

History of the Fidelity Lodge
No 3708
At and After its Consecration
AL 5914 AD1914

1913

22nd September The Lodge originated from a conversation between W.Bro.E.S.Sumner P.P.G.W and W.Bro.W.W.Lawrence P.P.G.P., and which took place at the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire held at Coventry on 22nd September 1913. The purpose of the conversation being, that it was thought another Saturday lodge to be held in Birmingham was desirable, owing to the increasing numbers in the Loyal Travellers Lodge No 2733 and the Concord Lodge No 3239.

1914

A meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire was held on Saturday the twenty eighth day of March 1914 at the Grand Hotel Colmore Row Birmingham.

The Brethren present numbered 284 and upwards including..

Rt.W.George Beech, J.P. Provincial Grand Master.	
W.Bro.Colonel W.F.Wyley,D.L. Dep.Provincial Grand Master.	
W.Bro.H.R.F.Brooks, Prov.G.S.W.	as S.W.
W.Bro.J.Smedley Crooke Prov.G.J.W.	as J.W.
The Provincial team and 29 founding Brethren.	

The Rt W. Bro George Beech, Provincial Grand Master of Warwickshire having taken the Chair appointed his officers as under

W.Bro.Colonel W.F.Wyley,D.L. Dep.Provincial Grand Master.	
W.Bro.H.R.F.Brooks, Prov.G.S.W.	as S.W.
W.Bro.J.Smedley Crooke Prov.G.J.W.	as J.W.
W.Bro.Rev.A.A.David,D.D. Prov.G.Chaplain	as Chaplain
W.Bro.Colonel. T.J.Graham, Prov.G.D.C.	as D.C.
W.Bro.F.G.Swinden.P.D.G.S.B. Prov.G.Sec.	as Sec

The Rt.Wor.P.G.M. then referred to the object and purpose for which Prov.G.Lodge was assembled viz that he was deputed by the Grand Master of England to consecrate the Lodge that was to be held at the Masonic Hall, New Street, Birmingham and to be called Fidelity Lodge No 3708.

The Prov G,Sec read the warrant authorising the formation of Fidelity Lodge No 3708 and dated 16th December 1913 and signed by the Rt.Hon.Lord Ampthill, M.Wor.Grand Master, the Rt Hon.Wor.T.F.Halsey,Rt.Wor.Dep G.M. and Wor.Bro.Sir Edward Letchworth,G.Sec.

The Fidelity Lodge No 3708 was then duly Concecrated,Dedicated and Constituted in accordance with the Book of Constitutions and Ancient Custom.

The Rt.Wor.Provincial Grand Master then proceeded with the installment of W.Bro.William Walter Lawrence the W.M Designate.

W.Bro.W.W.Lawrence was duly Installed as Master of Fidelity Lodge No 3708.

The Worshipful Master then invested his officers as follows.

S.W.	W.Bro.R.Hannah, P.Prov,D.A.D.C.
Treas.	W.Bro.E.T.Barton.
J.W	W.Bro. E.T.Barton.
Sec.	Bro.G.R.Griffin.

S.D. Bro.G.Fisher.
 J.D. Bro.C.J.Reinhardt
 D.C. Bro.J.E.Isles.
 C.S. W.Bro.J.Headon Boocock.
 Asst Sec. Bro.R.J.Campbell.
 I.G. Bro. J.H.Hawkes.
 S.Std. Bro.S.M.Hopkins.
 Stewards, Bros.E.C.Burkitt, L.W.Smith, A.Batchlor, H.B.Allen, H.Holman.
 Tyler. Bro.G.Collins.

Founders Jewels were presented to the P.G.M, the Dep.P.G.M, and the Prov.G.Sec. who all expressed thanks for the honour conferred.

Propositions. There were propositions for 4 candidates for Initiation and 1 joining member.
 The Charity Box contained the sum of £2-17-6.

The banquet was held at the Grand Hotel with 74 Brethren present. The Charity box contained the sum of £2.17.6.

For the next few years subsequent meetings were held at the Masonic Hall in New Street Birmingham.

During March the United Grand Lodge of England revised rule 175 to effect that any Brother in the service of the country should be exempt from the payment of his dues until he returned from that service. It meant that Brethren in the armed forces who were unable to attend their Lodges should not be prejudiced by non payment. If they were in arrears before such service then those same arrears would still be payable.
 June 1915 saw the receipt of an instruction from U.G.L.E. that all Brethren of German, Austrian, Hungarian and Turkish birth, should not during the continuance of the war attend any meeting of G.L. P.G.L. or private Lodge or any other Masonic meeting and are therefore required to abstain from such attendance.

During 1916 Bro.Edwin McKenzie joined the Royal Flying Corps, we are pleased to say that he survived the war and returned to the Lodge.
 During 1916 the Rt W.P.G.M. W.Bro George Beech who had officiated at the Consecration of the Lodge passed to the Grand Lodge above and Masonic mourning was ordered.

The meeting held during November 1918 was held as the first Past Masters night. This being the month that the first world war was ended by the signing of the armistice a special prayer of thanksgiving was read by W.bro.E.S.Sumner. At this meeting a vote of congratulation was accorded to W/Bro.James F Gradwell on his being appointed to Grand Rank of P.G.J.D.

It should be noted that the Lodge had no members killed on active service during the conflict of 1914-1918 although several members lost close family members in the services because of this war.

After the January 1919 Meeting the first Ladies evening was held with 108 Ladies and Brethren present. The charity box contained £6.0.0.

November 1919 Fidelity Lodge sponsored the creation of St Martins Lodge No 4011.

At the meeting in January 1921 WBro.W.W.Lawrence informed the Brethren that it had been suggested that a Royal Arch Chapter be formed in connection with Fidelity Lodge and it was proposed and seconded that a petition be signed by the Lodge for presentation to Supreme Grand Chapter for a Warrant, the proposal was unanimously carried.

At the meeting on 14th October 1927 the Lodge began meeting at the Masonic Temple, Broad Street, Birmingham. No reasons for the change of meeting place can be found in the minutes of previous meetings. The dispensation for the change is dated 27th September 1927.

20th October 1928 the formation of a new Lodge to be called the Lodge of Impartiality was announce and that all the founders of which were all Brethren of Fidelity Lodge no 3708. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously approved That the W.M and the Wardens of the Lodge sign the Petition which was duly carried out.

Ladies night on 24th January 1931 saw the wearing of Masonic Regalia by the Brethren by dispensation or the first time. It is believed that this has happened every Ladies night since.

The summons for the 159th meeting of the Lodge on 28th November 1936 saw the listing of the Past Masters and Officers of the Lodge on the Summons for the first time, this has continued ever since.

The silver jubilee anniversary and founders night was held on March 25th 1939

28th October. The summons reads:- to open the lodge at 12.30 pm, there is no reason given in the minutes for the early start, we must assume that it is because of the 2nd world war and the reduction in street lighting and to allow the Brethren to get home before dark. This early start was t continue for the foreseeable future.

A membership register for 1937 shows the Lodge membership number at 83

25th November 1939. A dispensation had been granted for the Lodge to move temporarily to the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms, Francis Road, Birmingham. We assume that this move was also due to the second world war. The Lodge was to remain at Francis until the 400th meeting on 25th September 1971 when it moved to the Masonic assembly rooms at Stirling Road, Edgbaston.

A note in the minute book records that the night 22nd 23rd November 1940 that Birmingham was the scene of an enemy air attack, however it did not stop the Lodge meeting on the 23rd November.

At the September meeting 1941 it was reported that the Board of General Purposes had expressed considerable satisfaction of the efforts made by the large majority of Lodges to continue to hold their meetings in these difficult times.

During the war years, the minute books make little reference to the progress of the war although in the second rising from the 209th meeting of the lodge held on 27th May 1944, Bro. Secretary read a letter from the Provincial Grand Secretary referring to the extension of hospitality to American Brethren. In hindsight, this message seems particularly poignant given the events that were about to unfold on the beaches of Normandy from 6th June 1944 which will forever now be known as "D-Day"

During the 223rd meeting of the lodge, held on the 23rd February 1946, the Senior Warden, Bro. Allan Hawkes proposed that the lodge meetings to be held during the remainder of 1946 and 1947 be held at the Masonic rooms in Severn Street, Birmingham, the lodge's current home although the reasons were not recorded.

The 230th meeting held on the 22nd February 1947, was held during a fuel crisis, which resulted in little or no heating being available. as such, the brethren were given special permission to wear overcoats if they so desired.

Appended to the minutes of the 232nd meeting of the lodge, on 26th April 1947, is a note headed "*Freemasonry & The War*" it is stated that the lodge was the first to introduce a "Ladies Afternoon" during the war period with the first held in 1941. This was felt so unusual as to cause favourable comment in a periodical circulated amongst brethren of the USA.

The note also states that lodge membership during the war numbered 79 of which 29 members served with His Majesty's Forces – all of whom returned safely.

During the post war 1940's, the average attendance in lodge meetings was in excess of 60 brethren and visitors and there were 14 initiates and joining members.

There was also the Coronation of the current queen, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. There was the conquering of Mount Everest by Edmund (later Sir Edmund) Hillary and Fidelity Lodge No 3708 was honoured by being made a Patron Lodge of The Royal Masonic Hospital.

The lodge also received a letter from the Commercial Travellers Benevolent Institution stating that the lodge is recorded as a Patron in view of its previous donations amounting to £128-4-0

The lodge proved to be vibrant in the 1950's culminating in a visit from the Provincial Grand Master, The Right Worshipful, The Very Reverend Michael Clarke MA, Provost of Birmingham on the occasion of the installation of Bro. Reginald John Marcus Pryce on the 27th September 1958

The 1950's saw the average attendance at 58 brethren and visitors and saw 26 initiates or joining members take their place in lodge history.

The "swinging 60's" started in excellent fashion with the 320th meeting on the 23rd January

April 1960 saw the celebration of the 90th birthday and 50 years in masonry of W. Bro. George Fisher PPGW, a founder member of the lodge and the first candidate for exaltation into Fidelity Chapter No. 3708 on 10th September 1921. Unfortunately, during the 341st meeting of the lodge on the 26th January 1963, the lodge was devastated by the loss of three founder members of the lodge, W. Bro. G Fisher PPGW, W. Bro. H B Allen PPGPurs and Bro. S Chandler.

These sad losses meant that there was just one founder member of the lodge left with us, W. Bro. Sidney Smith PPAGDC who was to be 95 on his next birthday but sadly, W. Bro. Smith was announced as having passed to the grand lodge above during the 343rd meeting of the lodge, which was held on 23rd March 1963

The 345th meeting of the lodge, held on 28th September 1963 saw the installation of Bro. John Bertram Wreford, a member of the lodge still fondly remembered by some of the current brethren and marked the beginning of the 50th Masonic year of the lodge.

The 350th meeting of the lodge, held on the 11th April 1964 marked the Golden Jubilee with a short history of the lodge attached to the summons. The membership of the lodge was recorded at that time to number 75 brethren.

The 1960's continued to see the lodge thrive and an average attendance in excess of 50 brethren and visitors were recorded. There were 17 initiates or joining members welcomed to the lodge.

The "Sensational 70's" kicked off in fairly quiet fashion for the lodge until the 400th meeting, which was held on 25th September 1971. That meeting was noted as being the installation of Bro. Denis James Cater but was also the first meeting of the lodge to be held at the Masonic Assembly Rooms, Stirling Road, Edgbaston which was to remain the home of the lodge until the 27th April 2013.

For the occasion, a new cushion for the VSL was purchased and is still in use today. In addition, the lodge banner was also refurbished

So far in the 1970's, the average attendance fell to about 44 brethren and visitors but there were six initiates or joining members

Founders

W. Bro. Edward Smith Sumner P.P.G.W. 1060 2733 3239
W. Bro. Walter William Lawrence P.P.G.P. 2733 3239
W. Bro. Robert Hannah, P.P.G.A.D.C. 1246 3239
W. Bro. Thomas Frederick Mason, 3239
W. Bro. John Headon Boocock, Prov. G. Treas. 43 418 3239
W. Bro. Edward Thomas Barton, 2733
W. Bro. John Kire Cuttriss, 3239
W. Bro. James Francis Gradwell, 3239
Bro. Thomas Edwin Isles, 3239
Bro. George Fisher, 3239
Bro. George Reginald Griffin, 3239 3391
Bro. Francis Horatio Hawkes, 3239
Bro. Caspar Joseph Reinhart, 3239
Bro. Philip Daniel Griffin, 3391
Bro. Horace Holman, 2733
Bro. Sam Chandler, 3239
Bro. Harold Bevell Allen, 3239
Bro. James Henry Berry, 3239
Bro. Lewis William Smith, 2897
Bro. Sauviour Moore Hopkins, 3239
Bro. Edwin Chamley Birkett, 3239

Bro. Alfred Batchlor, 2733
Bro. James Hadfield Cocker, 3239
Bro. Richard James Todman, 2733
Bro. Sydney Albert Smith, 377
Bro. Robert Jackson Campbell, 1522
Bro. Henry William Richard Tarrant, 3239
Bro. Alfred Huntley, 2733 3239
Bro. Arthur James Eggison, 2733