

THE BEGINNING.

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In the late nineteen fifties, it was taking some fifteen years for an initiate in the Five Orders Lodge to attain the Master's chair, and since the membership was increasing - then over 100 - it could become longer still. There was a steady stream of brethren aspiring to take office - the attendance at L.O.I. was 25 - 30. In order to reduce this waiting time it was suggested that a daughter Lodge be formed - this was discussed by various Past Masters with W.Bro. Bert Manning (D.C. and Preceptor of the L.O.I.).

However, nothing materialised from these discussions until in 1962, W.Bro. Frank Richardson and I decided to take the initiative and to canvass the members' views. There appeared to be sufficient interest to proceed, so I announced our intention during my last reply to the Master's toast at the May (1963) meeting of the Five Orders Lodge, inviting interested Brethren to pass their names to Bro. Richardson. About twenty names were submitted, mostly from the Brethren anticipating a long wait to reach the chair and new Past Masters keen to take useful office. Only one of the "elder brethren" of the Five Orders Lodge decided to participate, namely W.Bro. "Nibby" Hunt LGR; but the then Secretary of Five Orders W.Bro. F.C. Freeman, made a generous offer to act as Tyler without remuneration.

After meetings to consider the distribution of offices, likely venue for meetings, funding of the Lodge and last but not least a name for the Lodge, which Five Orders agreed to sponsor, a meeting was arranged for Bros. Hammond and Richardson to see the Grand Secretary (R.W. Bro. J.W. Stubbs PGW). The meeting took place at Freemason's Hall late in 1964, when the Grand Secretary agreed that we had good grounds for founding a new Lodge, but on reviewing our suggestions, he stated that two points would require modification. These were

- 1 The name of the Lodge, for which we suggested "The Five Points of Fellowship Lodge" - continuing the number theme of the mother Lodge.
- 2 In considering the names of Lodges of the founders he thought there should be more Brethren from Lodges other than 'Five Orders', preferably lay Brethren holding more senior progressive office. The only Brother above Steward was Bro. Reg Hennessy who was currently Inner Guard.

We had further discussions among the founders re Point 1 when a name suggested by W.Bro. Roy Wells was favoured, namely Architrave - that architecturally being that part of the entablature resting on the columns, so establishing our connection with the mother Lodge.

Point 2 was satisfied by the inclusion of Bros. E. Foskett, J. Peters and S. Fryer from Lodges other than Five Orders. Bro. E. Foskett also fulfilled the other requirement as he had occupied the office of Senior Deacon.

At a second meeting with the Grand Secretary, he agreed that with these alterations, our "prayer" should meet with the approval of the Most Worshipful the Grand Master, who would have to sign the necessary papers. The Grand Secretary particularly liked the proposed name which he considered showed original thought - as far as he was aware it would be the only Lodge of that name on the Grand Register.

A point of interest is that while on holiday in Scotland in 1964, the writer was beach-combing along the Moray Firth when he found a complete cable-tow, in beautifully spliced pale blue rope. I can only presume that it had been lost overboard from a passenger or cruise ship where "ad hoc" Lodge meetings were sometimes organised by ships officers. This cable-tow was used regularly at initiations until the Lodge moved to Southgate when it mysteriously disappeared from the Lodge chest. The finding of this cable-tow prompted the consideration of Cable-Tow Lodge as a name for the new Lodge, but it was decided that Architrave was more appropriate.

Grand Lodge then made the necessary arrangements for the consecration and a date - January 11th 1966 - was appointed for the ceremony which was performed by the Grand Secretary, R.W. Bro. J.W. Stubbs, PGW in a really impressive manner. The consecration was conducted in the Burma Temple at Great Queen Street which is the temple regularly used for consecrations. Apart from the Grand Secretary's impeccable rendering of the ceremony, mention must be made of the help and guidance given to us both before and during the proceedings by V.W. Bro. Air Marshall Sir Victor Groom, K.C.V.L., K.B.E., C.B., D.F.C., PGSwdB who acted as Director of Ceremonies and Secretary. W.Bro. Rev. D.J. Dove, PJD, gave a very inspiring and thought provoking oration on the practical and spiritual aspects of Freemasonry. A detailed and full account of the proceedings was published in the March 1966 edition of the 'Masonic Record' a copy of which had been passed to the Lodge Secretary for inclusion in the Lodge archives. This report was submitted by W.Bro. R.A. Wells who was elected an Honorary Member in 1984.

The second meeting of the New Lodge was held on the fourth Saturday in February 1966 in the Abercorn Rooms by Liverpool Street Station; the actual dates were governed by the availability of the Middlesex Temple for Saturday meetings. At this meeting two candidates were initiated - Mr. Jim Hanson proposed by myself and Mr. Tony Stockbridge, the elder son of our senior deacon. I initiated my candidate while W.Bro. Nibby Hunt initiated the second after which I gave the charge to both candidates. Also at this meeting we admitted our first joining member, Bro. Eric Murdoch, who had wished to become a founder but was precluded because his Mother Lodge was under the Irish constitution. Unfortunately Bro. Hanson passed to the Grand Lodge above in 1969 and Bro. Tony Stockbridge resigned on moving to the North of England in 1972.

As our third meeting was held on the third Saturday in March, we were informed by Grand Lodge that the ceremony of passing could not be performed as the two initiates had been 'Entered Apprentices' for only three weeks. The Book of Constitution states that "four weeks and upwards" must elapse between successive degrees. The impasse was resolved when Bro. Ernie Stockbridge - senior deacon - volunteered to give us a rendering of the First Degree Tracing Board - without prior notice and with only a single prompt! Similar difficulty would not arise in subsequent years as the February meeting would be the Installation Meeting.

Bro. Eric Foskett was installed in February 1967, the year in which Grand Lodge celebrated its 250th Anniversary with a special meeting of Grand Lodge at the Albert Hall. W. Bro. Foskett, as the Worshipful Master, was invited to represent Architrave Lodge as we had fulfilled our obligation of subscribing £1 'per capita' to the Special Fund to be vested with the Royal College of Surgeons for Research. W. Bro. Roy Wells was on duty at the Albert Hall as he had recently been invested as Assistant Grand Standard Bearer in an active capacity.

During the early years we were honoured by supporting attendance's at our meetings by some of the consecrating Officers - namely W. Bro. Rev. F.J. Dove, W. Bro. H. Moles and W. Bro. A. Cowie. The Grand Secretary himself paid us a visit on the 18th December 1971 to give us encouragement and to ensure that the early promise had been maintained. The visit by W. Bro. Rev. Dove, a somewhat eccentric bachelor, caused some amusement as he always carried with him a leather case some 12" X 3" which held a pair of clay "Churchwarden" pipes which he proceeded to light and smoke at the festive board!

W. Bro. Henry Moles was a regular attender at our meetings for about twelve years during which time he gave support and sympathetic advice to successive masters, which was much appreciated during those early formative years. In 1972 the normal succession of members to the chair was interrupted when Bro. Murdoch, then Senior Warden, decided for personal reasons that he could not proceed to the mastership, W. Bro. L. Milligan and W. Bro. Hunt LGR therefore became Master of the Lodge for 1972 and 1973 respectively - special dispensation being obtained from Grand Lodge as all founders were required to renounce election to the Master's Chair if they were past masters of a Lodge. 1974 saw the Installation of Bro. W.R. Maxwell as Worshipful Master - the first initiate of the Lodge to achieve this honour.

In 1972 W. Bro. F. Richardson became the first member of the Lodge to be invested with London Grand Rank, to be followed in 1975 by a similar appointment to the writer.

During 1978 there were rumours (late proved unfounded) that the Abercorn Rooms were to be refurbished and the Masonic Temples used for other purposes. The members, after deliberation, decided to look for an alternative venue for their meetings before receiving notice to quit. When it was expected that other Lodges

using Abercorn Rooms would also be competing for other Masonic accommodation when required to move. Thus it was, after considerable investigation and inspection by W.Bro. Frank Richardson the Lodge found our alternative meeting place at Southgate and there we have remained.

In the early years the Lodge could not support its own Lodge of Instruction, so Five Orders L.O.I. welcomed Architrave members. These meetings were supplemented in the weeks before installations by "ad hoc" L.O.I. meetings at hostelrys run by Bro. E. Foskett and E. Stockbridge!

The Lodge badge was designed by Bro. Stan Robinson - the Architrave resting on five columns - all Corinthian. This was decided because the details of the individual Orders would become confused when the drawings were reduced in size for reproduction.