



**PERSEVERANCE LODGE OF MARK  
MASTER MASONS NO. 733**

## **LODGE HISTORY**

**1921 - 2021**



## The Beginning

The earliest entry in the first minute book is dated 7th February 1920 and relates to a "Preliminary Meeting" which was held at Hayward House, Halesowen, to discuss the formation of a new Mark Lodge.

The meeting was attended, and chaired by, Wor. Bro. James Jones, Deputy Provincial Grand Master (Worcestershire) together with three other members of Provincial Grand Lodge (including the Provincial Secretary) together with 10 members of Godson Lodge, No. 330 "Godson Lodge". The purpose of the meeting was stated as being, "to make arrangements for the formation of a Mark Master Masons Lodge at Halesowen" and that the Godson Lodge "were pleased to recommend the petition", and, furthermore, putting forward a number of their members to be Founders.

At the above meeting Bro. S. S. Somers proposed and Bro. J. Bingham seconded that, "That a Mark Masons lodge be formed at Halesowen" and, furthermore, "That the name of the Mark Master Mason's Lodge be Perseverance Lodge of Mark Master Masons".

Having ascertained that a Lodge was to be formed and having given it a name, the meeting set about agreeing the fees to be charged to members as follows:-

- ◆ Founders Fee — Three Guineas
- ◆ Advancement Fee — Four Guineas
- ◆ Annual Subscription — Two Guineas
- ◆ Joining Fee — Two guineas

To give the reader a present-day comparison, I have used the website <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppoweruk/> to give a comparative value of the Advancement Fee which would be approximately £182.20. Therefore, if you joined the Lodge as an advancee, then, together with your annual subscription, it would cost you in the region of £273.30 to do so.

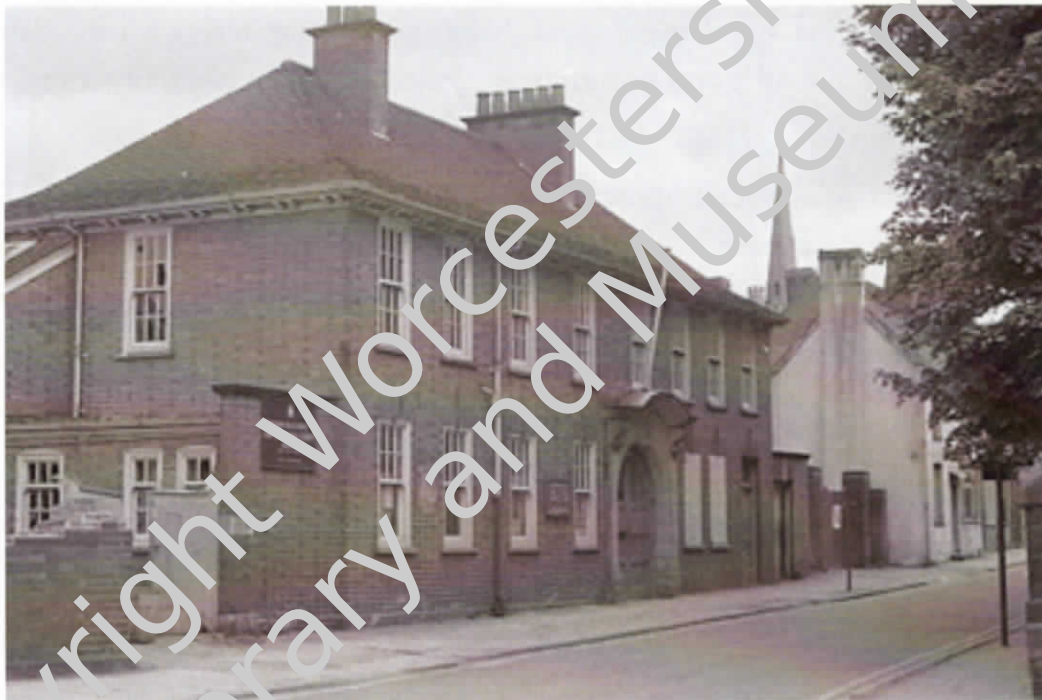
All that remained was for the meeting to agree and vote upon who should be the Founding Worshipful Master. Having read out the eligible Brethren, it was proposed and seconded that Bro. S. S. Somers be elected as the first Worshipful Master of the Lodge.

The following other names were agreed upon to fulfil the various roles within the

Lodge. Namely:-

- ◆ Senior Warden — Bro. J Billingham
- ◆ Junior Warden — Bro. S. Hill
- ◆ Immediate Past Master — Wor. Bro. James Jones, Deputy Provincial Grand Master

As to the meeting place for the new Lodge, it was agreed that it would be at “the masonic Room, Halesowen”. The picture below is “The Drill Hall” which, prior to the move to our current location, was the centre for Masonry in Halesowen and was less than a quarter of a mile from where we are today.



A sub-committee was also formed at the meeting on 7th February 1920 with the remit to “... to make arrangements as to Bye Laws and other matters in connection with the formation of the new Lodge”.

## One Step Further

The next meeting to take place, the Founders Meeting, was held on Monday 30th May 2021 at "The Grange" again with the Deputy Provincial Grand Master (Immediate Past Master Elect) in the Chair.

Since the Preliminary Meeting notice had been received from Grand Lodge that the new Lodge would be numbered 733 and it was further reported that the Warrant was in the possession of the Provincial Grand Secretary.

It was minuted that Perseverance Craft Lodge No. 573, "have kindly agreed to let us have use of their rooms & furniture etc for use in the Lodge for the sum of six guineas per annum".

As to the Bye Laws, it would appear that the sub-committee were in some disagreement as to the number of black balls required to reject a candidate for advancement and, like all good committees, left it to the Founders to make the decision which was that it should be two black balls.

A Founders Jewel was agreed upon and it was noted that the Worshipful Master Elect was to provide the pedestals, gavels and wicket gate and that all incoming Officers would provide their own collar thereby ensuring the Founders Fee would cover all expenses.



**Provincial Grand Lodge of  
Mark Master Masons of Worcestershire.**

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL BRO. WILLIAM THOMAS PAGE, P.G.O.  
Provincial Grand Master.

THE WORSHIPFUL BRO. JAMES JONES, P.A.L.M.  
Deputy Provincial Grand Master.



CONSECRATION

OF

THE PERSEVERANCE LODGE  
OF MARK MASTER MASONS, N.O. 733

AT

THE MASONIC ROOMS, DRILL HALL, HALESOWEN.

ON

TUESDAY, JULY 12th, 1921, at 3.30 p.m.

BY

The Right. Wor. Bro. WILLIAM THOMAS PAGE, P.G.O.  
BY THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER.

ASSISTED BY

The Officers of the Provincial Grand Lodge.

### The Big Day Cometh

The Consecration took place on Tuesday 12th July 1921 at 3.30 p.m. at the Masonic Rooms, Drill Hall, Halesowen with the Consecrating Officer being the Provincial Grand Master, The Right Wor. Bro. William Thomas Page, P.G.O., assisted by Officers of Provincial Grand Lodge.

Sadly, Bro. J. Billingham, who was the Senior Warden Elect, died prior to the

Consecration meeting as is recorded on the Warrant

Following the Consecration of the Lodge, The Provincial Grand Master installed Bro. S. S. Somers into the Worshipful Master's Chair who then appointed his Officers with the address to the Worshipful Master being given by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Wor. Bro. James Jones. The Founding Officers were:-

Worshipful Master	-	Wor Bro Seth S Somers
Senior Warden M	-	Wor Bro James Jones, P A G D C, D Prov. G
Junior Warden	-	Bro Sydney Hill
Master Overseer	-	Bro F T Goodnan
Senior Overseer	-	Bro W H Chapman
Junior Overseer	-	Bro A E Priest
Chaplain	-	Rev R A Morris
Registrar of Marks	-	Wor Bro J Chilton, Prov. G J O
Secretary	-	Bro W Somers
Senior Deacon	-	Bro W Chilton
Junior Deacon	-	Bro T Chilton
Director of Ceremonies	-	Wor Bro T K Bathurst, P Prov. G M O (Staffs.)
Organist	-	Wor Bro H V Stanton, Prov. G Sec.
Inner Guard	-	Bro F L Rose
Tyler	-	Bro Otto Scott

And Off We Go ...

A copy of an extract of the first minutes:-

*the first*  
Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Perseverance Lodge of Mark Master  
Honors No. <sup>753</sup> held on Monday October 17<sup>th</sup> 1921 at the Masonic  
Hall, Worcester at 5.30 p.m.

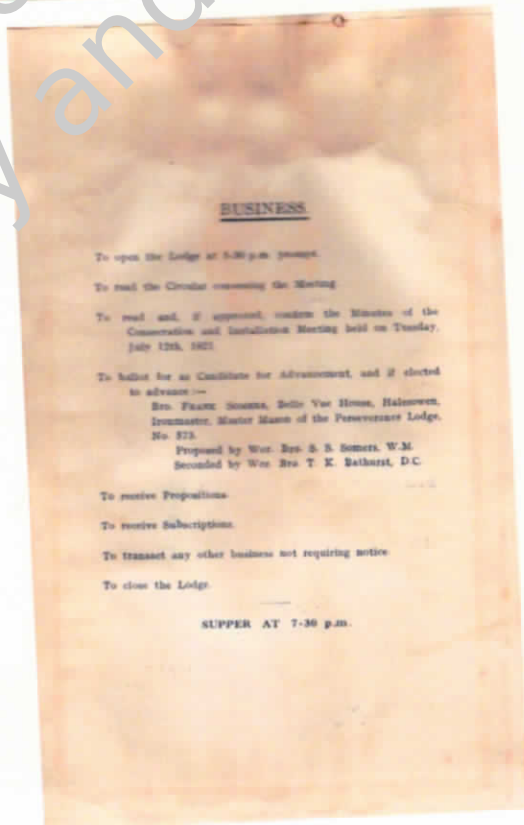
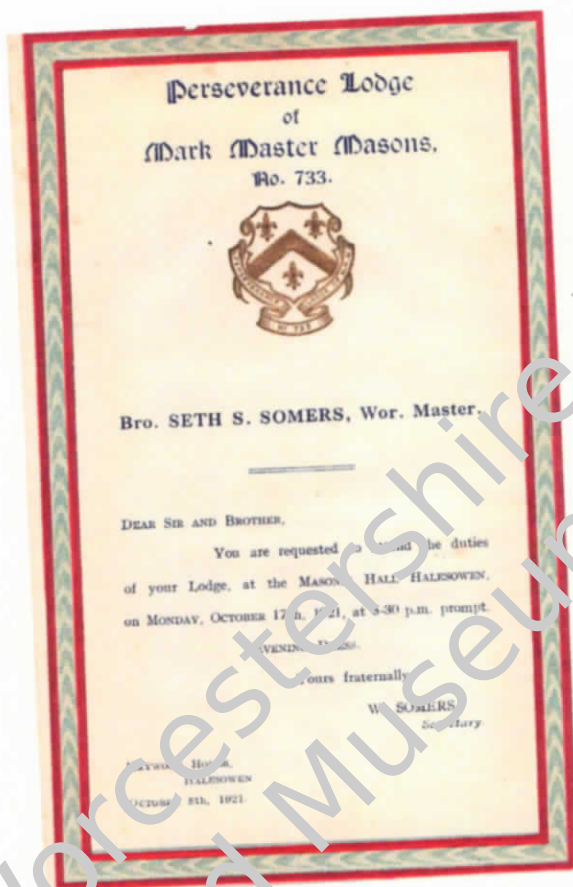
Present: Wm Bro. J. L. Somers, W. M.  
" " Geo. Jones, I. R. M.  
" " J. S. Morris, S. W.  
Bro. Sydney Hill, J. W.  
" J. T. Goodman, M. O.  
" W. H. Chapman, S. O.  
" A. E. Priest, J. O.  
" F. W. Bagwell, Treas.  
" W. Somers, Sec.  
" W. Chubb, S. D.  
" J. Chubb, J. O.  
Wor. Bro. J. K. Battam, M.  
" " F. Staines, Org.  
" " F. L. Ross, I. G.

Wor. Bro. W. J. Saidjweb & Wm Bro. W. J. Whittaker, Bro. Otho Scott, Tyler  
also visitors present W. Bro. W. B. Hammond, P. G. D. Org, Prot. G. S. Harvish  
Wor. Bro. Percy Gibb, P. G. J. W. Attlebury Lodge, No. 590.

The Lodge was opened in due form and with solemn prayer.  
The Secretary read the circular covering the Meeting.  
The Secretary read the Minutes of the Consecration and Installation  
Meeting held on Tuesday, July 12<sup>th</sup> 1921 - which were duly confirmed  
and signed.

The ballot was then taken for Bro. Frank Somers, Belle Perseverance,  
Worcester, Domestic Master Mason, of the Perseverance Lodge, No. 573  
Elected by Wm Bro. J. L. Somers, W. M.  
Worked by Wm Bro. J. K. Battam, J. O.

Copy of the first Summons:-





The first meeting of Perseverance Mark Master Masons Lodge No. 733 took place on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1921 as can be seen by the above copy of the Summons. Noticeably, the dress code was stated to be "Evening Dress" and that what in later days would become known as the Festive Board was referred to as "Supper".

The business of the first meeting was to include the balloting as a candidate for advancement, Bro Frank Somers, who was noted as being an "Ironmaster" to join two other members of his family in the Lodge although he was subsequently to resign in April 1928.

The minutes of the following meetings show a regular flow of both Advancements and Joining Members into the Lodge.

Moving into the 1930's, Grand Lodge announced a "New Premises Fund" to allow the building of a new Grand Lodge. Consequently, a letter was received from Grand Lodge dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 1931, indicating that the Lodge had "passed the Keystone Resolution". It was minuted with regards the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1932 that funds were remitted to Grand Lodge of £77.0.0 (equivalent to approximately £5,000 in today's money) to complete the Lodge's Keystone Qualification.

Having said that the Lodge had a steady flow of Advancements and Joining Members, in the April meeting in 1933 17 (yes seventeen!!) members were balloted for and advanced in one evening. An extract from the relevant Summons/Minutes is replicated below. It is noted that the meeting was opened at 5.15 p.m. and the "Banquet" was scheduled for 7.30 p.m.. Quite some achievement if it included 17 Advancements.

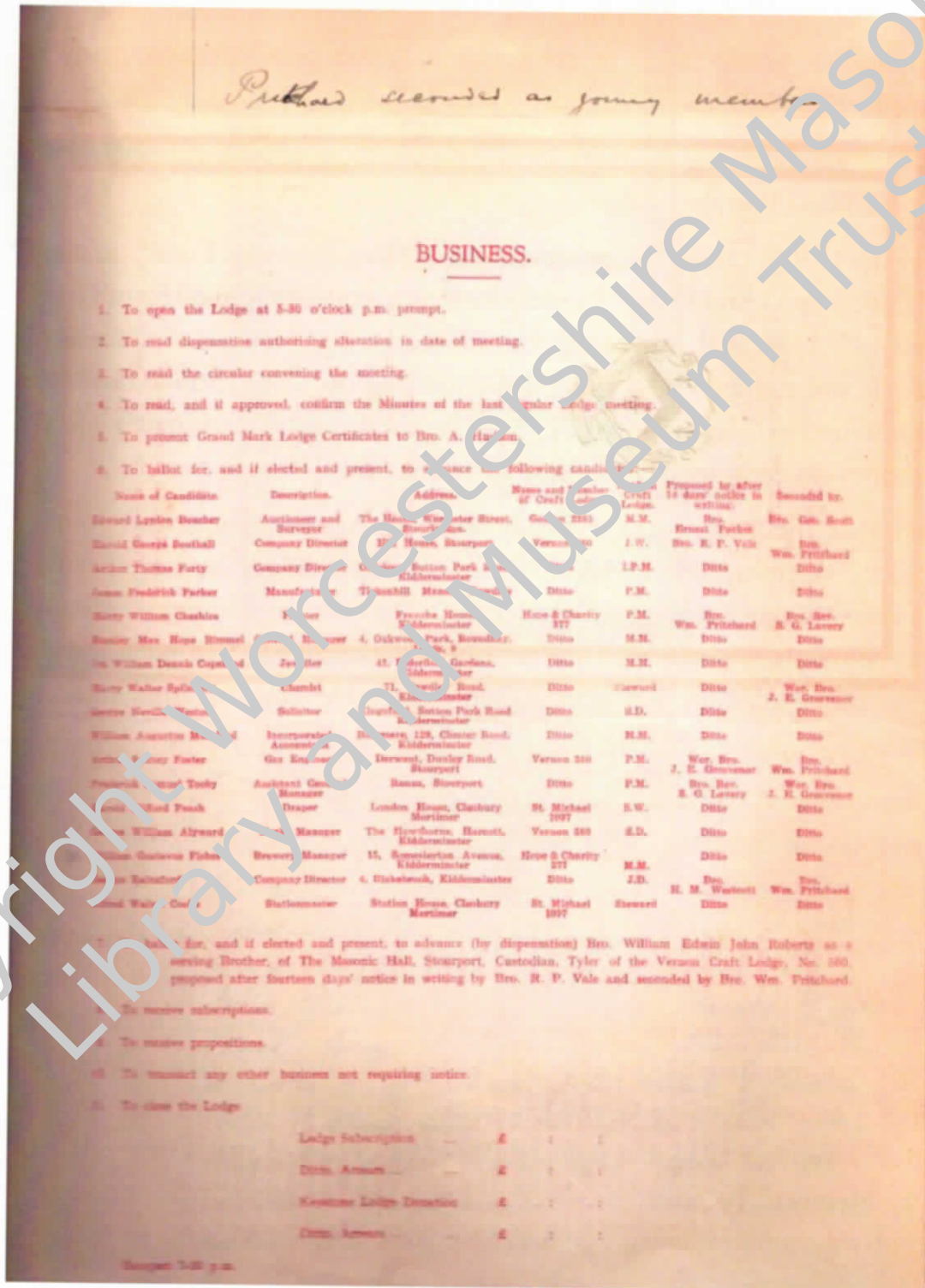
At the aforementioned meeting, it was proposed and seconded that a Petition be signed regarding the formation of a new Lodge, Vernon Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

At the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1933, it was noted that one of the Lodge members, Wor Bro H V Stanton, D. P. G. M., was resigning from all masonic commitments on "health and work" grounds and it was proposed that to help him, a new category of membership be created, "Dining Member", with a reduced fee being paid of 1 guinea to cover Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge fees. It was not until December 1934 that it was proposed and carried that a new category of "Country Member" be added to the Bye Laws for "members who reside at a distance" with subscriptions being 1 guinea, 5/- for dinner or 8/6 for the Installation Banquet.

Between October and December 1935, the Lodge moved its meetings from the Drill

Hall to its current setting at Newfields.

If the early years of the Lodge could be said to have been dominated by "iron" men, then' the 1950's saw another local family, the "Dudley's" become heavily involved in the Lodge. Very few people will have walked along a street without passing over, or around, a drain cover or drainage grid manufactured by Dudley Iron & Steel.



## The War Years

Very few references are made during the 1939 to 1945 periods with regards to the ongoing Second World War.

The October 1939 minutes did, however, show the Provincial Grand Master, R Wor Bro C D Eaton tendering his apologies "under the present conditions" whilst expressing his pleasure that "... we [the Lodge] have decided to carry on during these abnormal times". The installation meeting held by dispensation, on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1940 at 2.30 p.m. would assume to allow the Provincial Grand Master to travel and attend in daylight

It is noticed during the war period that previously mentioned Suppers and Banquets were firstly replaced by "Refreshments" and then towards the end of the war to "Light Refreshments" presumably as the effects of food shortages and rationing took effect.

During the war period the Grand Master, H.P.M. The Duke of Kent died, having "... lost his life whilst serving his country"

On 19<sup>th</sup> April 1943, Bro Douglas Inge Begbie Fisher was advanced into the Lodge. The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1944 reported a letter received by the Lodge saying that Bro Fisher was "reported missing during operations over Germany". The following meeting in early 1945 reported that nothing further had been heard of him. No further mention is made of Bro Fisher in the Lodge minutes. Research the writer carried out on Bro Fisher's war record showed that in 1946, Pilot Officer Douglas Inge Begbie Fisher, was "missing, presumed killed in 1945". The Lodge's only casualty to war.



## Lodge Alumni

The writer has compiled this list of Lodge Members, who are included by reason of High Rank in Mark/Craft Masonry, to illustrate the depth of talent that has been, or is, within the Lodge. Not only does it refer to Masonic achievements but service to the members communities. It is not, and cannot be, a comprehensive list of all the Members of the Perseverance Lodge of Mark Master Masons who have provided dedication and service to the Lodge.

### V Wor Bro Seth Somers

A member of the Somers family who were synonymous with the history of Halesowen and the Black Country who made their name in the Iron Foundry Business which dated back to the 1860's. Anyone who lived in Halesowen during the period up to the 1980's will recollect on a cold frosty morning or evening, the sound of the famous Hammer (or, as they say in the Black Country, "the 'ommer"). Many an anchor or chains for ships were made by Walter Somers Limited.



As previously stated, Bro S. S. Somers became the Founding Worshipful Master on 12th July 1921 having been a member of the Godson Lodge previously. Once out of the Chair, he became Treasurer which he remained as until his retirement in 1953, some 30 years later. Not only was he the Lodge Treasurer but in 1927 he became Grand Treasurer which he remained for a number of years after which he became Grand Master Overseer.



### Wor Bro H V Stanton

Founding Member

Grand Assistant Director of Ceremonies

### Wor Bro James Jones

Founding Member

Deputy Provincial Grand Master

### V Wor Bro Stuart Edwards

Until his awful accident which curtailed his Masonic career, V Wor Bro Stuart was a hugely influential and respected person within Provincial Masonry. He became Deputy Provincial Grand Master in both Craft and Mark Masonry and, like the Founding Master, became Grand Treasurer.

### Wor Bro Dr Charles Morgan Gwynne

The recent, hugely sad, loss of one of the most respected Masons in the Provinces of Worcestershire and Warwickshire has left a huge hole which will be difficult to fill. A well respected medical doctor with a wonderful sense of humour, "Charlie" became Provincial Grand Senior Warden in both Worcestershire and Warwickshire before becoming Provincial Almoner in both Craft and Mark Masonry. He was also the holder of the Territorial Declaration as well as the Order of St Johns and had held the rank of Deputy Intendant General in the Red Cross of Constantine order.

### Wor Bro William Parkes

On 15<sup>th</sup> December 1946, Wor Bro Parkes was installed into the Master's Chair. Subsequently, he became Mayor of Halesowen at the time of the Coronation in 1953. His grandson, Wor Bro Mike Dancer is a current member of Perseverance Lodge.

### Wor Bro John Woodall

Wor Bro John was a popular Mason who, before illness beset him, served the Lodge for a number of years. Outside of Masonry, Wor Bro John served for many years as

a local councillor which culminated in him becoming Mayor of Dudley.

### Wor Bro James Mulligan

Wor Bro James "Jim" having served for many years in the police force has become a respected Mason in a number of Orders. Having recently served as Provincial Senior Warden, Jim is also the current Deputy Intendant General in the Red Cross of Constantine.

### Thoughts of the Writer

It has been a privilege to undertake the research into "my" Lodge. It has given insight as to not only the Perseverance Lodge but the workings of both Provincial and Grand Lodge.

The early minutes were beautifully written in "copper plate" writing which, given the obvious care and attention needed to produce such work led me to reflect on how easy it is for current day Secretaries who can "cut and paste" to their hearts content.

One difference that became clear to myself was that in the early days, the catering for the Lodge was left in the hands not of the Secretary as is the practice nowadays, but in the hands of the Treasurer.

In the few years I have been a Member of Perseverance Lodge, it has always been a pleasure to receive visits from the Provincial Grand Master and his team. The minutes and summonses show that this has been the case for all times over the one hundred years of the Lodge. Many thanks and long may it continue.

Finally, they say that nothing changes, and the minutes of the Past Master & Officer meetings show that since the dawn of time, there were complaints about the food, not enough members and the level of subscriptions. Nothing new then!

Bro Martyn Duerden  
31/3/22

M