

# The Life and History of our Lodge

A lodge history goes way beyond the day that it was founded. It builds upon masonry within its local area, or province, and involves many brethren that sadly are no longer with us. Researching and documenting any lodge history is indeed a mammoth task and it is thanks to the efforts of **W. Bro. Roy Sydney** that the history of The Royal Sovereign Light Lodge No. 6630 is so well documented. The History of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge runs to several pages so we trust you will find the content both enlightening and of interest.

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## The Founding of our Lodge

Our lodge Temple was born from a desire by the members of the Hadrian Lodge No. 2483 to have its own dedicated building in which to hold its meetings, that had for many years taken place at the Devonshire Hotel. The Hadrian Lodge was founded in 1893 and stems from the Anderida Lodge No. 2434.

Prior to the laying of the foundation stone on 1st May 1931, by R.W.Bro. Major R.L.Thornton ,CBE, DL, Prov.G.Master, the members of the lodge formed a procession through the town in full regalia. It must have been an impressive sight to behold as this public parade of freemasons was one of a very few occasions such an event took place in the history of the town, or in local freemasonry.



Records tell of the members dressed in frock coats and silk hats. The ceremony itself was well documented by the local "Bexhill Observer" as having a strong religious element. The vessels containing corn, wine and oil, having been conveniently placed, together with the mallet, the Worshipful Master of the Hadrian Lodge asked the Provincial Grand Master to lay the stone.

After an appropriate address and a prayer, a box containing coinage and records was deposited in a cavity, which would be sealed upon the lowering of the stone. The architect then presented the Prov.G. Master with a beautifully engraved silver trowel to spread the cement. The stone was lowered in three distinct stages while the hymn "O God our help in ages past" was sung. Having proved the stone with the plumb rule, the level and the square, it was declared "duly prepared, truly laid and the craftsmen have worked well".

From the Cornucopia, the Prov.G. Master scattered corn - *the emblem of plenty and abundance* - from the ewers he poured wine - *the emblem of joy and cheerfulness* - and oil - *the emblem of peace and unanimity*.

*Quoted from a book by W.Bro. J.E.Du Merton*

## Before the Light

To begin to appreciate the founding and the development of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge, it is helpful, if not essential, to know at least a little about Sussex Lodges in general and the important parts that particular lodges have played in its history.

There can be no better place to start the research needed to supply this requirement than the excellent publication by W.Bro. H.R.Dixon, P.A.G.D.C., P.P.S.G.W., "The History of Freemasonry in Sussex". This was published in 1974 in connection with

the bicentenary of the appointment of the first Provincial Grand Master for Sussex. It is without doubt essential reading and has proved to be invaluable to me as I have traced the route of development which led to the founding of our own Lodge. In my humble opinion it ought to be on the compulsory study list of every Sussex Mason. Much of what appears in this first chapter is taken directly or indirectly from this publication.

At the time of the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1814, the lodges in Sussex were:-

1. Howard Lodge of Brotherly Love No. 56 warranted in 1736 - meeting at Littlehampton, but originally in Arundel.
2. Royal Clarence Lodge No. 271 warranted in 1789 - meeting in Brighton.
3. South Saxon Lodge No. 311 warranted in 1796 - meeting in Lewes.
4. Royal York. Lodge No. 315 warranted in 1797 - meeting now at Brighton but at Seaford up to 1824 as the Royal Cinque Port Lodge.
5. Lodge of Harmony warranted in 1799 and combined with the Derwent Lodge No. 40 in 1817 - meeting at Hastings.
6. Lodge of Friendship warranted in 1811 combined with the Lodge of Harmony (Atholl Lodge) in 1828 as the Lodge of Union, No. 38 - meeting in Chichester.
7. Lodge of Harmony (Atholl Lodge) warranted in 1812 combined with the Lodge of Friendship in 1828 as the Lodge of Union, No. 38 - meeting in Chichester.
8. Derwent Lodge No. 40 warranted in 1813 - combined with the Lodge of Harmony in 1817.



To these should be added the lodge for which the period between the Petition and the issue of the warrant, bridged the Union. That is, the Wellington Lodge No. 341 warranted in 1814, which met and still meets in Rye.

From these are descended all the lodges in Sussex except Selsey Lodge No. 3571, which was sponsored by Robert Mitchell Lodge No. 2050, London, primarily for a group of business men working in London and living in or frequently visiting Selsey.

The early roots of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge begin with the Royal Clarence Lodge No. 271, Brighton which has sponsored only three Lodges, but from two of these, namely South Saxon Lodge No. 311 and Worthing Lodge of Friendship No.851, are descended directly or indirectly, all the Lodges in Brighton, Worthing and Central Sussex. The South Saxon Lodge No. 311, Lewes, has sponsored nine daughter Lodges, of which the earliest is Royal York No. 315, Brighton, from which are descended most of the Brighton Lodges and, most important for us, the Hartington Lodge No. 916, Eastbourne from which is descended a different group.

On the 19th. March 1862, the South Saxon Lodge sponsored a petition for a new Lodge in Eastbourne and a warrant was issued on the 26th. May 1862 for the Hartington Lodge No. 916 which was consecrated at the Diplocks Hotel Eastbourne on July 6th 1862. On the 20th. June 1866 the P.G.M. consecrated the Tyrian Lodge No. 1110 at the Lamb Hotel, Eastbourne whose founders included members of South Saxon Lodge and the sponsoring lodge, Hartington. The Tyrian Lodge No. 1110 in turn has sponsored seven daughter lodges through which are descended six more at Eastbourne, Bexhill and Herstmonceux. Of these, one is the Hadrian Lodge No. 2483, the sponsor of both the Bexhill Lodge No. 4898 and the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge No. 6630.

In 1953 W.Bro. Ivor Grantham prepared a chart showing the descent of all the lodges in Sussex up to that date. There were then 107 lodges in the province with a total roll of 7835.

When the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge was consecrated in May 1948 there were 92 lodges with a total roll of 6531 and when W.Bro. H.R. Dixon was about to publish his work in 1974 there were 148. As this paper is prepared (1993) there are 171 lodges with a total roll of 8611 representing an average number of 50 members per lodge. These figures are very different from those that showed that in 1854 when Provincial Grand Lodge was revived there were just 8 lodges in the province with a total roll of 199.

On the 16th. of October 1947, the M.W. Grand Master, His Grace the Duke of Devonshire installed the V. Rev. Alfred Thomas Arthur Naylor, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.A., Dean of Battle as the new Provincial Grand Master for Sussex. He succeeded Major Robert Thornton, C.B.E., D.L., who had died on the 19th March 1947 and it was the new Provincial Grand Master who on May 1st 1948 consecrated the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge No. 6630 at the Wilton Road Temple, Bexhill-on-Sea.

We now need to look at the circumstances that lead to the decision to form a new lodge in the town and to help with that area of research we must turn to the old minute books and early correspondence.

### **In the Beginning**

It is clear from early correspondence that the first steps towards the formation of a third lodge in Bexhill were taken before the start of the Second World War and that W.Bro. F.E. Poulton, P.G.P., P.P.G.R., the then Secretary of the Hadrian Lodge No. 2483 was very active in this respect.

A letter from W.Bro. Poulton was received by the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Robert Lawrence Thornton on the 28th August 1936, informing him of the good position of the Wilton Road Temple and enclosing a copy of the Hadrian Lodge accounts. In his reply dated 17th September 1936, the Provincial Grand Master expressed his concern that the formation of the Bexhill Lodge had not

relieved the Hadrian Lodge to any appreciable extent and that in his humble opinion there was room for a third lodge in Bexhill. He was sure that a third lodge would reduce No. 2483 a little, encourage the numbers of candidates coming forward and increase the chances of young masons reaching the chair.



The Second World War became a reality and it is not until 5th June 1947, three months after the death of R.W.Bro. Robert Lawrence Thornton that W.Bro. Poulton wrote to the Provincial Grand Secretary. This was following a meeting of the standing committee of the Hadrian Lodge and a request for the necessary forms and instructions for an application for a new lodge to be made to the Provincial Grand Master. By this time the number of members of the Hadrian Lodge had topped 100 and there was a continuing influx of candidates into Freemasonry so a third lodge for Bexhill was as much necessary as it was desirable.

A positive reply was typed on 10th June 1947, and the request was put before the Deputy Provincial Grand Master in Charge. Following consultation with the Provincial Grand Master Designate, permission was granted to go ahead and the requisite Form of Petition and instructions were received on 19th November 1947. Now began the task of collecting together the names of those brethren who wished to be founders of the new lodge and it was W.Bro. Poulton who took up this challenge.

### **The Founders**

W.Bro. Poulton set about collecting the names of those brethren who wished to be founders. This entailed the applicants completing a form giving their name, masonic history, residence and trade or profession and paying a founders fee of 5 guineas. The list that follows was closed with a total of 24 names, many of which are well remembered in the history of Bexhill masonry.

1. Richard Allerton-Austin 2593, Osteopath, The Marina, Bexhill.
2. John James Borthwick P.P.G.W. Surrey, 1661, 2096, 5888, retired technical brewer, Chestnut Walk, Little Common.
3. Matthias Walter Catt 2434, 5059, retired bank official, Pebsham Farm, Bexhill.
4. Leonard Frederick Chandler 2483, Master Printer, London Road, Bexhill.
5. Basil Newport Dunster 3736, Chartered Electrical Engineer, London Road, Bexhill.
6. William Francis L.G.R., 5379, 4076, Furrier, Marina Court, Bexhill.
7. Frederick Stanley Gibbs 398, Manager of the Wheatsheaf Inn, Little Common.
8. Ronald Harry Gilliam 1380, Accountant, Pear Tree Lane, Little Common.
9. William Samuel Harris 2841, 3345, 2483, retired Farmer, Cantelupe Road, Bexhill.
10. Alexander Henney, O.B.E. 1208, Master Mariner, Glenleigh Park Road, Bexhill.
11. Harold Hildred 889, 2048, 382, 2483, retired Assurance Manager, Church Lane, Hooe.
12. Norman Frank Hill 3923, 2483, Schoolmaster, London Road, Bexhill.

13. John McIntosh 4315, 2483, French Polisher and Dance Band Leader, Dalehurst Road, Bexhill.
14. James Thomas Herbert Mason P.P.G.D. Surrey 3968, 5688, 5888, 2483, retired Bank Manager, Maple Walk, Little Common.
15. Albert Edward Mears 874, Postmaster-Librarian, Barnhorn Road, Little Common.
16. Herbert Morris 4808, 4326, Company Director, Collington Avenue, Bexhill.
17. Peter Drummond Muirhead 16, 353, 2483, retired, De La Warr Road Bexhill.
18. David Perry 2483, Secretary for East Sussex Hospital Scheme, Eastwood Road, Bexhill.
19. Harry J. Saywood 3190, Wine and Spirit Merchant, Buckhurst Place, Bexhill.
20. Sidney Bailey Selmes 2483, 5273, 40, Trade Organisation Secretary, Boscobel Road North, St.Leonards-on-Sea.
21. William Dougherty Smith P.P.G.D., 2483, Building Industry Clerk, Station Road, Bexhill.
22. Frank Felix Spooner 2918, 2483, Motor Engineer, Woodville Road, Bexhill.
23. Norman Tuckett Spry 2483, Builder and Decorator, Havelock Road, Bexhill.
24. Arthur James Thompson L.G.R., 3910, 5379, Hotelier and retired Purser, Devonshire Hotel, Bexhill.

Sadly, Harry Saywood passed away only a few weeks before the consecration of the Lodge and this then left 23 founders.

**Continued below....**

# An Early Photograph of the Founders

Back row - left to right

Captain Freddie Cross, retired Captain of the Mauretania. Frank Walter, an early initiate. Peter Evershed, an early initiate. Bobbie McClean, a professional golfer. George Collins, an early initiate. Richard Allerton-Austin, steward and a Founder. Tony Mottram, a farmer. Thomas Webb, an early joining member.



Middle row - left to right

Les Cook, an early joining member. Dick Frake, an early initiate. John McIntosh, the first Inner Guard and a Founder. Norman Hill, the first Junior Deacon and a Founder. Norman Spry, the first Senior Deacon and a Founder. Len Chandler, a Founder. Ted Mears, the first A.D.C. and a Founder. Basil Dunster, steward and a Founder. Stan Gibbs, steward and a Founder. David Perry a Founder. Peter Muirhead a Founder. Richard Turner, the first Tyler.

Front row - left to right.

Walter Catt, the first Assistant Secretary and a Founder. John Borthwick, the first Treasurer and a Founder. William Harris, the first Chaplain and a Founder. Frank Spooner, the first Senior Warden and a Founder. Arthur Thompson, the first Master and a Founder. Sydney Selmes, the first Junior Warden and a Founder. Jimmy Mason, the first Secretary and a Founder. Bill Francis, the first D.C. and a Founder. Harold Hildred, a Founder.

It is believed with the best information available, that this photograph was taken in April 1950, in the upstairs dining room of the Devonshire Hotel, Devonshire Square, Bexhill-on-Sea where the lodge held its Festive Boards.

Working closely with W.Bro. Poulton during these early days was W.Bro. Jimmy Mason, and it was he who, following the completion of this list, arranged a meeting for the Founders at the Temple, Wilton Road on Friday 12th December 1947 at 8.00 pm.

It was at this meeting that important issues were to be decided by the Founders. These included the appointment of a first and Founding Master, Secretary, Treasurer and the Wardens, the name of the lodge, the day of the meeting and whether the new lodge was to be dining, or non-dining.

The officers designate were noted as:

1. Master designate - W.Bro. A.J. Thompson.L.G.R.
2. S.W. designate - Bro. F.F. Spooner.
3. J.W. designate - Bro. S.B. Selmes.
4. Treasurer designate - W.Bro. J.J. Borthwick.P.P.G.W. Surrey.
5. Secretary designate - W.Bro. J.T.H. Mason.P.P.G.D.Surrey.

### **Naming the Lodge**

It was particularly important to name the Master and Wardens designate, as under Rule 96 of the Book of Constitutions, the form of petition for warrant must include these three named officers in addition to the signatures of all the regularly registered master masons wishing to become founders. A look at our warrant will reveal the names of W.Bro. Arthur Thompson and Brothers Frank Spooner and Sidney Selmes.

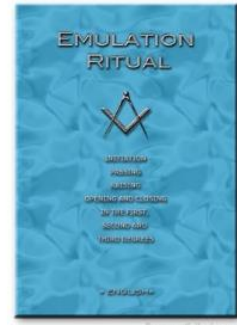
A name or title, as well as a number must distinguish every lodge. Once that name or title is decided and recorded it cannot be changed without the approval of Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge. It is not surprising then, that when this item was discussed on the 12th December it generated a great deal of discussion.

One strong suggestion was that the name of the new lodge be connected with the Earl of De La Warr's family but after much discussion this idea was discarded. Brother Frank Spooner then suggested that the lodge take its name from the **Royal Sovereign Light Vessel** which guarded the dangerous shoals 9 miles off the Bexhill coast and was in clear view to residents and visitors alike. Amongst the founders were both working and retired Master Mariners and it was thought that the name was particularly appropriate. This was unanimously accepted and so the new lodge was named.

The choice of day for the regular meetings also caused much discussion, but as we had 9 founders out of the 24 who worked in London and commuted on a daily basis, it was decided to meet on a Saturday and in addition to be a dining Lodge. At that time the Hadrian and Bexhill Lodges were non-dining. (i.e. dining fees were paid separately to the annual lodge subscription). It was also agreed that the lodge would meet on the third Saturday in the months of February, March, April, September, October and November at such hour as the Master may determine. The Installation

meeting was set as the regular meeting in September; a little different from the present calendar.

With regard to the ritual to be used by the new Lodge, the founders agreed that the first Worshipful Master and first Senior Warden would use the London Ritual, Universal, West End or Taylor's working. Thereafter the lodge would work the Nigerian version of Emulation working, but as the brethren will know, it is the Revised Emulation Ritual of 1986, first published in 1969, that is currently worked.



As a date for consecration was awaited, W.Bro. Jimmy Mason wrote to Trinity House in London informing them that a new Lodge was to be consecrated in the coastal resort of Bexhill-on-Sea and would be named the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge. They were most helpful and gave us permission to use their crest on our communications and included an enlarged copy whilst at the same time sending full details of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel. This initial contact between Trinity House and the lodge began an association which continues to the present day.(2018)

### **The Consecration**

The Consecration of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge took place at the Temple, Wilton Road, Bexhill-on-Sea on Saturday May 1st. at 3.15 p.m.

In view of the limited accommodation that was available in the Temple, admission was by ticket only and early application was advised. Dark morning dress or uniform was requested and Grand Officers appeared in full dress. There were 10 Consecrating Officers led by:

1. The Very Reverend A.T.A. Naylor, the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master who was accompanied and assisted by:
2. W.Bro. F.W.A. Cushman. P. G. D. Dep. Pro. Grand Master.
3. W.Bro. H. Wilfred Aldrich. P. A. G. Reg. Ass. Prov. Grand Master.
4. W.Bro. H.T. Holliday. Prov. S. Grand Warden.
5. W. Bro. E.M. West. Prov. J. Grand Warden.
6. W.Bro. I.G. Teakle. M.A. P. Ass. G. Chaplain. Pro. Grand Chaplain.
7. W.Bro. A.H. Edwards. P. A. G. D. C. Pro. G. D. C.
8. W.Bro. A. Jolly. P. A. G. D. C. Pro. Grand Secretary.
9. W.Bro. Dr. W. Norman Maple. Pro. Grand Organist.
10. W.Bro. Middleburgh. P. P. G. D. C. Ass. Dep. G. D. C.

There were 22 Founders present and the Lodge was honoured by the presence of 132 visitors whose names, ranks, lodges and lodge numbers are all duly recorded in the signature book. Even to those of us who know the Wilton Road Temple well, it is difficult to imagine the subsequent total of 162 brethren seated in the lodge room. At the end of the Consecration Ceremony, the Provincial Grand Master handed the gavel to W.Bro. F.W.A. Cushman, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master who took the Chair, resumed the lodge in the Second Degree and then proceeded with the Installation of the first Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Arthur James Thompson L.G.R. The Worshipful Master then invested the Wardens designate and continued with the



appointment and investiture of the officers of the lodge. The Tyler was elected by a show of hands and following a proposition, it was agreed the Treasurer be appointed by the Worshipful Master.



### **The Early Years**

In the early days of the lodge, by-Laws were drawn up. These were proposed, seconded and unanimously accepted by the brethren at the September meeting in 1948 and included such details as:-

"the Annual Subscription shall be Two Guineas"

"the Initiation Fee shall be Fifteen Guineas"

"and the Joining Fee shall be Four Guineas"

The September meeting also saw the first candidate initiated into the lodge, Bro. Sydney Daley-Yates. The ceremony was performed by the Worshipful Master who also delivered the Charge. At both the February and March meetings in 1949, Item Two on the agenda was to initiate two brethren, followed by Item Three which was to pass two brethren to the degree of a Fellowcraft. Both meetings began at 3.45.p.m. and dinner was served at the Devonshire Hotel at 6.30.p.m. at a cost of eight shillings!

At the Election meeting in April 1949 the Secretary noted in his minutes the following decisions of the Lodge Committee which stated that:

"until a further decision to the contrary progression from the office of Inner Guard to Junior Deacon will be through the office of A.D.C., and that in accordance with No.4 of the Ancient Charges, all preferment will be grounded on real worth and personal merit only. No Master or Warden will be chosen by seniority but for his merit"

"at the Installation meeting Evening Dress would be worn"

"the lodge would hold a Ladies Festival in September"

"for the use of Initiates two sets of pyjamas will be purchased"



The Master Elect at this meeting was Bro. Frank Spooner and as the lodge was closed the brethren looked forward to his Installation in September 1949. There being no further business, the Lodge was then closed in due form with Solemn Prayer and in Perfect Harmony. The Consecration Dinner that followed the meeting was held in the upstairs dining room of the Devonshire Hotel, Post Office Square, Bexhill-on-Sea. This was the home and place of work of the Worshipful Master, Arthur Thompson - 83 brethren paid a dining fee of 15 shillings each.

### **Lodge of Instruction**

At the September meeting of 1948 the brethren were informed that a United Lodge of Instruction would be held together with the Hadrian and Bexhill Lodges on Tuesday evenings. This continued until February 1956 when the sanction of the Lodge was sought to hold a Lodge of Instruction working under the Warrant of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge. Sanction was unanimously granted providing that the

proceedings were in accordance with the Antient Charges, Landmarks and Regulations of the Order and that the Emulation Ritual was taught.

Booklets of the Sussex Masonic Charities, unearthed by W.Bro. Jack MacKenzie, confirm the calendar of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge of Instruction from February 1956 through to February 1969 and are a reminder that the distinguishing feature of a freemason's heart is Charity. In Freemasonry charity plays an important part in a lodge's and a member's life. It is not important how much you give, the expectation is that you give something without detriment to yourself or to your connections.

17th September 1949, saw the Installation of W.Bro. Frank Felix Spooner as the second Worshipful Master of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge. 57 brethren attended the meeting including the Pro.J.W., W.Bro. J.F.W.Cooper, representing the R.W.Prov.Grand Master. On the second rising, a letter from the R.W.Prov.Grand Master was read as follows:

"I much regret that I cannot be present at the Installation of Bro. Spooner. Please give him and all the brethren my best wishes for a happy and successful year. It is good to learn that the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge is in such a healthy state. May 'the unity' of the spirit, which is the bond of peace' ever continue."

Also on the second rising, following a direction from the Pro. Grand Master, a letter was read dealing with the Master's Light dated 7th December 1839 and issued by Grand Lodge. In the letter was confirmation of the decision of Grand Lodge that the Master's Light was **never** to be extinguished while the Lodge was open, nor was it by any means to be shaded or obscured and that no Lanthorn or other device was to be permitted as a substitute.

The reason given was that one of the lights represents the Master, who is always present while the Lodge is open, if not actually in his own person, then by a Bro. who represents him. Without the Master or his representative the Lodge cannot be open so his light cannot be extinguished until the lodge is closed; the two other lights figuratively represent luminaries which at periods are visible but at other times are not.

As the 1940's drew to a close, W.Bro. Frank Spooner completed the year with a double raising at the October meeting and at the ceremony in November passed two brethren followed by the initiation of two candidates.

Clearly an industrious start had been made in the early and formative years of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge and evidence exists up to and including the present day that confirms the continuance of the high standards laid down by our predecessors.

### **Our Lodge during the 1950's**

As the Lodge moved into the new era of the 1950's, candidates for initiation and joining members continued to be welcomed into the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge and steadily the membership grew.

W.Bro. Sidney Selmes was installed in September 1950 as the 3rd Master and on the first rising the secretary reported a communication from Grand Lodge which read:-

"Dark clothing, black tie and white collar should be worn, Masters of Lodges should by example and encouragement lead their members to a standard of dress compatible with the dignity of the Order. Black shoes should always be worn. During 1951, W.Bro. Sidney Selmes' year, Emulation Working was printed on our summons and Provincial Grand Lodge wrote and said that the lodge could not do that. They arranged for the Provincial Grand Master, V. Rev. A.T.A. Naylor to come on his own to an ordinary meeting. After opening the Lodge the P. G. M. asked the founders to join him in the anteroom. He agreed that Province could not make the lodge use the Sussex Working as no such undertaking had been given by the founders. In his view Sussex Working was carried out in a different manner wherever he had been and that for his part he was delighted to see that we had such a positive approach to ritual and he gave us his blessing to continue. The only point that he asked us to comply with was a change to the salutation in the Inner Working. It was agreed to drop the London Salutation that we had been using and adopt the one in use in Sussex.

From the 1st January 1952, it shall be left to the discretion of the Master to decide whether to request the wearing of white gloves. The interests of the members generally must be considered."

In April 1951, the Devonshire Hotel found it necessary, to increase the lodge dining fee from 8 shillings to 8 shillings and 6 pence!

Norman Spry became our 4th Worshipful Master on the 15th. Of September 1951 and at that meeting notice was given of the Royal Sovereign Light Ladies Festival which was to be held at the Sackville Hotel on the 27th of October.

At the November meeting, it was proposed by Brother Secretary and seconded by W.Bro Frank Spooner :

"that a Lodge Banner be purchased as soon as practicable and that a fund be opened for this purpose, to which the brethren will be asked to subscribe either by direct payment or by instalments spread over a period" - The proposition was carried unanimously.



The brethren supported the fund with great enthusiasm and enquiries were able to be made about the cost of a suitable banner without delay. What then had to be decided was what design would be used. W.Bro. L.F. Chandler and W.Bro. F.F. Spooner were charged with this task and appreciating the connection of the lodge with the sea, contacted Trinity House, the Authority responsible for the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel, to see if permission would be granted to incorporate their coat of arms in the banner design. Trinity House were most helpful and not

only did they grant the permission requested but in addition sent a large and detailed drawing of the coat of arms.

### **The Design of our Banner**

The final design decided upon was a subtle blend of the masonic landmarks and maritime influences that reflected the ethos of the lodge in those early years. Close inspection of our banner will reveal that at its head is the name of our lodge inscribed in gold upon a scarlet ribbon. At its centre is a circular representation of one of the early Royal Sovereign Light Vessels, showing a bright and golden beam. Three sailing ships within a regal crown, a clear adaptation of the Trinity House coat of arms, surmount this. Attached to each side of the Light vessel is a dolphin, acknowledged to be the seas most intelligent creature. This centre piece is suspended above the Masonic square and compasses which themselves are centrally positioned beneath the all-seeing eye. The whole of this rests upon a dark blue ribbon with the Lodge inscription, "**The Predominant Wish**" an inscription that is particularly fitting to our lodge.

The lower half of the banner is occupied by the Master's pedestal inscribed with the date of consecration and to one side the jewel of the Senior Warden with the smooth ashlar and to the other the jewel of the Junior Warden complete with the rough ashlar. This is surrounded by light clouds and rests upon a golden plinth which itself supports two great pillars. These are surmounted by representations of the terrestrial and celestial globes pointing out masonry universal.

At the bottom edge is the number of the lodge, that being number 6630 in the register of the Grand Lodge of England. The complete design sits upon a light blue background and is fringed with dark blue and gold tassels.

This completed design was sent to Toye and Co. of London who accepted the commission for the sum of £70-5s-6d. A delivery date was arranged and plans then went ahead for a banner dedication ceremony.

Provincial Grand Lodge agreed to dedicate the banner at the regular meeting on October 18th 1952.

The original 1952 banner survived until March 1990, when the ravages of time dictated that it should be replaced. On this occasion an exact copy was made by Fabb and Co. of Maidenhead and this, our current banner, was dedicated on March 17th 1990. Unfortunately there had been a noticeable amount of inflation and this time the bill was approximately £1200.

### **Dedication Ceremony**

The Banner Dedication Ceremony was held in the Wilton Road Temple on Saturday, 18th of October 1952. This was preceded by a double ceremony of passing beginning at 3.30 pm and was conducted by W.Bro. Norman Hill, our 5th Master. The candidates were Bros. Howard Stokes and Andrew Mowbray.

The Lodge was called off at 5.00.pm when tea was taken, and called on again at

5.30.p.m. The Banner Dedication Ceremony then began and this was presided over by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. F.W.A. Cushman, O.B.E., P. G. D., who was supported by 12 Dedicating Officers. The total attendance was 71 Brethren. On the first rising, Grand Lodge expressed their strong objection to the practice of 'Chain Prayers' and declared it both a threat and un-masonic. They urged that all such documents received by the brethren should immediately be destroyed.

At the November meeting in 1952, the minutes show the first written reference to the link that was to be established between the lodge and the crew of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel and subsequently the Royal Sovereign Light Tower when on the third rising it is recorded:

"Brother Almoner was asked to make a collection at dinner and from the proceeds to purchase and to deliver some small token of our goodwill to the crew of the Royal Sovereign Light Ship. Brethren not staying to dinner were asked to leave their donation with Brother Almoner. The smallest contribution will be thankfully received.



Our late Treasurer, W.Bro. Roy Lane Smith was very keen that the lodge should associate itself with the crew of the Lightship and thought that Christmas would be the most appropriate time"

From thereon, the lodge minutes bear witness to a regular and similar proposition being made and accepted at the November meeting of the lodge. This continued for the next 42 years and only came to an end when in August 1994, the Royal Sovereign Light Tower became fully automated and its crew transferred or retired.

In April 1955, the lodge changed its dining venue from the Devonshire Hotel to the Granville Hotel. Meals then cost 9 shillings and a footnote on the front of the summons pointed out to the brethren - **"No notice of your intention to dine will mean no dinner!"**

The October and November meetings of the lodge in 1955 were unusual in that ceremonies were not performed. A very rare occurrence for the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge! The candidate for the October meeting was unavoidably absent and so the lodge was opened and closed in all three degrees and an explanation of the 2nd. Degree Tracing Board was given by W.Bro. Harris. At the November meeting W.Bro. Frank Spooner gave an explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board and W.Bro. Jimmy Mason gave a short talk about the origins of some of the things that we say and do in our Lodges.

On the 18th February 1956, at the regular meeting, the sanction of the lodge was sought to hold a Lodge of Instruction working under the Lodge Warrant and designated the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge of Instruction, No.6630. Sanction was unanimously granted on the understanding that the proceedings were in accordance with the Ancient Charges, Landmarks and Regulations of the Order. Before this time a 'United Lodge Of Instruction' was held at the Wilton Road Temple on Tuesday

evenings and the responsibility for administering its work and the organisation was shared between the three Bexhill Lodges - Hadrian, Bexhill and Royal Sovereign Light.

March 1958 saw the Annual Subscription raised to three guineas payable at the Installation meeting in September, and brethren residing over 20 miles away and thereby not in a position to enjoy the full privileges regularly were to pay an Annual Subscription of two guineas. The reasons given for this rise in subscriptions were:

""the increased rent demand for the use of the Temple entirely owing to the steadily rising costs both of maintenance and rates and the rising costs in running expenses." - Some things never change!

As the 1950's drew to a close, the records show that our lodge was continuing to grow with a steady number of applications from both initiates and joining members. The lowest attendance recorded was 27 in October 1957, believed to be as a result of a severe bout of influenza whilst the average attendance had increased during the decade from 36 to 50. It was in this healthy state that the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge entered the 1960's.

### **The Swinging 60's**

The new decade began with W.Bro. Gordon Terry as our master and it was his sad duty at the February meeting in 1960 to record the passing to the Grand Lodge above of W.Bro. Arthur James Thompson, the first Master of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge.

On a brighter note at the same meeting the late Bro. Bill Nurse was initiated and became the first of quite a few policemen to be numbered amongst our ranks.



Our next master was W.Bro. Andrew Mowbray and on his Installation Night amongst the proposals for four joining members was one in the name of Bro. Roy Louis Lane Smith. As many members will acknowledge, W.Bro. Lane Smith, as he later became, was a driving force in the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge and is remembered with great love and affection. At the October meeting in 1960, Bro. Richard (Dick) Barnes was passed followed by the raising of Bro. Cedric Andrews.

On the second rising the secretary announced the decision of the Lodge Standing Committee who had met in response to a circular from Provincial Grand Lodge regarding the adoption of Sussex Ritual. The decision was :

"That the brethren alone have the right to regulate their proceedings, (Book of Constitutions, Rule 155).

That it is the wish of the brethren to continue to work the ritual as taught by the Emulation Lodge of Improvement as practised during the last 12 years :

1. For opening and closing the Lodge;
2. For the working of the Three Degrees.

That the Installation Ceremony continue to be worked using Emulation Ritual, with the exception of the Inner Working, that would be according to Sussex Ritual." This motion was carried by an overwhelming majority of the brethren and the decision of the Standing Committee was confirmed.

### **RAF Wartling**

The meeting held in November 1960 saw a second and third degree worked with the candidate in the latter being Bro. R.T.Barnes. Applications were also received at this meeting for, as a joining member Bro. Herbert Hudson and as an Initiate Mr. James Roch. James Roch was a serving RAF Officer and Bro. Hudson a Civil servant. Both men worked at the RAF Station, Wartling.

In the early 60's, the Royal Air Force Station at Wartling was facing closure and of the 85 civilians working there 41 were to be offered other Government posts and the remaining 44, all stated to be married men, were to be discharged. The station was formed as a ground control interceptor unit in 1941 and between 1941 and 1945 took an active part in the destruction of 59 enemy aircraft and the possible destruction of a further 14.

W.Bro. Andrew Mowbray, Master in 1960, said that the brethren who worked at the RAF station and who were also members of the Lodge extended invitations to



several brethren to accompany them back to the Officers' Mess at Wartling following the completion of the Festive Board on lodge evenings. I am also assured that a very happy time was had by those brethren concerned enjoying the last few drinks of the evening before they returned home, sometimes in the early hours of the morning!

In April 1961 the Standing Committee of the lodge recommended that, **"the lodge apply for a petition to form a Chapter working under the warrant of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge No. 6630 and meeting on a Saturday"**.

The brethren were informed that 10 applications had already been received to join a Saturday Chapter and it was felt that the time had come for steps to be taken to supply this need. The brethren unanimously passed the proposal, and on the 24th of March 1962 the Royal Sovereign Light Chapter was consecrated.

From that date on, the brethren of the lodge were reminded on their summons that, **"It should be the aim, as it is the privilege, of every Master Mason, to attain this Supreme Degree"**



### **Dress Code**

The wearing of evening dress for the Lodge meetings was first mentioned in April 1949 but it was September 1962 that saw the introduction of the wearing of dinner jackets for the Installation Meeting. It was however stressed to the brethren that

this was a request and not compulsory and if any inconvenience would be caused then dark suits may be worn. The important matter was attendance.

At the same meeting, Bro. George Grant was Installed as Worshipful Master and it is recorded in the minutes of the February meeting of 1963 that **W.Bro. George personally delivered the Christmas Gifts to the Master and Crew of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel.**

This was the first time that the gifts had been handed over by a member of the Lodge as on previous occasions these had been transferred from the shore to the light vessel by the crew of the Eastbourne Lifeboat.



At this Installation in September 1963, when W.Bro. George King took the Chair, W.Bro. Jimmy Mason retired from the office of Secretary of the Lodge. W.Bro. Frank Spooner made a presentation on behalf of the Lodge to W.Bro. Jimmy Mason in recognition of his untiring devotion and zeal in the execution of his duties as Secretary of the Lodge since its foundation in 1948.

At the same meeting at which W.Bro. Frank Spooner made the presentation to W.Bro Jimmy Mason, a new Tyler was appointed. This was Bro. Ernie Gilbert and many of the brethren who were initiated or became joining members in the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge will remember Ernie as the 'little' man who gave them every assistance as they prepared to take their first or subsequent steps in masonry.



March 21st 1964 saw Bro. Alec Henney, a member of the Lodge, honoured with an appointment to command the largest British tanker. Bro. Alec as Commodore of the BP tanker fleet attended the launch of his new vessel, the "British Admiral" and was presented to Her Majesty the Queen.

September 16th 1967 saw W.Bro. Douglas Holman Installed as the 20th. Master of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge. Following the addresses to the Master, Wardens and Brethren, W.Bro. Holman presented the lodge with a magnificent sword which was worn by his father and himself during their service careers. The sword was to be suitably inscribed and used by Tylers of the Lodge for years to come.

In the minutes for this meeting, first mention is made of the Royal Sovereign Ladies' (Masonic Charities) Association when thanks are received from them for monies sent by the lodge for the provision of teas at the Installation Meeting. As all members of the Lodge are well aware, this is a much-appreciated tradition which is still carried on today by members of this excellent Association.



**The next meeting held on the 18th November 1967 saw a change made to the regular meetings of the Lodge. Following full discussion by the brethren it was proposed that the regular meetings of the lodge shall be in the months of October, November, January, February, March and April. The Installation meeting would remain as the first meeting of the "Masonic Year" in October. This was carried by a majority decision, and subsequently, W.Bro. Richard (Dick) Thomas Barnes was Installed as the 21st Master of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge on 19th October 1968.**

**Our 21st Anniversary** The meeting took place on Saturday 26th April 1969 at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill on Sea at 4 pm precisely with W.Bro. Richard T. Barnes, Master and W.Bro. Albert C. Willmott, Immediate Past Master. Dress was full regalia and dinner jackets.

Included on the agenda for the meeting were items to present a Grand Lodge Certificate, to ballot for as a joining member W.Bro. Fred Brocklebank and to ballot for as candidate for initiation and if elected to Initiate Mr Gordon Eldridge. Item 6 consisted of the annual elections as this was the last meeting before the October Installation.

The election by ballot for Worshipful Master proved unanimously in favour of Bro. Roy Louis Lane Smith. The lodge was honoured with the presence of V.W.Bro. C.H. Mosse, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, and two accompanying Provincial Grand Officers. There were 35 visitors present making a total gathering of 85 brethren in all.

W.Bro. Roy Louis Lane Smith was Installed on Saturday 18th October 1969 and it was he who led the Lodge from the 1960's into the 1970's.

The Royal Sovereign Light Lodge had continued to grow from strength to strength and as it moved into the new decade the membership total stood at 68, with in addition, 5 Honorary Members. Meetings were very well attended by both members and visiting brethren with the average number in the signature book being 55.

### **The 70's**

The first Master of the new decade was W.Bro. John Wilkinson. He was installed at the meeting in October 1970 by W.Bro. Roy Lane Smith when 80 brethren shared the festive board.

January 1971 saw a notice of motion proposing the wearing of dinner jackets at all meetings. This was not adopted, although even today dinner jackets are encouraged to be worn at the Installation Meeting.



A month later the lodge was delighted to receive from Bro. Freddie Ellis of the Tyrian Lodge, one of the very last ensigns to be carried by the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel. This ensign graces our festive board at every meeting. The light vessel was replaced in 1971 by the Royal Sovereign Light Tower.

Another gift gratefully received by the Lodge was the Bible cushion presented by Bro. R.E.MacDonald.

April 1972 saw W.Bro. Vic Spanner initiate another member of the "thin blue line" and on this occasion it was Bro. Ian Greenlow.

Following the April meeting in 1973, there is recorded in the minute book the following report at the festive board. "The W.M. reported that on the occasion of the Lodge's 25th and Silver Anniversary, it was fitting to mark the occasion by presenting a coveted Masonic Hospital silver nurses' buckle to Miss Jacqueline Willmott since she had recently passed her final examinations and had endeared herself to many of the brethren and their families through her kindness to them when staying in hospital. On behalf of the lodge, the W.M. stated that he had made the presentation to an unsuspecting Miss Willmott at Crawley during the previous Sunday afternoon and her expression of appreciation made every part of the presentation more the worthwhile. The W.M. also extended his thanks to Bro. Willmott for his forbearance in allowing the lodge to make the presentation and to Miss Willmott's fiancé for conniving with the Matron to delay Miss Willmott purchasing a buckle on her own account".



It was at the following meeting that W.Bro. Richard Barnes began his many years service as the Lodge Secretary. No single person makes a lodge, but people of the calibre of W.Bro. Dick have done more than most to ensure continued success in the progress of our lodge.

October 1973 saw the chair of the lodge occupied by W.Bro. Bobbie Allen. Sadly in February 1974 W.Bro. Bobbie was taken seriously ill with a stroke and was likely to be incapacitated for quite some time. The Worshipful Master's duties were taken over by the Immediate Past Master, W. Bro. Derek Last. It is recorded in the minutes that there was a great rallying of the brethren to help the lodge and in particular, to assist with the needs of W.Bro. Bobbie Allen.

In April 1974 the lodge received an invitation from Provincial Grand Lodge to send their banner and the model of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel to the 200th Anniversary Celebration of Provincial Grand Lodge. This invitation was happily accepted.

At the Installation meeting later in the year the number of brethren attending topped the 100 mark for the first time since the consecration. 104 brethren signed the attendance register and of those, 100 shared the festive board. Throughout the 70's it is noticeable that the attendance at regular lodge meetings was now usually around 75 to 80.

At the 1975 election meeting in April, no Wardens were available to progress to the chair and so the then Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Derek Last stood for re-election and was elected for a second year in office.

On the 10th April 1976 the author's application for initiation was read. Following a favourable ballot and three double ceremonies conducted by W.Bro. Charles Denton, Bro. Roy Sydney was appointed organist of the lodge, where he was to remain until the time came for him to begin his work on the floor in October 1984.



October 1978 saw the retirement of Bro. Ernie Gilbert after 16 years of service to the lodge as Tyler. His post was taken up by W.Bro. Stuart Elford who himself was to serve for the next 16 years in the same capacity. As this decade neared its end, it must have been very satisfying to the founders and senior past masters of the lodge to see the continuing growth in the number of brethren coming forward, swelling the numbers as joining members and initiates. It was also gratifying to see also the large number of visiting brethren who regularly attended the meetings. It was surely a clear indication to them that the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge was in good health and thriving.

### **The Eighties**

The March meeting of 1986 was a little unusual. In fact it is recorded in the minutes that the ceremony was unique in the history of the lodge.

The candidate for initiation was Keith Mason, a Police Officer. The Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Derek Greenwood invited the following brethren to assist in the ceremony :

As Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Ian Greenlow. as Senior Warden, W.Bro. James Young. as Junior Warden, W.Bro. Tom Cranmer. as Senior Deacon, Bro. Reg Keys. as Junior Deacon, Bro. Allen Fuller. as Inner Guard, Bro. Hugh Shaw. The Charge to the Initiate was given by Bro. William Clements.

All these brethren were either past or serving members of the Police Force as were many of the 40 visitors who attended the meeting and festive board.



In October 1986, W.Bro. Roy Lane Smith retired as Director of Ceremonies and W.Bro. Ian Greenlow took on the duties of that most important office. W.Bro. Ian went on to demonstrate his skill in organising the lodge ceremonies and festive boards in addition to his extensive delivery of masonic charges, tracing boards and addresses.



**Brrrrrr!**

Due to the severe weather being experienced by most of the country, January 1987 saw the shortest ever meeting of the lodge. Just 14 local brethren were able to reach the Temple. Many of the roads around Bexhill were closed by deep snow. The Lodge was opened in due form and with solemn prayer at 5.00 p.m. and the secretary proposed that because of the

extremely severe weather conditions the business of the agenda be deferred until the following meeting. This was seconded by W.Bro. Frank Spooner and agreed by the brethren. The Secretary expressed his sincere thanks to those brethren who had been able to reach the Temple and the lodge was then closed in ancient and solemn form at 5.20 pm, and we all gratefully returned to our firesides!

The October 1987 meeting opened with the sad news of the passing to the Grand Lodge above of two highly, respected and much loved brethren, W.Bros. James Young and Ken Greenlow. W.Bro. Richard Barnes drew the brethren's attention to the extensive masonic and police career of W.Bro. Young and of the distinguished flying record of W.Bro. Ken Greenlow in Wellington bombers during the years of conflict.

On a happier note the November meeting saw the lodge convey their warmest wishes of congratulation to W.Bro. Frank Spooner, our one remaining Founder, on the celebration of his 50 years in Freemasonry. There is scarcely an office in the lodge that W.Bro. Frank had not filled with his usual enthusiasm and attention to detail. A happy milestone aspired to by many, but achieved by so few.

There are also many recorded occasions where Frank has delivered the Charge after Initiation, the Second Degree, Tracing Board, the Traditional History of the Third Degree and presented the explanation of the Grand Lodge Certificate. In addition Frank always encouraged the younger brethren and to this end he opened up his home on Monday evenings to those officers approaching the chair. There are many Past Masters who can reflect on the time spent at "Little Copse", Birchington Close, with grateful thoughts. At the following Festive Board, Frank was presented with an engraved silver tray and a beautifully decorated cake which the assembled brethren felt privileged to share on this happy evening.

At the same meeting the brethren experienced a joyful ceremony where the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Alan Fuller raised his own son, Bro. Robin Fuller. The Wardens for this ceremony, Bros. Roy Sydney and Malcolm Cowlard were tested to the full, as Bro. Robin was well over six feet tall and in the words of his dad was "quite a big lad" - he wasn't exaggerating!



The Election Meeting in April 1989 saw W.Bro. Richard Barnes draw the attention of the brethren to the sad state of our lodge banner. Many years of standing in an atmosphere of high humidity in the temple had taken its toll and the banner was now beyond repair. It was agreed that a fund should be started and events organised to obtain a replacement as soon as possible. Estimates for supplying a new Lodge Banner were sought and W.Bro. Roy Lane Smith and Bro. Roy Sydney were subsequently despatched to Fabb and Company of Maidenhead to confirm the final price, design and delivery date of the new banner.

Fund raising events to meet the necessary target of £1200 went ahead throughout the year, the required sum of money was realised by the end of 1989 thanks to the brethren and their families support at events organised, as well as individual cash donations. Approaches were then made to the Provincial Grand Secretary to apply for a Banner Dedication.

In the meantime the newly installed Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Roy Sydney had received permission from Trinity House to personally take the annual Christmas gifts out to the keepers of the Royal Sovereign Light Tower on the 15th December. The journey was made by helicopter and after distributing the gifts and communicating the best wishes of the brethren to the crew he was given a guided tour of this magnificent structure. This was the first time that a member of the lodge had delivered the Christmas packages in such a manner.

Back on 'terra firma' the lodge celebrated another "first" when it held a Christmas Carol Service for the brethren and their family and friends in the Wilton Road Temple. The evening was very well supported with an attendance in excess of 90 people, a hot pie and pea supper at the home of the Worshipful Master and his Lady followed an enjoyable afternoon.

As the 1980's drew to a close the brethren were able to look forward with great anticipation to the Banner Dedication Ceremony now scheduled for March 1990.

### **The Nineties**

In February 1990 the brethren enjoyed a third degree ceremony conducted by the Past Masters of the lodge and on this occasion the lodge was closed in all three degrees. This was unique for the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge and is still unusual to see in other lodges in the Province.

17th March 1990 saw the eagerly awaited Banner Dedication. W.Bro. Richard H. Mosse, P.S.G.D. the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, led the Officiating Officers, a team of 13 Acting Provincial Officers including our own Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro. Ian Greenlow, Assistant Director of Ceremonies supported him. The Temple was very full for this happy occasion and in addition to the Officiating Officers there were 29 visitors and 51 members. The Chaplain was W.Bro. The Reverend C.H. Cartwright P.Pr.S.G.W., P.Pr.G.Chap. and it was he who delivered a moving oration during the ceremony. Following the ceremony in the Temple the brethren subsequently dined together at the Granville Hotel. The highlight of the Festive Board was the presentation by W.Bro. Richard Barnes of a beautiful cake, decorated

with a representation of the new lodge banner. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master and the Worshipful Master ceremoniously cut the cake which was then shared with all the brethren. Later in the year the new banner was displayed at the annual Provincial meeting held in the Town Hall at Worthing.

As the Lodge progressed through the early years of the new decade, two highly respected and much loved brethren passed to the Grand Lodge above. They were W.Bro. Jack Cousins and W.Bro. Roy Lane Smith:

W.Bro. Jack will always be remembered for his happy disposition and unassuming nature. At our lodge meetings today, the Worshipful Masters are proud to wear the collar purchased in his memory as a gift from his daughter Rita.

W.Bro. Roy Lane Smith was an outstanding character in every way. He will always be remembered for the excellent Lodge of Instruction suppers that he organised and which were enjoyed so much. Also for the guiding hand he gave to so many brethren as both Preceptor of the Lodge of Instruction and Director of Ceremonies of the Lodge. Recent Masters of the lodge are also proud to wear the Past Masters' Jewels that were provided in his memory.

### **A Founders' Jewel at last!**

When the lodge was founded in 1948, Founders' Jewels were not purchased. However, in the Summer of 1992, a Garden Party was organised by W.Bro. Reg Keys, specifically to raise funds for the purchase of Past Masters Jewels and it was the wish of the brethren that at the same time a Founders' Jewel be acquired and presented to W.Bro. Frank Spooner. At the Installation Meeting in October 1993, when W.Bro. Bill Clements was Installed, a presentation of the one and only Founders' Jewel of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge was made to W.Bro. Frank Spooner, a Lodge Founder and our lodge's first Senior Warden.

On the 21st March 1992 the candidate for initiation was Mr Kevin Greenlow. Kevin was the Bro. of the then lodge Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro. Ian Greenlow and the son of the late W.Bro. Ken Greenlow. Kevin proved to be the first of a number of brethren whose place of work is the "permanent way".



The November meeting of 1992 heard W.Bro. Tom Cranmer give an interesting report on the proceedings at the 275th Anniversary Meeting of the Grand Lodge of England.

In February 1993 the Lodge held a Past Masters' Night and for the ceremony W.Bro. Ian Greenlow occupied the Master's Chair. I am sure that it gave him much pleasure to raise his own brother, Kevin, an occasion that we all enjoyed.

The October meeting of 1993 proved to be a very happy and special occasion. Bro. Bill Clements became our Worshipful Master and our remaining Founder, W.Bro. Frank Spooner received from the Assistant Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. Donald

E. Durrant, P.S.G.D., a certificate to mark his 50th year in freemasonry, which had not been available in 1988. The Assistant Provincial Grand Master gave a report on the distinguished civil service and masonic careers of W.Bro. Frank which reminded all the brethren present of just how much Frank has given to his country and to the lodge over many years. To complete the evening, W.Bro. Bill Clements then presented W.Bro. Frank with a new and the only Founders' Jewel to mark the brethren's appreciation.

Sadly also in October 1993 the Lodge learnt of the passing to the Grand Lodge above of W.Bro. Charles Denton. Charles fought a severe illness for many years and will always be remembered for his excellent ritual and delivery.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Preparations**

The Lodge General Purposes Committee met prior to the November meeting and it was then that a working party was established to make plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge. The initial members were W.Bros. Malcolm Cowlard, Bill Clements, Derek Greenwood and Roy Sydney. Brother Mike West and W.Bro. George Gibson later joined them.

On 15th January 1994, the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Bill Clements conducted a 1st Degree ceremony and following the Charge after Initiation, an explanation of the First degree Tracing Board was given by W.Bro. James Knight of the Bexhill Lodge. This was at the invitation of the Worshipful Master and enjoyed by all the brethren. The evening was completed with a poem entitled, "The Initiate".

After completing 16 years as the Temple Tyler, W.Bro. Stuart Elford retired from his post in October 1994 and was elected a Honorary Member of the lodge. We were all used to seeing Stuart outside the door of the lodge and it is now good to see him "in the warm" for a change. The office was taken up by W.Bro. David Lane. Also at the October meeting Bro. John Carey was installed as the 47th Worshipful Master and his first ceremony in November was one of those special occasions when a father initiates his son.

It was with great sadness that on 22nd December 1994 the news was received of the sudden death of our remaining founder W.Bro. Frank Spooner. On passing to the Grand Lodge above, Frank will leave behind many brethren who have benefited so much from his guidance and kindness. The Royal Sovereign Light Lodge became the great light in his life particularly in his later years and we will all miss so fine a man and a mason.

The lodge was struck with further tragedy when on 10th April 1995, W.Bro. Richard 'Dick' Barnes died following a short but severe illness. Dick will always be remembered for his excellent ritual and sharp wit. A speech given by W.Bro. Dick either at the Festive Board or at Ladies' Festivals always held the complete attention of his audience and was enjoyed and appreciated by all those fortunate enough to

be present. A glance around the honours boards in our Temple will show how busy a mason Dick was and as with everything he did, no effort was too great to achieve the perfection of ritual and presentation that was his hallmark. He is greatly missed by all who knew him and the standards that he set down for us to strive to achieve are a fitting tribute to such a dedicated mason and so fine a man.

The loss of two so highly respected brethren came as a sad blow to us all, but their memories will never be forgotten.

### **Towards the Millennium**

We left off at that time in our history which saw the lodge rapidly approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> year. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary working party, established in 1993, had been hard at work looking at ways in which the occasion could be celebrated and planning a wide variety of fund raising ideas to enable the activities to go ahead.

Amongst the foremost of these were teddy bear raffles, a pie and pea evening, a number of barbeques, big breakfasts, a selection of garden parties, a valentine evening, gourmet evenings, many taxing quizzes, hot cross bun mornings and mince pie and coffee mornings. In addition Christmas Carol evenings, established in 1989 by W. Brother Roy Sydney and Mrs Susan Sydney, were held in the lodge room, at the Mermaid Restaurant and later in the Manor Barn.



As plans progressed it was agreed that a meal would be arranged at the Powdermills Country House Hotel, Battle, to celebrate the Golden Jubilee when the brethren would be joined by wives, family and friends. In addition we were delighted to welcome the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master for Sussex, Right Worshipful Brother Ian Homan Lay, and Mrs. Jill Lay as our guests.

After the meal the brethren were presented with an engraved and polished English Pewter hip flask with a ceramic disc of the lodge's crest on it and the ladies received a single golden rose. We were then entertained by the "Regency Singers" who performed a varied programme of popular songs.

Following the publication of 'Towards the First 50 Years', W. Brother Peter Bulmer and W. Brother Roy Sydney spent many hours researching and preparing a presentation entitled 'The First Fifty Years'. This included the use of appropriate music from the time, drama, narration and costume. This was performed at the Anniversary Lodge meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1998 when W. Bros. Peter Bulmer and Roy Sydney were assisted by budding actors W Bros. Bill Clements, Reg Keys, George Gibson, Ren Phillimore and Richard Parker, Alan Fuller, Malcolm Cowlard, Derek Greenwood, Mike West and Keith Mason. It lasted one hour and was very well received by the brethren including the R.W. Provincial Grand Master.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 1998 saw the lodge room taken over by a display of Royal Sovereign Light Lodge memorabilia. Much of what was on display were items found in the lodge room cupboards, the contents of past minute books, gifts from the



crews of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel and Tower and contributions, such as Ladies' Nights menus, summonses and photographs from the brethren themselves. Families and friends were invited to enjoy the display and also the tea and cake which was provided.

In response to requests made by several of the lodge members, the 'First Fifty Years' was presented to the brethren and their families and friends in the Wilton Road Centre at a later date in December 2000.

## **2000**

And so the new millennium was upon us. Time seemed to have flown by. One thing was clear and that was the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge No. 6630 went into the new era with a healthy membership of 80 and with sufficient candidates to ensure ceremonies for the next 18 months

## **New Owners**

The Royal Sovereign Light Lodge holds its meetings in the Masonic Centre, Wilton Road, Bexhill-on-Sea as do the Hadrian and Bexhill Lodges. The Hadrian Lodge owned the building outright. Over a number of years it became clear that a fair amount of maintenance was needed to keep the building in good order. In many parts of the country Masonic lodges were finding it ever-more difficult to attract new members both for joining and as candidates for initiation. This subsequent fall in numbers and income made funding the necessary maintenance program difficult. Following a meeting of the Hadrian lodge members it was put to the other two lodges that the way forward was for each lodge to hold a one third interest in the building. This would provide additional funds which would enable the work to go ahead.

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 1997 the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge held a Special G.P.C. meeting to discuss the situation and the third share proposal was approved. Each lodge would be represented by 2 trustees and W. Brother Bill Clements and W. Brother Derek Greenwood agreed to accept this responsibility. The legal work progressed and in April 1998 the proposals were ratified.

W. Brothers Bill and Derek gave reports on the progress being made and it became clear that the necessary work was being tackled as and when funds allowed. Upon the death of W. Brother Bill Clements, W. Brother Derek Last became a trustee.

## **R.S.L.L. 100 Club**

The R.S.L.L.100 Club is run by the brethren for the brethren and their families. A draw takes place at the six Festive Boards in the year which the brethren eagerly await. Cash generated by this draw is shared between winning tickets and good causes including masonic and non-masonic. Since its inception in 1998 it has

supported the Lodge Benevolent Fund, the Sussex 2004 Festival and most recently a local Scout Group.

### **Brethren, be seated**

In January 2000, it was brought to the attention of the brethren that some of the original furniture of the lodge was in need of some remedial work, particularly 40 of the chairs. After close examination it was agreed to refurbish the worst of these. A quotation for repair was obtained and that provided the stimulation to find out how difficult it would be for a small working party to carry out the work, given some guidance. Some chairs needed new seat pads and others needed a jolly good clean and re-polish. W. Brother Reg Keys organized the volunteers into shifts during the summer and within a few days the job was done. The saving of £1,000 was well worth the effort.



### **Gratefully Received**

When the lodge was formed in 1948 a number of gifts were given by the founders and early joining members. This is normal when a new lodge is formed. Some of these items are still in use today. However, there have, since those early days, been other gifts some of which are noted below.

A 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cake by W. Brother Derek Greenwood

A large projector screen by W. Brother Ren Phillimore

A square and compass set from W. Brother Russell Bew

A banner display case made by Brother Albert Freeman

Ballot balls and their box made by Brother Albert Freeman

Ballot box from W. Brother Roy Sydney

Home made masonic teddy bears by Mrs. Pat Keys

Master's Collar by W. Brother Jack Cousins' daughter, Rita

Third Degree sheets by the efforts of W. Brother Ren Phillimore

A heavy maul hand turned by W. Brother Charles Tozer

A pair of deacons' wands presented by the Lodge of Instruction.



A beautiful set of Firing Glasses together with an illuminated glass case, an extensive library of Quatuor Coronati research books and a painting of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel now displayed in the masonic centre were all presented by W.Bro. David Wallis.

Beautifully crafted wooden squares presented by W.Bro. Richard Parker.

A set of square and compasses to be used on initiation ceremonies presented by Mrs Ilsa Cranmer in memory of the late W.Bro. Tom Cranmer, a highly respected member of our lodge.

A set of 3 gavels and striking plates for the WM, SW and JW in memory of the late Chris Perry.

Proceeds from the Birthday Garden Party of W.Bro. Terry Wood are to be used to provide Masonic jewels. If I have failed to acknowledge anyone's gift to the lodge I apologise and trust that it will be included in the next Anniversary update.

***Thankyou, all***

### **Freemasonry in the Community**

In the early months of the new millennium, lodges were contacted by the United Grand Lodge of England with the details of a nationwide initiative. The idea was to present to the general public the true picture of Freemasonry in their community and that to concentrate our efforts nationwide over an agreed period of time would have maximum impact. Working parties were formed, ideas were discussed and investigated and from the reports received from other provinces it was clear that this initiative had the support of the brethren at large despite a few early concerns.

It was agreed that the three lodges in Bexhill should join forces and work together to present an open-day with display at the Masonic Centre, Wilton Road on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2002 and a Garden Party with cream teas and entertainment on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June.

The event in the Masonic Centre enabled the brethren of all three lodges to put on display details of their history together with some artifacts of interest.



Complimentary tea/coffee and biscuits were offered and over 70 members of the public took the opportunity to see inside the Masonic Centre. Brethren acting as stewards were encouraged to wear their

usual regalia and to be prepared to answer any questions presented by our visitors.

The Garden Party with cream teas and entertainment was also very well supported on the following day. We were delighted to be invited to hold this event in the garden of W. Brother George Rogers and Mrs. Wendy Rogers. Bexhill-on-Sea. Observer Senior Reporter Mr. John Dowling opened the Garden Party. A variety of garden games were in evidence as brethren, families and friends tried their luck and in addition garden and book stalls added interest to the day. The Hooe Silver Prize Brass Band provided some excellent musical entertainment during the day and the whole event had an unmistakable aura of a typical English summer garden party.

The recipients of the profits for the week-end were the Bexhill Homestart and the Friends of Bexhill Hospital. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Worshipful Brother Kenneth E. Thomas made the cheque presentations at the end of the day.

### **The R.M.B.I. 2004 Festival**

Throughout the 1990's and forwards to 2004, the brethren of Sussex worked towards a successful 2004 R.M.B.I. Festival. A very wide and varied list of fund raising events illustrated the great commitment and support for the 2004 Festival given by the brethren of our lodge. In Bexhill-on-Sea the three craft lodges in the town, The Hadrian Lodge, The Bexhill Lodge and The Royal Sovereign Light Lodge, worked together to plan a Summer Garden Party and Barbeque. The proceeds of this venture were to go to the 2004 Festival. Worshipful Brother George Rogers and Mrs. Wendy Rogers once again very kindly offered the setting of their lovely garden at Friar's Charm.

Lots of stalls and competitions made for an interesting and exciting occasion with many members and families coming throughout the course of the day. We were pleased to welcome to this event the R. Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, R. Worshipful Brother Ian Lay and Mrs. Jill Lay.

We were blessed with fine weather and the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge chefs kept everyone supplied with fine food and repartee. Receipts for the event were **£2,321.**



In 1997, W. Brother Peter Bulmer started his quizzes in support of Masonic and non-Masonic charities. To date he has produced eleven and I know that they were welcomed by the brethren. The RMBI 2004 Festival received the proceeds from seven quizzes, the Grand Charity Tsunami Appeal benefited from one quiz, funds from another went to support the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge Benevolent Fund benefited from one quiz and the latest recipient was the Restricted Growth Association. Overall the quizzes have produced in excess of £1000 worth of donations to charities.

Brother Tony Beaden used his artistic talents to produce an excellent oil painting of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel. The painting was auctioned in support of the 2004 Festival by sealed bids and W. Bro. David Wallis was the happy winning bidder.

On 15<sup>th</sup> April 2004 the Province held a Festival Banquet in Brighton as a fitting conclusion to the 2004 Appeal. Our target, set by the Province on a per capita basis, was £26,320. We exceeded this figure by £5,622 and the Province went on to declare that the final sum raised was **£4,104,896.51**.

### **Sussex4Sussex**



Following the success of the Sussex 2004 R.M.B.I. Festival the Province launched an initiative called 'Sussex4Sussex'. This provided Sussex Masons with an opportunity to support Sussex non-Masonic charities and other good causes. It was clearly welcomed by our brethren and they gave it great support. By February 2007 Sussex4Sussex had already presented £352,200. The Bexhill Hospital received £6,500 towards the cost of a Dyonics machine and an application for £5,500 for the Maritime Volunteer Service was supported.

Running alongside this was the Sussex Masonic Charities Matched Funding Scheme which enabled a non-Masonic charity to have money raised by them matched by a gift from the Sussex Masonic Charities. This was particularly beneficial to the smaller charities to whom a doubling of their self-raised amount made a big difference.



The sum given in this manner was £58,775. Under this scheme, the Eastbourne Lifeboat received matching of £250, and the Little Common Scout Group and the Hellingly Guide Group sought matched funding for £150 and £250 respectively.

In addition to the above, individual lodges made donations to non-Masonic charities of £119,988.

### **The Grand Total distributed was £530,963 for 2006**

As of January 2007 donations received from Sussex brethren for the Sussex4Sussex appeal amounted to £905,409.38. The amount given or committed to Sussex Charities and other good causes since the beginning of the appeal is £671,600. The figures quoted above will be by now out of date. For the up to date situation speak to our lodge Charity Steward.

## **Royal Sovereign Light Lodge on the Road**

Early in the year 2000, an idea born out of discussion at the Festive Board, led to W. Bros. Reg Keys and Roy Sydney looking into the possibilities of visiting other lodges sharing our association with Trinity House, or who had a strong maritime background. The directory of lodges and chapters from United Grand Lodge was perused, details noted down and a general letter prepared. Thirteen lodges were identified as being likely to fit the criteria and 13 copies of the letter were sent on their way.

Over a period of time 7 lodges expressed their interest in becoming involved in this initiative. They were:

Trinity Mariners No.8406, Folkestone visited in 2001,

Owers Light Lodge No.7756 in Chichester visited in 2002,

Eddystone Lodge No.3952 in Plymouth visited in 2002,

Needles Lodge No.2838 in Freshwater I.O.W. visited in 2003,

Nore Lodge No. 3610 in Southend visited in 2003,

Great Orme Lodge No. 7703 in Llandudno in 2004 and the

Humber Lodge No. 57 in Hull also visited in 2004.

Travel to the Eddystone, Needles and Great Orme lodges was by luxury coach, driven by W.Bro. Dougie Mayne, and some private cars. Travel to the Nore, Humber, Owers Light and Trinity Mariners was by mini-bus courtesy of W. Bro. Ren Phillimore.



**Trinity Mariners**, whose membership included ships' pilots for the Dover Strait and Harbour welcomed the brethren to their October Trafalgar Night where it was unusual to hear the Senior and Junior Wardens report their respective columns as Port and Starboard! A large number of Trinity Mariners returned the visit in March 2002.

**The Owers Light lodge**, like ourselves, took its name from a Trinity House Light Vessel guarding dangerous shoals off Selsey Bill. They made us feel very welcome.

**The Eddystone Lodge** welcomed both the brethren and wives to Plymouth where the men attended a lodge meeting and were then all joined at the Festive Board by their ladies. The Provincial Grand Master for Devon was also present. Some members of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge, who had formed themselves into a

Sea Shanty ensemble entertained an Eddystone party the previous evening. On another evening, dinner was also arranged for Royal Sovereign aboard H.M.S. Drake by W. Bro. David Wallis.

Eddystone Lodge presented the R.S.L.L. with a large printed copy depicting the building of the Eddystone Lighthouse together with a book recording its history. In return the Eddystone received a framed photograph of the Royal Sovereign Light Vessel and our lodge printed history.

A reciprocal visit was made in March 2003 when Eddystone brethren attended our meeting which was also graced with the presence of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Sussex, V.Worshipful Brother Kenneth E. Thomas.

The Royal Sovereign Ladies (Masonic Charities) Association arranged a dinner for the Eddystone Ladies together with Mrs. Maureen Thomas. We all met together at the end of the evening

**The Needles Lodge, Freshwater**, on the Isle of Wight welcomed the brethren and their ladies in Spring 2003. At the Festive Board a leaded quarter light window pane, made by one of the members, was presented. A suitable framed print and lodge history were given by return. The members of the Needles Lodge and their families joined us in our hotel on the following evening.

**The Nore Lodge in Southend** welcomed the brethren to their Trafalgar Night celebrations in October 2003. A short lodge meeting, attended by brethren from far and wide, was followed by an impressive meal echoing the fare of the time. All lodge members were in appropriate costume and a wide selection of toasts, monologues and sea songs, complete with cannon, made for an unforgettable evening.

**The Great Orme Lodge, Llandudno**, was visited in 2004 and amongst the highlights of the occasion was a performance of popular songs by the Llanddulas Male Voice Choir. Some of the Great Orme Lodge members were also members of the choir.

**The Humber Lodge, Hull** was visited in October 2004 by W. Bros. Ren Phillimore and Roy Sydney. A ceremony of passing was performed using Emulation working. The evening did however have distinct differences to Royal Sovereign Light, both in the ceremony and at the Festive Board. This lodge was consecrated over 250 years ago and the organ in the lodge appeared to be original. It had only recently been upgraded from hand bellows to an electric motor!

It is true to say that on every visit we were received with great hospitality and made to feel very welcome and I am sure the brethren will remember these occasions with pleasure.

## **Royal Sovereign Light Lodge Honoured**

On 21<sup>st</sup> January 2001, W. Brother Roy A. Sydney was appointed Provincial Junior Grand Warden. W. Brother Roy said that he had no doubt that this honour reflected the high esteem in which the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge and all its members were held by the Province.

At the lodge meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2004, W. Brother Ren Phillimore, Worshipful Master, rose to congratulate W. Brother Roy Sydney on his appointment to Grand Lodge with the rank of Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies. This was the first 'home grown' Grand Officer in the lodge's 60 year history.

## **Success**

Both our current Provincial Grand Master and his predecessor, asked what makes the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge so successful. There is no single answer to this, but some of the points below may well be instrumental in the Lodge's appeal:

- Friendly meetings on a Saturday (October to April);
- Additional large and varied selection of social events for all;
- Dining venue makes for warm and welcoming Festive Board, with fine food;
- Atmosphere in the Lodge room with a membership of 70 adds to the enjoyment of a ceremony;
- Lodge of Instruction, open to all with a regular attendance of up to 25 brethren and an annual Lodge of Instruction Supper;
- Active support for members and events;
- Complemented by the unique Royal Sovereign Ladies (Masonic Charities) Association.

Why joining members and initiates choose to join the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge doesn't really matter..... The important thing is, that they do!



## **Lest We Forget**

At the January 2003 lodge meeting W. Brother Ren Phillimore announced that he, together with W. Brothers Dougie Mayne, Vince Doddington and other brethren, had attended the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium and had laid a wreath of poppies on behalf of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge in remembrance of those who lost their lives in World War One. These visits were initiated by W. Brother Dougie Mayne in the year 2000 and have been repeated in subsequent years.



Following these occasions in November 2005 the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge welcomed 5 brethren from the 'Builders of the Silent Cities Lodge' Number 12, Province of Flanders, Grande Lodge Nationale, Francaise.



In a totally separate piece of Masonic research I came across the following excerpt from the Masonic Year book for the District of the Punjab 1940-1941.

'In January, 1922, Brother Rudyard Kipling was a Founder of a lodge in France, No.12, under the Grande Lodge Nationale, the membership of which is open to those who have taken part in the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission. This Lodge meets in Lille on the third Saturday in January, March, September and November.'



Brother Kipling was invited to suggest a name for the new lodge and what could be more appropriate than the name that he put forward, 'The Builders of the Silent Cities'. This name was adopted. He was also a founder of the lodge of the same name consecrated in London in 1927, No. 4948, under the English Constitution, for those who had completed their work in France and had returned to England as well as those still engaged in the work'.

This lodge now meets in the Lancaster Gate Hotel, London. In our Grand Lodge Library there is a form dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 1922 filled up in Brother Kipling's own handwriting for the Secretary of 'The Builders of the Silent Cities Lodge No 12', to complete his register and Grand Lodge returns.

Brother Rudyard Kipling celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1935 and passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1936. His ashes now lie in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

### **If Music Be the Food of Love**



One of the hardest lodge offices to fill is that of Organist. I found myself trusted with this responsibility from the date of my raising and remained there until it was time for me to take my place as Inner Guard.

Guest organists then filled the post until W. Brother John Prynne agreed to step in and play on a regular basis.

John was very new to playing in lodge ceremonies but with lots of encouragement and a little help and advice he grew to become not only the organist to the Royal Sovereign Light Craft Lodge and Chapter but also to many other lodges and side degrees throughout the Province. Infact it seemed that wherever you went as a lodge guest, W. Brother John was already there playing the lodge organ, or his own keyboard. When family commitments called for him to move from Bexhill-on-Sea in 2007, John had completed 20 years as our organist. He has been succeeded by W. Bro Harry Waddingham who now adds to the ceremonial with his own particular style of music. Our current organist is W. Brother Trevor Carey who delights us with his wide selection of compositions.

### **Royal Sovereign Light Lodge on the Web**

Following the publication of the Lodge History it was thought that this would make a perfect starting point for our own website.

Brother Phil Conner took on this challenge and following several meetings with the editor of the History and a great deal of time and effort, the proposed site was ready for uploading. Prior to this the finished package had to be presented to Provincial Grand Lodge for their approval.

Authorization was granted without alteration and in fact the website of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge, which went "live" in 2001, was looked upon by the Province as an example of how a Masonic website should look. We still receive enquiries from interested parties on a regular basis.

### **Christmas**

Of the social events organized for the brethren and their families the most eagerly awaited of all is the Christmas Evening. These began in 1989. They were initially held in the Masonic Centre, Wilton Road and included evenings of Christmas Music, both carols and popular songs, with appropriate readings. New musical skills were encouraged with some modern carols being introduced and the playing of musical instruments. This led to the inception of the lodge's own male voice choir (complete with candles and antlers!). Also joining us one year were the Bexhill Ladies' Barbershop singers.



More recently these occasions have taken place in the larger, historical setting of the Manor Barn and have followed an annual theme. These have included 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', 'Olde Tyme Music Hall', 'Christmas Extravaganza', 'Christmas Aboard HMS Royal Sovereign' (Trafalgar), 'Medieval Night' and in 2007, a 'Christmas Special' with the Hastings' Stage School. Our Christmas meal in 2008 was once again held at the Manor Barn, with entertainment being provided by the Bexhill Ladies' Harmony Choir. Spectacularly, Christmas aboard the HMS Royal Sovereign and the

Medieval Banquet were attended in full costume. These events have been principally led by W. Brothers Sydney, Keys and Mason ably supported by working parties and choir members.

Proceeds from the evenings have supported a variety of charities including the R.N.L.I., the Sussex Kidney Trust and the Restricted Growth Association.

### **New Changes**

Instead of a Ladies' Festival for his year the Worshipful Master in 2006 organised a most successful Quiz Night which was held at Bexhill Bowls Club. Proceeds from the evening were forwarded to the charity, Barnardo's. Other formats for traditional Ladies Evenings continue but each Master and his Lady decide the format they favour.

After much debate between the three lodges using the Wilton Road Temple, a defibrillator was provided by the temple trustees, for emergency use. Brethren from each of the lodges have had the opportunity to undergo training to ensure its correct use on several occasions. Further sessions will be held to offer to new members and others who would like a refreshment session.

At the April meeting 2007, Bro. Tony Beaden received a framed certificate recognising his 60 years in freemasonry, while W. Bro. Derek Last received a certificate commemorating his 50 years in freemasonry. Both were presented with their certificates by the Assistant Provincial Grand Master, W. Bro. Ken Thomas.

### **Other snippets of information**

At the November meeting 2017 Hugh O'Neill delivered a lecture entitled 'Fifty shades of Blue'.

Sadly, as the years go by more of our brethren pass to the Grand Lodge above. Amongst those have been the following;

Ren Phillimore a mighty piece in the architecture of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge, Chapter, Mark and many other side degrees.

Kenneth Simpson whose calligraphy skills graced many a festive board together with Hugh Shaw, Derek Last, Russel Bew, Derek Greenwood, Colin Archer, Jim Reynolds, Alex Landymore, Mike Perry, Bill Nurse, John Carey, Chris Perry, Barry Wickens, Nigel Paine, Des Eakins, Pete Banwell and Bill Fisher.

Members of all lodges were encouraged to support the Provincial Grand Master in his parachute jump to raise money for the repairs needed for our Provincial H.Q in Brighton.

His jump in 2017 raised £30,000.

In May 2017 W.Bros, Paul Lown and Roy Sydney attended a conference in Maidstone and Peacehaven dealing with the implications of the General Data Protection Regulations. This was coming soon and held work for all lodges holding members' details. The date given for its implementation was not far away (May 15<sup>th</sup> 2018) but with the combined help of Paul, Roy and Mrs Sue Sydney, a policy and notice was achieved, presented to the brethren and ratified and confirmed by the members. W.Brothers Paul Lown and Roy Sydney were confirmed as the Data Controlling officers for the Craft Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter.



As the new website is preparing to go live, under consideration is the future celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Platinum meeting in May 2023. Watch this space!

### **"Our hopes for the future"**

We are confident that it is the wish of all our brethren, from the youngest member, to the most senior officer, that the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge continues to promote the high ideals of freemasonry in the same manner for the next 50 years as it has done for the previous half century.

It is clear from our records that our members have come from diverse occupational, social and geographical backgrounds and it is through their individual contributions, both great and small, that the Masonic wealth of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge has so much to offer the new member.

We will continue to welcome new members and joining members from other lodges, to this intricate tapestry and look forward with confidence, and above all enthusiasm, to enjoying many more happy afternoons at our meetings and enjoyable evenings at the Festive Board.

As our predominant wish, "Let our light shine long, far and bright."

**W. Bro. Roy A. Sydney, (Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies)**