

200th Anniversary Lecture Nov 7th

Title: Pomfret Lodge Hora e Sempre... Now and Always

Worshipful Master,

There were three birthdays of note in 1819, Queen Victoria, her husband Albert and of course Pomfret the provinces oldest surviving lodge.

Pomfret's motto was taken from the family motto of the Earl of Pomfret the first provincial Grand Master of the Province hence our name and is *Hora e Sempre* which translates to 'now and always'.

A motto which is as true today as it was 200 years ago.

Three weeks after the dispensation to proceed was granted on October 19th 1819 the first meeting of the Lodge was held at the Fountain Inn Northampton on the 9th November 1819. After much rebuilding and renaming it is now The Boston Clipper.

Other Lodge meeting venues in Northampton have included The Peacock Inn Market Square (1822), The Saracens Head (1826), The Green Dragon (1829), The Ram Inn (1831), The George Hotel (1840). The masonic buildings (1876), The Masonic Hall (1890), St. Georges Avenue (1972) and a short spell at The Westone Hotel now very happily here at Sheaf Close.

Everything changed in the 1830's with the Punishment of Death, Reform, Factory, Education and Abolition of Slavery Acts. Those same winds of change in society resulted in a growth in freemasonry in general and membership of Pomfret in particular. The growth in numbers for Pomfret with members with the same competing trades was a major factor behind the 1839 contested election for master.

Pomfret carried the sole light of Freemasonry in the Province for several years resulting in being the oldest Lodge in the Province. Today we now have 93 progeny lodges.

Both October 19th and November 9th 1819 were Tuesdays. Pomfret met on Tuesdays for 12 months a year until 6th June 1836. Installation was on St. John's day December 27th. This custom rolled over from the pre-union days when installation of the Master occurred twice a year on St. John the Evangelist day being December 27th and conveniently being six months apart St. John's the Baptist Day on the 24th June.

Nothing much happened on either Tuesday except on October 19th 1819 there was a solar eclipse.

This evening Pomfret enjoys the masonic register number of 360.

We haven't always been 360. Numbering of Masonic Lodges in the register did not commence until 1729. Between 1729 and today masonic Lodges were renumbered no less

than eight times! Our initial number was 714 as can be observed on the reverse of some of our officers' jewels. In 1832 the next re-numbering we became 463 demonstrating the rapid turnover of masonic lodges during this period.

In 1863 the last re-numbering we became number 360.

The dispensation to proceed and the Lodges constitution cost five guineas and was dated October 19th 1819. The warrant was not received until 28th September 1821 *this was normal practice at the time*. The warrant therefore bears the date 19th October 1819, it states the Lodge to be known as Pomfret to be held at the Ram Inn and the three principal officers.

Pomfret's warrant has the signatures of the two Grand Secretaries of the United Grand Lodge. Until 1839 the joint secretaries represented the ancient and the moderns the precursors to the union.

In a letter of 27th September 1821, we acknowledge receipt of the warrant and ask someone to consecrate the Lodge. Lord Pomfret had been requested to do this but he '*expressed a total ignorance of those affairs*' in fact the Lodge was never consecrated.

We received our book of constitutions circa Christmas 1819. United Grand Lodge stated that if we did not have an original 1815 copy, they would sell us an 1819 Edition as it was mandatory to possess a copy. The Lodges copy is signed by the author William Williams and cost 20 shillings.

It was bound much later after 1832 and is therefore embossed 463.

It was originally intended that a history of Freemasonry would be published by Grand Lodge and Lodges would bind it with the constitution. The history was never written.

We are known for our deviation from an emulation working.

In a letter dated 27 Sept. 1821, Bro. Chamberlain, the secretary, asks the Grand secretary "*to send us a Gentlemen that will also give us instruction in the Masonic Art and shall be guide for our future conduct in carrying on the work in regular order*".

Grand Lodge acted quickly on their request for instruction. On 6 Nov. two months later, W. Bro. Peter Gilks visited Northampton. The minutes record:

'Lodge open'd in due form and Solemn prayer when B Gilks was respectfully invited to take the chair when he went through the ceremony of Initiation according to the system of the Lodge of Reconciliation, and communicated other important Masonic Instruction.

Bro. Gilks having come from London on purpose to give instruction and having presided over us for the last seven nights, and gone through degrees every evening, it was moved by bro. Masters and seconded by Bro. Dunkley that the thanks of this Lodge can be given to Bro. Gilks

for his services, which was carried unanimously. All business being over the Lodge was closed with due form and perfect harmony'.

Henry Dunkley was our first initiate aged 22, a butcher from Drum Lane Northampton, being proposed by a founder member Worshipful Brother W Masters. Henry was initiated on the 8th May 1821 became Worshipful Master on the 13th January 1824 and features heavily in the minutes of Pomfret.

Henry's proposer, Worshipful Brother Masters was expelled at a regular lodge meeting on January 14th 1823 after a majority vote of six '*For giving publicity to the Lectures and disclosing the secrets of a Master Mason*'. It was also ordered 'that his name be sent' to the Grand Secretary and the Provincial Grand Master. He was subsequently reinstated in 1828 and attended until October 1833.

Brethren will observe a pair of terrestrial and celestial globes placed next to the tracing boards table in the centre of the Lodge. These Coronelli globes were purchased in 1837. They have been displayed at every Lodge meeting since.

It is stated that "they illustrate the universality of the Craft" anywhere under heaven, anywhere in the earth, there is the home of freemasonry!

On the Senior Wardens pedestal is a tripod derrick or Masonic Triangle supporting a Perfect Ashlar. Examination of the elegant brass structure reveals engraving to show that it was donated by four prominent Past Masters in 1837.

The Past Masters that donated the funds were; Elkington, Shrewsbury, Adkins and Boeme. These four-illustrious departed merits are significant in the history of Pomfret Lodge, the contested election resulting in the formation of the Lodge of Merit and the history of the Freemasons Tavern in Great Queens Street. The Masonic Triangle and Perfect Ashlar had prominent place in several Masonic processions from 1837 onwards (including consecration of Fidelity Lodge 445).

There is an engraved silver trowel on the Senior Wardens pedestal first used by Earl Spencer at the lunatic asylum in 1836

The trowel was next used by Sir Charles. Knightley M.P. to lay the foundation stone of St. Andrew's church in 1840.

Then used by Marquess of Northampton to lay the foundation stone of St. Katherine's church in 1857.

Some 24 years later the trowel was used by Earl Spencer's son at St. Giles parochial school in 1881.

The trowel was finally used at the Jubilee wing of Northampton Infirmary in 1887.

This trowel was used to lay this foundation stone by Albert Victor the Prince of Wales, favourite and eldest Grandson of Queen Victoria. The jubilee being Queen Victoria's accession to the throne.

Our volume of the sacred law is a beautiful copy of The Reverend Brown's Self-Interpreting Family Bible. This edition has coloured plates and been dated to 1887.

Pomfret has had many prominent and distinguished masons including George Wilkinson who was Provincial Grand Secretary and then Deputy Provincial Grand Master.

His good friend was Alfred Cockerill, who donated Abington Park and the Cricket ground to Northampton. Alfred also donated the Hallstone Jewel to Pomfret, the stained-glass window that can be seen outside, and our Masters photographic album.

Our motto is as apt for Freemasonry in general as it is for Pomfret in particular.

Hora e Sempre... Now and Always

[Worshipful Master that concludes the 200th anniversary lecture.](#)