

History of Metropolitan Lodge

No. 1507



W. Bro. WILLING (Founder)

The First Master

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Foreword

We are proud to have the opportunity of recording the History of the Metropolitan Lodge, an honour for which we are very grateful.

Fortunately the recorded Minutes of the Lodge in its early days and all subsequent Minutes are available, having been zealously preserved by the nine Secretaries of the Lodge.

It is hoped that facts, as recorded here, will give the younger Brethren a knowledge of how the Metropolitan Lodge came into being, how it has progressed and maintained its high stand despite the calamitous effects of two World wars.

In writing the history of the Metropolitan Lodge during its first hundred years one cannot but reflect on the vast changes which have taken place in the social life of the Nation and the scientific advancement throughout the entire world during the past century.

In the following pages we have set forth some of the most interesting events which have taken place in the Lodge since its foundation.

We have no evidence as to the reason for founding a new Lodge but it had evidently been under consideration for some time as seven of the Founders were members of the DOMATIC Lodge No.177 itself consecrated in 1786. It was therefore, that in the early part of 1874 a petition signed by James Willing, Joseph Jacob Michael, Thomas Williams, Richard Rose, George Tims, Henry Howard Child, Richard Thomas Kingham, John Thomas Douglas, Richard Fowler, Frederick Kent and H. Daly was presented to the Most Worshipful the Grand Master of the Most Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of England, with the result that on 14th July 1874 a Warrant, by command of the Grand Master, was issued by the Deputy Grand Master, the Right Honourable Henry Howard Molyneux, the 4th Earl of Carnarvon, Baron Porchester of Highclere in the County of Southampton. The warrant was also signed by the Grand Master, Marquess of Ripon, Earl de Grey and earl of Ripon, Viscount Goderich of Norton, in the County of Lincoln, Baron Grantham of Grantham K.G. and by the Grand Secretary, John Hervey.

THE CONSECRATION CEREMONY took place on September 28th 1874 at the Metropolitan Club at 269 Pentonville Road, Kings Cross and this was the venue of the Lodge for the next three years.

The ceremony was carried out by V.W. Bro. Hohn Hervey, Grand Secretary. He was assisted by W.Bro. James Brett P.G.P. and Bro. Stephens, Lodge No. 1365, acting as Senior and Junior Warden respectively. W. Bro R.H. Little, P.G.S. Middx. Was Director of Ceremonies.

There were present:-

Bro James Willing	No. 177	Master Designate Secretary of Lodge 177
Bro Thomas Williams	No. 177	J.W.
Bro. Joseph Jacob Michael		S.W.
Bro. Richard Rose		Treasurer
Bro. George Tims	No. 177	Secretary
Bro. Henry Howard Child		S.D.
Bro. Richard Thomas Kingham	No. 177	J.D.
Bro. John Thomas Douglas	No. 177	I.G.
Bro. Kent	No. 177	Master of Lodge 177 in 1874 I.P.M.
Bro. Richard Fowler		D.C.
Bro. H. Daly (Tyler)	No. 177	

Visitors were:-

V.W. Bro. J. Hervey		Grand Secretary- Consecrating Master
W. Bro James Brett	P.G.P.	S.W.
W. Bro R.W. Little	P.G.S. Mid-	D.C.
Bro Stephens	1365	J.W.
Bro Storey	861	
Bro. Norris	1489	
Bro. Manwell	861	
Bro. Dwarber	55	
Bro. Sayers	764	

Bro. Clarke	186	
Bro. Garrett	704	Organist
Bro. Frost	288	
W. Bro. Payne	G.T.	
Bro. Maples	1260	
Bro. Musgrove	1309	
Bro. Dixon	1107	
Bro. Cheek	177	
Bro. Ralph	177	
Bro. Hoest	753	
Bro. Byng	902	
Bro. Edwards	861	
Bro. Pidduck	1107	
Bro. Legg	812	
Bro. Cunningham	754	
Bro. Capt. Brown	275	
Bro. Stevenson	754	
Bro. Thiellay	145	
Bro. Cavet		
Bro. Massey	1275	
Bro. Reuter	1107	

THE CEREMONY

is recorded in the Minute Book as follows:

Held at The Metropolitan Club, 269 Pentonville Road, Kings Cross. Monday September 28th 1874.

A Meeting was held for purpose of Consecrating the Lodge, Installing the Worshipful Master, and investing the Senior, the Junior Wardens and other Officers.

The Brethren having formed procession V.W. Bro John Hervey the Consecrating Master appointed by the Most Worshipful Grand Master of England took the Chair as W.M. and appointed W.B Bro Brett Senior Warden and Bro. Stephens as Junior Warden. Bro. Little kindly acting as Director of Ceremonies and Bro. Garrett as Organist.

The Lodge was duly opened in the three degrees with solemn prayer. Bro. John Hervey then delivered a very able and interesting address to the Brethren assembled containing most excellent advice and replete with caution to the Members of the new Lodge.

The Petition to the Most Worshipful Grand Master for the Warrant to form the Lodge was read as also was the Warrant and the Brethren signified their approval of the Officers appointed therein.

The Ceremony of Consecration was then proceeded with and completed in a most solemn and impressive form highly appreciated by the Brethren present. The Oration being eloquently delivered by Bro. Brett.

At the conclusion the D.C. presented Bro. James Willing the Worshipful Master appointed in the Warrant who fully assented to the Ancient Charges and Regulations and having answered the usual questions in a satisfactory manner a Board of Installed Masters was formed and W.Bro. Hervey duly installed Bro. James Willing W.Master of the Metropolitan Lodge No. 1507 for the ensuing twelve months.

The Lodge was resumed in the 3rd Degree and Bros. Michael and T. Williams were invested Senior and Junior Wardens by Bro. Hervey, they being Officers named in the Warrant. A ballot was then taken for Treasurer which was declared unanimous in favour of Bro. R. Rose who was proposed by the W.M. and seconded by the S.W. The W.M. then appointed Bro. Tims Secretary, Bro. Child Senior Deacon, Bro. Kingham Junior Deacon., Bro. Douglas Inner Guard and Bro. Fowler Director of Ceremonies all of whom together with Bro. Daly who was elected Tyler, were invested by Bro. Hervey with their collar of office.

The W.M. proposed and the S.W. seconded that the cordial and hearty thanks of the Lodge be given to our V.W. Bro John Hervey for the able manner in which he performed the impressive ceremonies and that the thanks be given in like manner to our W. Bro. James Brett and to Bro. R. Little for the ability and zeal with which they rendered their assistance to the Consecrating Master. That the record be placed on the

Minutes and further that Bros. Hervey, Brett and Little be elected Honorary Members of the Lodge. This was carried unanimously. The W.M. proposed and the S.W. seconded that the thanks of the Lodge be given in like manner to Bro. Stephens and Bro. Garrett the latter having carried out the musical arrangements very effectively. Carried unanimously. Several Gentlemen were proposed to be balloted for at the next meeting and 4 Brothers for joining.

All Masonic business being ended the Lodge was closed in the three degrees in due form with solemn prayer and the Brethren adjourned to a banquet at the Midland.

FOUNDERS OF THE LODGE

Bro James Willing	Worshipful Master Designate
Bro. Joseph Jacob Michael	Senior Warden Designate
Bro Thomas Williams	Junior Warden Designate
Bro. Richard Rose	Treasurer
Bro. George Tims	Secretary
Bro. Henry Howard Child	Senior Deacon
Bro. Richard Thomas Kingham	Junior Deacon
Bro. John Thomas Douglas	Inner Guard
Bro. Richard Fowler	Director of Ceremonies
Bro. H. Daly	Tyler
Bro. Kent	Immediate Past Master

100 YEARS OF THE METROPOLITAN

The V.W. Bro. John Hervey *	Grand Secretary as Consecrating Master
W. Bro James Brett *	P.G.P. as Senior Warden
Bro. Stephens	(of Lodge No. 1365) as Junior Warden
W. Bro R.W. Little	P.G.S. Mid as Director of Ceremonies
Bro. Garrett	(of Lodge No. 704) as Organist

* Elected Honorary Members of Lodge.

The regular meetings were arranged for the 3rd Thursday in October, November, December, January, February and March, and the first meeting was on October 15th 1874. There were 7 extra Emergency meetings in the first two years and during that period 60 Candidates were Initiated and passed and 56 raised with 23 being accepted as Joining Members. At most meetings three degrees were worked with several Candidates in each degree. On one occasion 5 were initiated, 5 Brethren Passed and 8 Raised. Business at Installation Meetings invariably included 2 Ceremonies before the Installation of the Master.

This amount of work continued for about 20 years after which it was arranged that only 2 Degrees should be worked at a meeting (one only with an Installation ceremony). It was not until about 1929 that no other Degree was worked on an Installation night. (Until recently!)

On the completion of his year as the 1st Master of the Lodge W. Bro. Willing was presented with a portrait of himself and for many years this hung in the ante-room at Meetings.

During the first 10 years many of the Joining members, particularly those from Scottish Lodges appear to have joined immediately after being Initiated elsewhere and were Passed and Raised in the Metropolitan.

A "Summer" festival at which Ladies were to be invited was arranged for July 1876 and this festival became an annual event in the summer until 1900.

In 1900 the first Ladies Night was arranged at the Holborn Restaurant but had to be cancelled owing to the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria so 1901 saw the start of Ladies Nights and they were held after the Lodge meeting in either February or March. The tickets were 7 shillings and 6 pence for Ladies and Visitors but free to Members. From 1913 until 1954 they were held at Frascati's but by this time the tickets had increased to £1 1 shilling (one guinea).

By 1877 the Lodge had become too large for the Metropolitan Club and a new venue was arranged at Andertons Hotel in Fleet Street, a favourite meeting place in Masonic circles. The regular meetings were altered to the 3rd Wednesday in the months and the Lodge continued to meet here for 35 years. The charges were 4/6 (4 shillings and 6 pence) for the meal, 5/- for a bottle of wine and 10/- for Champagne. These prices were subject to a discount of 10% for cash.

Pedestals, Platforms and other equipment bought for use at the Metropolitan Club were sold to the Kings Cross Lodge No. 1732.

The first recorded petition to the Lodge of Benevolence was made in 1880 on behalf of Mrs Tettenborn and the following year a petition was forwarded for her son to be admitted to the Boys School.

1881 was the first year that Grand Lodge Certificates were presented in open Lodge and in the same year the Lodge listed its first Country member.

In 1901 a visiting brother, W.Bro. Charles Johnson of Regents Park Lodge No. 2202 as Preceptor of the Lodge of Instruction was invited to accept Honorary membership of the Lodge and in 1931 a Testimonial was presented to him commemorating his 30 years as Preceptor.

Mr Eric Moore became the first "Lewis" of the Lodge being initiated by his Father in 1911.

W.Bro Perks, Secretary for 41 years was honoured with London Rank in 1915, the first member to receive such an honour.

Once again the size of the Lodge necessitated a move to larger accommodation and in October 1913, the first meeting took place at Frascati's. This was to be our home for the next 40 years.

It was the practice of Frascati's to present an Iced Cake suitably inscribed to the Worshipful Master on his Installation. The last recipient of this pleasing gift was W.Bro H.E.Tilden who was Worshipful Master in 1953.

It was not until 1919 that a Committee was set up to interview Candidates before recommending them to the Lodge for ballot. Prior to this date it was the Proposer and Secunder who spoke on behalf of their Candidate in open Lodge before a ballot was taken.

LODGE JUBILEE

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary it was proposed that the Lodge became;-

- a). A Founding Lodge of the Freemasons' Hospital by subscribing £105.
- b). A 'Recorded Lodge of the Masonic Million Memorial' by collecting £700 towards the cost of building the Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street.

In 1922 Bros. John and Alfred Hess presented a Banner to the Lodge to mark the 25th Anniversary of their Initiation.

W. Bro. J. A. May became Secretary in 1929 and served in this capacity for 40 years.

He received Grand Lodge honours in 1943.

Following the declaration of War in September 1939, Grand Lodge suspended all Masonic meetings until further notice. However a few days later this order was rescinded and instructions were issued which enabled Lodges to continue to meet under relaxed rules. For example Suits or Uniform were to be allowed. The W.M. was empowered to alter the Place, Date and/or Time of any Meeting without prior sanction of Grand Lodge.

The period between Degrees could be reduced to 21 days (instead of 28) and Service Members could be advanced within 14 days but Grand Lodge sanction had to be sought for this privilege.

Lodges were instructed to arrange their meetings earlier in the day and because of food rationing any Refreshment after meetings had to be kept as simple as possible.

During the period of the War not a single meeting of the Metropolitan Lodge was postponed or cancelled but it was necessary to start them earlier and some commenced at 1pm but generally at 2pm or 2.30pm.

Several times Air Raid warnings were heard but the ceremonies were not stopped and in November 1944 when a Rocket fell nearby Frascati's the Initiation ceremony was continued without a break.

The first reference was made in 1943 of a copy of the V.O.S.L. being presented to a Candidate after Initiation. A donation by a P.M. enabled the Lodge to commence this pleasing practice. During these war years Serving Members had their subscriptions reduced to 10/6.

The Lodge continued to function smoothly until 1953 when it became necessary to find alternative accommodation as Frascati's was sold for development. At the last meeting to be held there after 40 years the W.M. (W.Bro Tilden) invited W.Bro W.R. Simmonds the eldest P.M. present to occupy the Chair to close the Lodge.

The next three meetings were held at The Holborn Restaurant until arrangements were completed for the transfer to the Oxford St Corner House in December 1954 and this remained the Lodge venue for 12 years.

During these 12 years both W.Bro. Ramsay and W.Bro. J. May celebrated their 50 years in the Metropolitan. The former in 1960 when he was presented with a set of suitably inscribed Pens & Pencils and the latter in 1962 when he presented a Silken Banner to the Lodge to mark the occasion.

In 1966 the Lodge moved to Colonial House in Mincing Lane, E.C.3 but difficulties soon arose and in 1968 arrangements were made for our meetings to be held at The Royal Angus Hotel, Coventry Street, W.1.

About this time Metropolitan Lodge joined with others to form a Central London Masonic Centre to acquire premises in the area but after several years work and much effort the scheme proved impracticable.

In 1969 W.Bro Jack May, for health reasons, had to relinquish the Secretaryship, an office he had held for 40 years. The Brethren presented him with a Gold Fountain Pen to show their appreciation of his services. He passed away in December 1971 after 59 years of devoted service to the Lodge. In his memory the brethren of the Lodge contributed to the purchase of a charity box in the form of a broken column with a suitably engraved brass plate, and also a substantial donation was made to the Royal Masonic Hospital.

During the summer of 1970- a particularly wet one - some of the Lodge furniture was flooded in the basement of the Angus Hotel but fortunately most of the damage was able to be repaired with the help of several members of the Lodge.

Re-development again forced a change of venue and since October 1973 the meetings have been held at the Angus Restaurant, 74 Regent Street, W.1.

During the hundred years under review the Lodge has accepted many Initiates and Joining members. It has also had the pleasure of entertaining many hundreds of guest-brothers, whose presence has undoubtedly contributed in large measure to the enjoyment of its meetings.

Metropolitan Brethren have always been drawn from men in a variety of professions and occupations in and around London and the Home Counties.

A century is a long time but for all that the common practice of Charity and Relief links the present members with their antecedents of a hundred years ago and the Tenets of Freemasonry are kept to the fore-front as they were in 1874.

Charity is virtue that should be practised but not advertised; but a discreet reference to the benevolence of the Lodge and Brethren over the years is not out of place in this brief history, considering the high place it occupies in the ideals of the Craft. The Lodge, as has been noted, is a Foundering Lodge of the Royal Masonic Hospital and a Recorded Lodge of the Masonic Million Memorial.

To mark the Centenary it is the intention that each of the Institutions and the Royal Masonic Hospital shall be presented with a cheque for £100.

Invitations are being sent to many Masonic friends, Principals of the Metropolitan Chapter and Masters of our Founders' Lodge.

A report of the proceedings on this occasion will have to wait until the future, but no chronicle would be complete without a feeling of humility and gratitude for the Hundred years of service to Masonry that have passed.

Anniversaries are not only times for reflection but also of re-dedication- may we therefore re-dedicate ourselves to emulate the aspiration of the Founders of the Metropolitan Lodge.

Looking to the future - and knowing what the Lodge had achieved in the past - we journey onwards with confidence well equipped with reasonable resources and eager to resolve the problems and to enjoy the opportunities that lie ahead.

See Lists of Masters, Treasurers, Secretaries, D.C's, Tylers & Meeting Places below.

WORSHIPFUL MASTERS
OF THE METROPOLITAN LODGE No. 1507

1874	Willing, J.	1918	Williams, Geo. T.
1875	Michael, J. J.	1919	Cooksey, Maximillian F.
1876	Williams, T.	1920	Magnus, Dick
1877	Kingham, R.T	1921	Ramsay, David G.
1878	Douglas John	1922	Simmons, Wm. R.
1879	Scales, Chas J.	1923	Widdowson, Marmaduke
1880	Side, Wm.	1924	May, Augustus Wm.
1881	Stiles, Wm M.	1925	Moore, Eric
1882	Stiles, Henry	1926	May, John A.
1883	Clark, Geo.	1927	Hess, Arthur Jas.
1884	Edwards, Geo.	1928	Beesley, Percy G.
1885	Lovegrove, Henry	1929	Medhurst, Henry J.
1886	Knight, Geo. W.	1930	Widdowson, Ernest B.
1887	Edmonds, Thos. G.	1931	Bridges, Geo. R.
1888	Dimsdale, Frank Wm.	1932	Neate, Fred G.
1889	Davey, Wm.	1933	Thompson, Ernest E.
1890	Bates, Wm. T.	1934	Harris, Walter
1891	Perks, Fred J.	1935	King, John Wm.
1892	Fraser, Robert W.	1936	Williams, Edward A.
1893	McEwan, John G.	1937	Nicols, Reginald W.
1894	Alaway, Robert	1938	Nicols, Cyril E.
1895	Saunders, John F.	1939	Cattermole, Sidney Wm.
1896	Bates, Jos.	1940	Milligan, Francis
1897	Moggridge, James H.	1941	Nation, Jos. W. R.
1898	Barry, Wm.	1942	Long, Henry, J.
1899	Hawkins, Edwin E.	1943	Clark, John Geo.
1900	Steers, Elijah G.	1944	Wheate, Wm. T.
1901	Bradley, Alfred C.	1945	King, Lawrence W.
1902	Thompson, Wm. R.	1946	Aylett, Fred E.
1903	Newman, Henry W.	1947	Magson, Reginald W.
1904	Hanniball, Jos. W.	1948	Gibbs, Stanley
1905	Hess, John	1949	Evans, Edwards J.P.
1906	Hess, Albert	1950	Kelly, Williams E.
1907	Jackson, Arthur	1951	Collier, Fred G.
1908	Churchill, Wm. R.	1952	Wallington, Walter J.
1909	Nicols, Wm. H.	1953	Tilden, Henry E.
1910	Dear, Robert J.	1954	Clarke, Edward J.
1911	Moore, Alfred	1955	Shepherd, Jos.
1912	Marvin, Edward J.	1956	Dykes, Ernest B.
1913	Trigg, Samuel G.A.	1957	Partridge, Wm. A.
1914	Chadwick, Arthur G.F.	1958	Low, Leonard W.
1915	Lorimer, Alexander H.	1959	Baskerville, Wm. C.
1916	Lloyd, Gabriel	1960	Diggins, Walter H.
1917	Coombes, Thos. J.	1961	Middleditch, Stanley E.

**WORSHIPFUL MASTERS
OF THE METROPOLITAN LODGE No. 1507**

1962 Sherburn, F.A.	1969 Chilton, J.E.
1963 Seales, L.G.	1970 Brittain, A.D.
1964 Kind, K.	1971 Judd, H.D.
1965 Diggins, Philip A.	1972 Burden, A.E.
1966 Randall, D.G.	1973 Spencer, R.B.
1967 Keska, Joseph	1974 Appleton, N.A.J.
1968 Hotchkiss, A.I.	

TREASURERS

1874/1876 Rose, R
1876/1897 Willing, J
1897/1912 Stiles, W. M.
1912/1937 Barry, W.M.
1938/1958 May, A.W.
1959/1965 Magson, R.W.
1966/1974 Tilden, H.E.
1974/ Hotchkiss, Allan I.

SECRETARIES

1874/1877 Tims, G.
1877/1878 Stiles, W.M.
1879/1881 Michael, J.J.
1882 Stiles, W.M.
1883/1890 Perks, F.J.
1890/1891 Scales, C.J.
1892/1928 Perks, F.J.
1929/1969 May, J.A.
1969/1974 Randall, D.G.

DIRECTOR of CEREMONIES

- 1874/1915 For these years the office was treated as a Progressive Office between
Steward and Inner Guard
- 1916/1932 Hess, John
- 1933/1948 Ramsay, D.G.
- 1949/1959 Beesley, P.G.
- 1960/1964 Nation, Jos.W.R.
- 1965/1967 Kelly, Wm. E.
- 1967/1972 Clarke, E.J.
- 1972/ Low, L.W.

TYLERS

- 1874/1884 Daly, H.
- 1884/1886 Smith, Saml.
- 1886/1905 Whiting, Richd.
- 1905/1926 Passenger, Henry
- 1926/1928 Hudson, G.
- 1928/1938 Wright, J.M.
- 1938/1939 Eyre, J.
- 1939/1954 Mills, Edward J.
- 1954/1972 Studdeard, Thos.
- 1972/ Prentis, H.B.

Meeting Places

1874/1877 The Metropolitan Club, 269 Pentonville Rd, Kings Cross, N

1877/1913 Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, EC

1913/1953 Restaurant Frascati, Oxford Street, W1

1954 The Holborn Restaurant, High Holborn, WC1

1954/1966 The Oxford Corner House, 14 Oxford Street, W1

1966/1968 Colonial House, Mincing Lane, EC

1968/1973 Royal Angus Hotel, Coventry Street, W1

1973 Angus Restaurant, 74 Regent Street, W1