to Salisbury, Probably several of the Ox trails were impassable owing to heavy rains.

Here, we have some reference to lighting, in a letter to the Secretary " the candels which arraigned safely from Johannesburg so promptly forwarded, for which a Postal Order for 38/- is enclosed. One wonders whether this outlay was for lighting the Lodge or the dance floor requirements.

In April 1895 is traced the first order to London, for aprons, collars, envelopes, seals, music, carpets etc. to a total value of (80) eighty pounds. The carpet to be 30ft. X 15'9", to be packed in a tin lined case and to be forwarded vis Beira, the rest to be made into small parcels and forwarded by parcel post. In the year 1895 no fewer than 23 meetings were held, the versatility of the Officers may be deduced from this record, and the number of candidates dealt with. Great credit must be given to those pioneers in the Masonic Circle of Rhodesia for the unrest in the country, and the insuridity of life and property cannot be more graphically illustrated than by a minute passed on the 9th January 1896, recording a telegram sent to a British resident in Pretoria" Can you inform us if our Master is amongst the dead with Jameson."(Dr Jameson raid)

Cecil John Rhodes, the founder of Rhodesia, was initiated in Oxford but as far as can be traced he took no active part in the working of The Rhodesia Lodge. Transport difficulties were not solely confined to the limits of Southern Africa, this is the era of the sailing ship, for although a minute records an organ for the Temple being ordered from London in 1895 it is read from a meeting in 1896 that the tyler declined the cheque for £25 twenty five pounds for fees voted him, and desired that in view of our having used the organ belonging to the Westlyn Chapel that the five pound to be applied and donated to the Church and the remaining £20 twenty to be used for the new organ. Both were approved. By January 1897 after some debate, it was decided to go ahead with the erection of a new Temple, members were invited to subscribe for (£30000) three thousand pounds debentures at 10% interest. It may be assumed in 1898 that the organ had arrived it seems it had been damaged in transit, the quality of the music was discussed at a meeting, and it was " agreed that nothing could be done to improve it " by April 1898 the contract had been placed for the building at a cost of £3260 pounds and to be completed in four months, and the builder to be subject to a fine of one pound a day for any extra days taken. The foundation stone was laid and dedication was held on the 24th June 1898 with Masonic honours, current newspapers, coins, stamps and plan of the building were deposited with the stone 31 Officers and brethren attended. A good Ball was held in the evening. When the new Temple was nearing completion enthusiasm for detail were abundant. Chandeliers, were ordered from Cape-Town, complete with all fittings, with four arms, with extra lamps wicks and globes. The Lodge was consolidated and plans were afoot for

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/4 ...for the formation of D.G.Lodge, the Bulawayo Lodge was advancing its claim to its being sited there instead of Salisbury. In 1899 a brother claims to have lost his G.L. Certificate which misfortune was due to having been destroyed by ants, and another incident records the destroying completely of a brothers apron and other Lodge property by white ants in the Temple. At the consecration ceremony two B.Brethren were posted outside owing to the ventilators allowing more sound to travel outside than was good for the listeners who were present. As so often happens even in the early days members who were in default in paying the usual subs, on one occasion those in default were given a deadline and those not paid would have their names posted on the board in the Lodge. This appears to have the right effect as no further mention is made.

Charity has and always will be close to our hearts, and so it was in the early days, in 1900 regular donations were made to R.M. School for Girls and Boys, also in the same year many of the brethren were asking for clearance certificates to go to the Boer war, at the same time the paint work on the new Temple had suffered by the exposure to the sun so orders were given for painting with two coats of paint the side doors and windows, "the front door to be grained in first class style" in the same year a Lodge of Instruction was formed and constituted, cultural advancement was also taken care of cinderella dances, social parties and picnics were arranged, and plans were debated for the eventual establishment of a Rhodesian Masonic Education Fund, and the inauguration of the Lodge Library. Well brethren.... here was just a little of the history of the first ten years (10) in Masonry in Rhodesia, and I think it fair and true to say, the old chaps, pioneers each and every one left us much to be thankful for they were truly great and went a long way to meet their obligations. "If in the length of C/toe pleading no excuse except sickness or the pressing emergency of my public or private avocation" Today I often wonder if we really take this as well as our predecessors.

In conclusion let me say it was in 1893 hostilities broke out between the administration and Lobengula which resulted in the death of that Chief and the occupation and settlement of Matabeleland. In May 1895 the name " Rhodesia" was officially adopted to designate the combined territories of Mashonaland and Matabeleland..