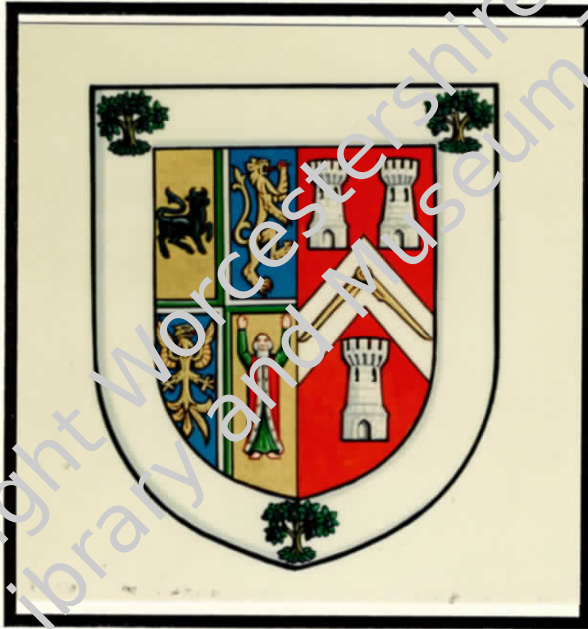


PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF WORCESTERSHIRE

CELEBRATION DINNER

**150th Anniversary of the
First Annual Meeting**



**Thursday 4th September 1997
Masonic Hall - Halesowen**

PRESIDENT

R W Brother B M Cooper JP
Provincial Grand Master

Grace by W Brother C E S Harris PGStB

Director of Ceremonies
W Brother D E Hopper PAGDC
Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies

TOAST LIST

The Queen and the Craft
Proposed by the President

The M W The Grand Master - HRH The Duke of Kent
Proposed by the President

SPEAKERS

W Brother R G H Goddard MA, PSGD
Assistant Provincial Grand Master
"A Short History of Freemasonry in
the Province of Worcestershire."

The R W Provincial Grand Master will introduce:
W Brother N Sebright
Training and Education Officer - UGLE
"Openness in Freemasonry"

Vote of Thanks
Proposed by **W Brother H G Wilson**
IPM Wythall Lodge No 5665

MENU

**Dressed Crab
with Mixed Salad Leaves**

Ramekin of Worcester Mushrooms

(Mushrooms cooked with Double Worcester
Cheese from Anstys Farm near Worcester)

Vale of Evesham Chicken
(Supreme of Chicken in a Cream Sauce)
Seasonal Vegetables & Potatoes

Raspberry Pavlova

(Fresh Local Raspberries, Double Cream
and light Meringue)

Selection of Cheeses

Coffee and Mints

WINES : 1996 Spring Gully - Shiraz/Cabernet
1996 Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine

THE FORMATION OF THE MASONIC PROVINCE OF WORCESTERSHIRE

17 AUGUST 1847

This evening's dinner celebrates the sesquicentenary of the 'modern' Province of Worcestershire. One hundred and fifty years is not very old in provincial terms – Cheshire, for instance, dates its formation from 1725 – but it is false to assume that the Masonic concept of Worcestershire did not exist prior to 1847. There were two early but historically isolated Provincial Grand Masters, Sir Robert de Cornwall from 1753 to 1756 and John Dent from 1792 to 1826, but these were appointments of patronage and their holders absentees. There were also at least two Deputy Provincial Grand Masters during John Dent's tenure of office, William Thomson 1802-22 and A Lam Dods 1822-25, both members of the Worcester Lodge. But there was no provincial structure as we recognise it today.

Dr Adam Dods tried to rectify this situation. At the regular meeting of his lodge in September 1822 he gave notice of his intention to call a meeting of his own and the other two extant Worcestershire lodges – Faithful at Kidderminster and Mercy & Truth at Evesham (the only two Worcestershire lodges to have been erased since the Union, in 1844 and 1833 respectively), Harmonic at Dudley being then in obedience – in order to hold a Provincial Grand Lodge and to appoint Officers. This was scheduled for noon on 2 October 1822 at the Reindeer Inn, Worcester, and duly took place, twenty-eight members of the three lodges being present. However, the Worcester Lodge subsequently refused to endorse the proposal that £16 be taken from Lodge funds and put into a Provincial Lodge Fund for the purchase of Provincial Grand Lodge regalia. A second Provincial meeting was held in 1824, but the same disagreement continued and the attempt collapsed.

On John Dent's death at the end of 1826 the Worcester Lodge petitioned Grand Lodge for a replacement, but was told that such appointment was the personal prerogative of the Most Worshipful the Grand Master, H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex. In fact, no appointment was forthcoming despite frequent petitions from Worcester, and in 1831 the Worcester Lodge refused to pay its dues to Grand Lodge in protest. For some obscure reason Grand Lodge took seven years to react, then threatened to erase the rebel lodge unless its members recanted. This they did with considerable reluctance but, although the Board of General Purposes had empowered the Grand Registrar to appoint a Deputy Provincial Grand Master who could then organise a Provincial Grand Lodge, they appear by this time to have had enough and no further initiative in the matter came from Worcester.

The successful initiative came from Kidderminster. There had been difficulty in founding the Royal Standard Lodge (which now meets at Dudley) in 1844 and its members became convinced that this would not have been the case had a Provincial Grand Lodge existed. So in 1846 one of the Past Masters, Dr. William Roden, decided, as his tellow medical practitioner Dr. Dods had done a quarter of a century before, that the best way to succeed was to organise one and then apply to Grand Lodge for endorsement. Accordingly he wrote to the other four extant Worcestershire lodges – Worcester, Harmonic (up and running again), Hope & Charity and Semper Fidelis – inviting their members to meet at Kidderminster in February 1847. This meeting was well attended and strongly supported his initiative. Further meetings produced an agreed sharing of offices and Dr. Roden negotiated with the Grand Registrar, Alexander Dobie, for formal recognition. The latter complied and on 17 August 1847, together with the Grand Secretary and the Grand Tyler, formally opened the first official Provincial Grand Lodge at the Guildhall, Worcester, suitably appointing Dr. Roden as the Deputy Provincial Grand Master. The 'modern' era of the Masonic Province of Worcestershire had begun.