

17th October, 1947.

I am conscious of the honour of being allowed to address this assembly on an historic occasion. Our brethren of Godson Lodge, more than 50 years ago, had vision. They saw "the light", and determined to assist others, both then and in the future, to find that same light, by establishing the Godson Chapter. Not one of the petitioners remains with us today, but fortunately there are a few of the earlier exaltees, who may now be regarded as the old men who dream dreams. This paper is intended to assist in the stimulation of those dreams.

Usually, any attempt to survey briefly the history of a lodge or a chapter, after a period of 50 years or more, becomes a recital of names known to but few living persons of another generation. My attempt shall be to provide at least a few items of general interest and to clothe what might be regarded as a skeleton of dry bones with a little flesh.

The consecration ceremony took place at the Talbot Hotel, Oldbury, on Tuesday, 20th July, 1897 at 3 p.m., and it will be observed that this was in the Diamond Jubilee year of the late Queen Victoria. Secured to one of the fly-leaves of our first minute book is a printed programme of Masonic celebrations and rejoicings in the Albert Hall, London, on the 14th June, 1897.

A small memento of our consecration, now in the possession of the Chapter, is the founder's jewel worn by the late Ex. Companion Harry Richardson, the first Scribe E., who was kind enough to hand it to me at the time that he attended the modest celebrations of the Jubilee of Godson Lodge, in 1941, at which he was amongst the first batch of initiates. He was appointed organist on the night of his initiation, and remained an officer throughout the long period of his membership.

Roast Lamb	Roast ducks
Stuffed chickens	York ham
Royal arch pudding	
Jellies	Creams
Devilled shrimps	Cheese straws
Dessert	
Coffee	

The ceremony of consecration was performed by the M.E. Comp. A. F. Godson, Master of Arts, Member of Parliament, Grand Superintendent of Worcestershire, assisted by

Ex. Comps. W. Waldron as H.
W. T. Page as J.
A. B. Rowe as N.
and G. B. Buttery as D.C.

(many of us will remember with some pleasure that delightful old gentleman, Ex. Comp. Page, as Deputy Prov. Grand Master).

The three principals designate were

Ex. Comps. Enoch Wood, M.E.Z.
G. B. Buttery, D.
and Comp. Herbert Marley, J.

Another memento of the date of the consecration is a copy of the menu and toast list used after the ceremony, and now safely secured to a fly-leaf at the front of our first minute book. I found it amongst the papers left behind by our late Treasurer, Ex. Comp. W.T. Davies, my immediate predecessor in that office. The toast list used today is much the same generally as 50 years ago; but not so the menu. There were giants in the land in those days, (hungry giants and no Mr. Strachey) and perhaps they worked very hard, thus needing much to maintain their health and strength. Details of the menu may be worth recording, namely :-

Clear turtle soup	
Curbot and prawn sauce	
Whitbait	Lobster cutlets
Stewed kidneys and mushrooms	
Roast Lamb	Roast ducks
Boiled chickens	York ham
Royal arch pudding	
Jellies	Creams
Devilled shrimps	Cheese straws
Dessert	
Coffee	

Attached to the first fly-leaf of the first minute book is an account rendered by Spencer & Co. (established before 1800), 15, Great Queen Street, London W.C., for robes, sceptres, banners, collars, furniture, jewels, coals, etc., with hire of consecrating vessels. After an allowance of 20% cash discount, the total is £70. 7. 10, and the receipt is over a penny stamp. What would be the cost today? Probably as much as £300 or more.

The minutes of the consecration are very full and clear, in the handwriting of Comp. Harry Richardson, who was then Surveyor to the Urban District Council of Oldbury. The list of petitioners includes many well-known names :-

A. F. Godson	Comp. William H. Kendrick	S. J. Sadler
Enoch Wood	William R. Hampton	W. F. Vernon
Abraham Green	Fred Richards	A. L. North
Geo. B. Buttery	W. T. Davies	John E. Mitchell
J. H. H. Manley	Harry Richardson	W. F. Smallman
William H. Richardson	T. R. Benser	C. H. Sharpe
		William Waldron

Many of these petitioners were members of the Royal Standard Chapter of Dudley, No. 438. They include one M.P., four solicitors, four surgeons, three brewers, two brickmasters and two architects.

These minutes embody in full a copy of the petition; and copy of a resolution passed by Godson Lodge on 27th November, 1895 giving consent to the petition and signed by

J. Herbert H. Manley,	(W.M.)
John Round	(S.W.)
and W. H. Kendrick	(J.W.)

This is dated 31st March, 1897.

This certificate follows, namely :

of the first convocation of 20th July 1897 were never signed, although some of the minutes of the third convocation held on 25th October, 1897

Recommended by

A. F. Godson, P.G.A.S. Eng.
Grand Superintendent for Worcestershire.

This is dated 14th April, 1897.

There follows in the minute book a full copy of the charter given at London, 5th May, 1897.

The appointment of officers was as follows :-

Ex Comp.	Enoch Wood	Z.	qualifi-
"	G. B. Buttery	H.	together.
"	H. Manley	J.	
"	H. Richardson	S.E.	
"	F. Richards	S.N.	
"	T. R. Bomser	Treas.	more
"	W. H. Kendrick	P.S.	
"	W. T. Davies	1st Asst. S.	
"	A. L. North	2nd Asst. S.	
"	W. H. Richardson	D.C.	
"	W. F. Vernon	Steward	
"	S. J. Sadler	"	

Among the candidates proposed on this occasion we find the names of

Charles Showell	(brewer)
Joseph Matthews	(brickmaster)
F. H. Ludlow	(brewer)

I cannot find that bro. Ludlow passed through the ceremony of exaltation at any date. as a joining member; and no less than six candidates, including Bros. Walter H. Hand and Alfred G. Eglov, were exalted. Thanks are recorded to Comp. Charles Showell "for his munificent present of the new furniture to the Chapter", and to Ex. Comp. Enoch Wood for his gift of an organ.

The minutes of the consecration and of the first convocation of 20th July, 1897 were never signed, although according to the minutes of the third convocation, held on 25th October, 1897,

"the minutes of the last convocation held 10th August, 1898, and those of the consecration of the Chapter, held on 20th July, 1897 were duly confirmed and signed."

The minutes of the second convocation also remain unsigned.

For quite a long time the minutes record ceremonies as being "impressively" performed. Later on, this qualification is varied, but subsequently is omitted altogether.

The third convocation records the reception of more names of candidates well known to many of us, such as

Bros. James P. Moore	(Theatres)
Walter H. Hand	(Collieries)
Alfred G. Uglow	(Bricks)
Thomas Jones	(Rates)
Edgar Webster	(Bricks)
John Hoond	(Painter)
Adam Cooke	(Gas manager)

Ex.Comp. Hand became our first Grand Chapter officer and was the only member to occupy twice the chair of first principal of this Chapter.

On this occasion Ex. Comp. George Salter (Springs - with West Bromwich) was accepted as a joining member; and no less than six candidates, including Bros. Walter H. Hand and Alfred G. Uglow, were exalted. Thanks are recorded to Comp. Charles Showell "for his munificent present of the new furniture to the Chapter", and to Ex. Comp. Enoch Wood for his gift of an organ.

At the fourth convocation, held 14th January, 1898, bros. J. P. Moore, Edgar Webster, John Round, and Adam Cooke, were exalted; and the original bye-laws were read and approved.

The summons to the sixth convocation for 31st July, 1898, is in black ink instead of being in red ink as usual. This was the day of the installation, and Comp. T. B. Pouser, the first Treasurer, and also Treasurer-elect, had passed away. He was a solicitor practising in Oldbury, a founder of the Chapter, and a very popular man. Companion W. F. Vernon (solicitor) was appointed Treasurer. Companion W. T. Davies was appointed Scribe E.

The minutes of the seventh convocation held on 14th October, 1898, make the first reference to the M.E. Grand Superitendent as Sir A. F. Godson. He was present and occupied the first principal's chair for a time. On this occasion Bro. William Morgan (printers' manager) was elected and exalted. (He is said to be the author of that amusing Black Country book "Ower Anuk"). He was invested as organist at the next convocation - the eighth, on 13th January, 1899.

The ninth convocation, held 14th April, 1899, saw the election and exaltation of Bro. John Dallow (builder) of Noah's Ark Lodge. His name is well maintained in our Chapter today by sons and grandsons, and his memory remains green.

The tenth convocation, held 14th July, 1899, dealt with the installation of Principals, and virtually nothing more.

In the minutes of the eleventh convocation, held 13th October, 1899, (which was followed by the Provincial Grand Chapter, meeting under our Godson banner) is to be found

the name of Comp. S. S. Somers among the visitors; so that in two more years we may hope to celebrate another jubilee, and to extend a very warm welcome to our much beloved and esteemed Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, although not, let us hope, as a mere visitor on that occasion.

The minutes of the twelfth convocation, held 12th January, 1900, are probably unique by the fact that no less than fifteen Grand Chapter certificates were presented.

The thirteenth convocation, on 12th April, 1900, is the first occasion so far when no "work" was recorded; but an emergency convocation on 27th April, was called to elect principals and officers for the ensuing year and to present six Grand Chapter certificates.

The summons to attend the fourteenth convocation on 13th July, 1900, was to present certificates and to transact general business.

The summons to attend the fifteenth convocation, on 12th October, was issued by Comp. Thos. Jones, described by himself as Scribe E., who, although elected, had not so far been appointed as such; and in the names of Ex. Comp. H. Richardson as Z., Ex. Comp. Fred Richards as H. and Ex. Comp. W. T. Davies as J., all previous to their respective installations as such. indeed, with the exception of Comp. W. T. Davies, they were so installed at that same convocation, and the minutes of the previous convocation were signed on 12th October (the same date) by the M.E.Z., Ex. Comp. W. H. Kendrick, who later in the proceedings became I.P.Z. All other officers as previously elected were also

W. T. DARLOW.
P.P.G.Sol.
Gordon Chapter

invested. It was at this meeting that the dates of future meetings were approved as on the second Fridays of October (installation), December, February, and April. There has since been no change.

Comp. W. T. Davies was installed as J. at the sixteenth convocation, held on 11th January, 1901, but the minutes, although recorded on 12th April as "read, confirmed, and signed" actually have never been so signed.

The summons to the seventeenth convocation, on 12th April, 1901, was printed in purple and black, masonic mourning having been ordered because of the passing of her late Majesty, Queen Victoria.

Our first minute book shows external signs of having been in a fire, and of having received a supply of water; but very fortunately the whole of the contents remain perfectly legible.

I believe that our present oldest member is Ex. Comp. T. E. Waring, who was exalted on 8th October, 1909. The minute book in recording the 50th convocation, says that the ceremony "was carried through in a most interesting and impressive manner". Ex. Comp. Waring became our third Grand Chapter officer (P.G.A.D.C.) in 1942.

At the 55th convocation, on 9th December, 1910, Bro. R. M. Hadley was exalted "in a most impressive manner" by M.E. Comp. W. H. Hand, Z., Ex. Comp. H. Richardson, H. and Ex. Comp. T. Jones, J; and now he is our second member to become a Grand Chapter Officer (P.G.A.D.C.), in 1941, and he has attained to high rank in certain other degrees. He is our second oldest member.

C. T. BARLOW.

P.P.G. Soj.

Godson Chapter No. 2385.