



Maida Vale Lodge

2743

1899—1949

Foreword

by

The Immediate Past Master



IN PREPARING a resumé of the activities of the Maida Vale Lodge during the past 50 years I have had to rely on the Minute Books for much of my information, and, as the details of some of the earlier proceedings are very limited, I am afraid that particulars of the early days of the Lodge are merely of statistical value.

The Lodge was consecrated on Monday, March 13th, 1899, at the Crown Hotel, Aberdeen Place, Maida Vale, the Sponsoring Lodge being the Ethical Lodge No. 753. The Consecrating Officers were:—

V.W. Bro. EDWARD LETCHWORTH, F.S.A., Grand Secretary.

Assisted by

W.Bro. JAMES TERRY, P.G.Swd.Br., as S.W.

W.Bro. J. J. THOMAS, P.G.Std.Br., as J.W.

V.W.Bro. J. STUDHOLME BROWNRIGG, M.A., P.G.C., as Chaplain.

W.Bro. FRANK RICHARDSON, P.G.D., as D.C.

W.Bro. W. J. MASON, P.M., P.Prov.G.D.C. Surrey, Vice-President Board General Purposes, as I.G.

The Lodge came into being at the commencement of the Boer War and has subsequently passed through the two Great Wars. Many of our Brethren served in these and happily all returned safely to the Lodge. The first Senior Officers of the Lodge were as follows:—

W.Bro. HENRY TRASK, P.Prov.G.Supt. of Works, Herts. W.M. Designate

W.Bro. W. H. STRATTON, P.M. 753-2150 - - - S.W. Designate

W.Bro. H. J. THOMAS, P.M. 753 - - - J.W. Designate

There were no fewer than 37 Founders of the Lodge, and a list of these is subsequently set out. It is, however, a matter of regret that many of the Founders took no active part in the affairs of the Lodge, and indeed quite a number of them resigned early after. At the Consecration Ceremony 81 Brethren were present, including the Consecrating Officers. The first regular meeting was held two days later, and the list of the Officers for the first year is also set out.

The Consecration Ceremony was apparently performed with great dignity, and the Lodge business included the Installation of the Worshipful Master, Election

of Treasurer and Tyler, while the Appointment and Investiture of Officers was subsequently carried out. A Committee was also formed to frame the By-Laws, and five candidates were proposed for initiation and two as joining members. All Masonic business having been completed, the Lodge was closed in due form with solemn prayer and in perfect harmony. The Brethren subsequently retired to the Festive Board, and, purely for the purpose of creating nostalgic memories, the menu at the Dinner is set out herewith :—

Huitres au Naturel.

Tortue claire. Tortue liee.

Saumon, Sauce Ecossaise.
Blanchaille.

Ris de Veau a la Demidoff.
Louis Roederer, 1893.

Quartier d'Agneau roti.
Pommes de Terre Nouvelles. Epinards.
Magnums Veuve Schuler fils, 1889.

Ponche a la Romaine.
Cigarettes.
Moet & Chandon, 1893.

Chapons bouillis.
Jambon de Yorc.
Asperges Francais.
Dry Imperial.

Baba aux Abricots.
Pouding glace a la Nesselrode.
Gelees au Liqueur.
Appollinaris. Brunnen.

Laitance d'Harengs en Croute.
Liqueur.

Dessert. Cafe.
Courvoisier, 20 years old.

It is presumed that a Ministry of Food did not exist in those happy days, and it is hoped that all the Brethren were able to complete the meal without undue discomfort. The programme of music was under the direction of Bro. Etherington Smith, and included the Lyric Vocal Quartette. It is interesting to note that almost all the artistes were Brethren of the Lodge or visiting Brethren, and although the Banquet was timed to commence at 7 o'clock, no indication is given of the time of its termination!

At this stage it should be pointed out that the first Secretary of the Maida Vale Lodge was Bro. J. L. Goldstein, then Senior Warden of the Barnato Lodge 2265. He became Master of the Maida Vale Lodge in the year 1902, and, apart from the year of his Mastership, he held the position of Secretary of the Maida Vale Lodge up till his lamented death in 1933. It is a matter of interest and pride that during the half century of its existence the Maida Vale Lodge has had but two Secretaries, W.Bro. J. ("Johnny") L. Goldstein and W.Bro. J. T. Lawson, our present Master. W.Bro. Lawson, who was previously Master of the Lodge in 1931, has now laid down the labour of love which he has conducted for the past 16 years. During that time he has served this Lodge most faithfully and conscientiously, and, although the Lodge is indeed honoured by his elevation again to the Master's Chair, it is with pangs of regret that the Brethren take leave of him as Secretary to the Lodge.

The early Minutes of the Lodge record that it made good progress, and for many years there was no lack of candidates for initiation. At this stage it might be interesting to give the following statistics of the Lodge during the past 50 years. Number of Founders 37, number of members 303, number of joining members 30. The Lodge is Vice-Patron to the three Masonic Institutions; it is a Founding Lodge and Patron to the Royal Masonic Hospital. It is also qualified as a Hall Stone Lodge with a contribution of 800 guineas. The Royal Arch Chapter was formed in 1901, and fifteen past and present members of this Lodge are found among the Past Principals. In the course of its existence the Lodge has been honoured by the elevation of no fewer than seven members as Grand Officers.

It is interesting to note that the late W.Bro. Henry J. Thomas, who was the last surviving Founder and died about three years ago, was an Officer of Grand Lodge for 38 years, and his longevity of office has been rarely exceeded. He was also Treasurer for a period of no less than 34 years. Happily the Lodge is still honoured with Grand Lodge Officers by W.Bro. George A. Sexton and our present Master, and a note on their records would at this point be appropriate. W.Bro. Sexton was initiated into the Maida Vale Lodge in 1901. He has served the Lodge faithfully

for 48 of its 50 years, having occupied the Chair in the years 1912 and 1930. He owes allegiance to no other Lodge apart from Maida Vale, and he was elevated to Grand Lodge Office in 1944. He was Treasurer of the Lodge from 1938 to 1948, and, although he is laying down the reins of active office, the benefit of his counsels are at all times at the disposal of the Brethren of the Lodge. Of our present Master it is impossible to write enough. Although he was not initiated into the craft until 1920, and he was then a man of 44, he was immediately noted as a Brother of outstanding ability, and in his Masonic career he has been the embodiment of all that is recognised in a gentleman and a Mason. It was at the unanimous wish of all the Brethren that he occupies the chair during the Golden Jubilee celebrations, and he does honour to the craft and to the Lodge in so accepting.

Fourteen Brethren have also been honoured by elevation to London Grand Rank, and seven of them are happily still with us, and their wise advice is always available. One, unfortunately, who has passed to the Grand Lodge above is W.Bro. "Charlie" Cohen, who was Director of Ceremonies of the Lodge for many years. He was one of the great characters of Maida Vale Lodge, and the dignity with which he conducted the duties of his office, as well as his unflinching humour, earned him the love and esteem of all who had the pleasure of coming into contact with him.

As one of the younger members of the Lodge my experience is naturally of a limited character. I have, however, seen many fine types of men occupying the various offices in this Lodge, and it is a source of great satisfaction to all connected with Maida Vale to know that, after 50 years, it is in as flourishing a state to-day as ever it was. The membership of the Lodge now approaches the three-figure mark, while the enthusiasm among the younger brethren is immense, and no further proposition forms for entry into the Lodge can be granted for at least 18 months.

The Lodge has its own Benevolent Fund, and many deserving cases have been assisted, while it has standing to its credit £360 invested capital. There is a Lodge of Instruction attached to the Lodge, and this is well attended. This was started by the late W.Bro. "Johnny" Goldstein, who, according to all accounts, was the Preceptor *par excellence*, and his teachings have been handed down from generation to generation. The Deputy Preceptors during the Goldstein regime were Asher Rosenberg, H. W. Bartlett, P. Reinganum, A. G. Fathers and J. T. Lawson, the latter being Secretary for many years. At this juncture it should be noted that for some years a joint Lodge of Instruction with Barnato Lodge has been held under the able tuition of W.Bro. A. G. Fathers and W.Bro. H. Carr.

In conclusion, may I express the hope that, having attained our 50th birthday in perfect harmony, goodwill and happiness, may the second half century prove equally successful. It is my hope that the Brother who 50 years hence will have the pleasure and honour of writing a foreword to celebrate our centenary will be able to record that the work of the Brethren who occupied office in 1949 proved in good stead, and that they laid the foundation for the second half century in as equally solid a manner as did those early pioneers.

R. G. DE GROOT, I.P.M.



The First Worshipful Master



W. Bro. H. TRASK, P.Prov. G. Supt. of Works, Herts.

The Golden Jubilee Worshipful Master



W. Bro. JOHN T. LAWSON, P.A.G.Purs.