

# *Transactions* of the **Discovery Lodge of Research**

**No. 971, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory**

*direct descendant of the Research Lodge of New South Wales  
and the Sydney Lodge of Research*



The lodge generally meets in the  
Sydney Masonic Centre  
on the first Thursday of the month  
March (Installation), June, August & November, at 7pm.  
Dress: lounge suit, lodge tie, regalia.

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*Foundation member of the*

***Australian & New Zealand  
Masonic Research Council***

website: <http://anzmrc.org/>



## From The Editor

*Dear Sir and Brother,*

*As we mark a new masonic year for DLoR No.971 and the eladership of a new Master, this edition gathers two papers from the last 6 months for your enjoyment and edification.*

*The first paper is the inaugural presentation of WBr McPhee (our new master) and his son-in-law Br Ben Wharton. It covers a perenial favourite in NSW - Early Irish Freemasonry - told through the lens of one of our earliest Lodges, Fidelity No.101 and its foundation master Richard Godson.*

*The second paper was presented in a private Lodge in the Northern Beaches by VWBr Neil Morse. Detailing some of the little known Masonic activites of Australian Masons during the two World Wars , it is a paper that has been previously presented to the Manchester Association of Masonic Research but never before published.*

*We hope this material stokes the fires of your desire for Research and look forward to seeing you at our next merry meeting.*

*Yours fraternally,*

*Ian Shanley*

*Secretary*

*Email: [secretary@discoverylodge.org](mailto:secretary@discoverylodge.org)*

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## Officers for the year 2018-2019

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Tyler	On Rotation	

# **Richard Godson and the foundation of the Australian Lodge of Fidelity, No. 267 of the Irish Constitution**

Presented on 1 February 2018

*by Bro Wayne Bruce McPhee & Bro Benjamin Luke Wharton*



This evening Ben and I will give a brief talk to describe how this Lodge came into being. We will also tell you some true-tales of the arrival in Sydney, and life of the foundation Master of our Lodge, Richard Godson.

If this Lodge were a building it would be State Heritage listed. The foundation meeting on 9th August 1843, predated many significant events in the history of Australia, having been formed just 55 years after the arrival of the First Fleet and eight years before the discovery of gold.

We will give you an insight into what led to the foundation of the Australian Lodge of Fidelity. We have been carrying researching over the last eighteen months and have almost become detectives in order to piece together the facts. With both luck and persistence we found the original minutes books of 1843, this was with the assistance of Right Worshipful Brother Phillip Miller.

On the 9th January 2017 at the Grand Lodge archives, we were excited to open these early minutes books which hadn't seen the light of day for decades.

Our research and documentation wouldn't be complete without acknowledging work done by others including: Grahame H. Cumming, who was instrumental in piecing together early Masonic history in Australia. Also R.W.Bro. Peter Read our Irish correspondent and Rebecca Hayes archivist in the Grand Lodge of Ireland, Dublin. Early photographs of our Lodge members and general background information has been provided by Wor. Bro. Ron Hawkins and Right Wor. Brother Brian Lowder.

Thanks to all those who have given their assistance and support.

### **Fresh cool winter breezes brought the sailing ship 'Lady Clarke' to berth in Sydney Cove.**

It was Friday 14th August 1840. Amongst the travel weary 203 Bounty Immigrants who disembarked at Semi-circular quay were Richard Godson, aged 26, a carpenter from Carraghaline, his wife Eliza (nee Coghlan) aged thirty years old, and their baby daughter Susan, then only five days old. Both Richard and Eliza were listed as 'Protestant' and 'could read and write'

The passengers had done well to survive the rough four-month voyage from Ireland. No deaths were recorded. A four-month voyage was, believe it or not, relatively fast for sailing ships of those days, with most trips from Britain to Australia taking five to six months on average.

Until the advent of steam power in the 1850s those travelling from the UK to Australia were wholly dependent upon the prevailing winds. Ships often experienced days of dead calm in the "doldrums" of the equatorial waters, then rough heavy seas in the southern oceans.

There were also health risks as lengthy sea voyages often resulted in outbreaks of highly communicative diseases, caused by cramped living conditions.

The Lady Clarke had departed Plymouth 20th April 1840. It then called into Cobh Harbour in Cork, Ireland to collect more passengers. Travelling south, the ship reached The Cape of Good Hope on the 7th July 1840, taking on provisions for the next important and potentially dangerous leg of the voyage. This was to head East on latitude 40 then blown by strong winds of the roaring 40s across the Southern Ocean to Cape Otway the southern tip of the Australian mainland then up the east coast to Sydney Cove.

This relatively new shipping route considerably reduced sailing time from Britain to Australia.

It pleased the ship owners but absolutely terrified the passengers because of the heavy seas, extreme cold and chance encounters with icebergs in the Southern Ocean. The southern coast of Australia is littered with shipwrecks from these early voyages.

The Colony had been dependant on convict labour which was cheap. When convict transportation was in decline large numbers of tradespeople and young families were encouraged to settle in Australia to populate the colony and help drive its prosperity.

A 'Bounty System of Immigration' was started in 1835 by Mr John Marshall to encourage new settlers. However, not all these free-settlers for various reasons were fully accepted by the locals.

Assisted immigrants and most of those who paid their own fares travelled in 'steerage,' which was a low ceiling space beneath the main deck. This was divided into three sections separated by bulkheads. Single men and youths in one end, married couples and young children in the centre section, and single women at the other end. In each section the accommodation consisted of a double tier of bunks on each side and a long fixed table down the centre. Commonly the bunks were three feet wide and shared by two people. It was cramped and noisy, and in the tropics, stifling. There was little privacy on board ship.

It was no wonder that Richard and Eliza's newly born baby daughter did not survive. Eliza Godson was in hospital in Sydney when her immigration form was filled in. Their baby daughter Susan was baptised on the 23rd August 1840 but sadly did not survive. Another daughter, they also named Susan, however, was born in 1841 and lived happily to the age of 84 years.

### **But who was Richard Godson?**

Our foundation Master of the Australian Lodge of Fidelity was born in Rathcormac, County Cork Ireland in 1814. Richard's parents were listed on his immigration papers as 'Thomas Godson, a gardener' and 'Susan,' his wife. It is believed that Richard's Grandfather was a 'Doctor John Godson.' Thomas Godson, (Richard's Father) was born at Rathcormac, Cork, in 1784 and married Susan



Ambrose in 1813. It is interesting to note that the baby daughter born to Richard and Eliza on board the Lady Clarke was named Susan after her Grandmother.

We do not know what prompted Richard and Eliza to leave their homeland to start a new life in Australia. However, for the people of Ireland during the early 19th century, everyday life was difficult. The potato crops failed for a number of consecutive seasons and this, combined with a shortage of farm livestock created severe food shortages. So much so, that by 1845 the whole of Ireland was in the grip of The Great Famine. In subsequent years, the population declined and a large number of families were deported or chose to settle abroad – North America, Canada, and Australia being the most popular.

Freemasonry was well established in Ireland by the time Richard Godson emigrated to Australia. The second oldest Grand Lodge of Freemasons in the world and the oldest in continuous existence. The earliest account of this Grand Lodge as in 1725 via an article published in the Dublin Weekly Journal describing the procession of the Grand Lodge Brethren.

There is, however, considerable evidence of Masonic Lodges existing in Ireland well before this time. The 'Baals Bridge Square' dated 1507 adds weight to evidence of early Freemasonry in Ireland. This brass square was recovered from Baals Bridge in Limerick during reconstruction works in 1830 and had been purposely placed under the foundation stone of the old bridge at the completion of its construction.

The brass square is inscribed on one side with "I will strive to live with love and care" and on the opposite side "upon the level and by the square." Given its form and construction it would appear to have been the collar or neck jewel of a Worshipful Master.

Lodge Meetings amongst the smaller towns and villages were held at Inns, taverns, and coffee houses. In Cork, Lodge meetings were held at the Eagle Tavern on Cork Hill. The Grand Lodge of Ireland established itself in public houses and initially in rented premises before purpose designed buildings were constructed for their headquarters.

The Grand Lodge of Ireland was unique, in that it was the first to issue warrants in their current form. Warrants were also issued to travelling Lodges. These travelling Lodge Warrants were used by Regiments of the British Army, including those which spread to the British Colonies. Wherever these Regiments travelled so too did Freemasonry.

### **Back in Sydney town in 1841.**

Richard and Eliza Godson were living in Hunter Street. Their second daughter they also named Susan, was born on 12th August, 1841. Three days later she was christened at St. James' Church on King Street. This fine Georgian church was commissioned by Bro. Governor Lachlan Macquarie and designed by Bro. Francis Greenway.

Richard would have most likely found local work as a Carpenter. At this time, he may have been introduced to Freemasonry in the Colony via his work and social contacts.

Freemasonry in Australia started soon after the colony was established in 1788.

Documents currently held in the Mitchell Library Sydney include a Masonic Certificate, issued to Captain Anthony Fenn Kemp of the NSW Corp from J. St Cricq – Sovereign Prince of Rose Croix, Lt. of the French Corvette 'Le Naturaliste.' This vessel was in Port Jackson on a scientific expedition for the French Government in 1802. Captain Anthony Fenn Kemp was issued a certificate in French which initiated him "...into the grade of ancient Masonry." Bro. Kemp's certificate remains the earliest known Masonic Certificate issued in Australia.

It is worthy of note that, although France and Britain were on the brink of the Napoleonic Wars, men of both nations could meet fraternally 'on the Square.'

The early 1800s in Sydney saw the beginnings of a push to create a Masonic Lodge. This happened through by the efforts of Convict Henry Browne Hayes, a colourful figure of the time. He arranged for Sergeant Wittle to hold a meeting at his Sydney Town cottage in 1803. This was designed to institute proceedings for the formation of a lodge, and had been previously refused by Governor King.

Despite this, and in defiance, the meeting was held. A warrant for Hayes' arrest from the Governor broke up the assembly and Henry Browne Hayes' plans were squashed. He was reminded by the

Governor that “instead of being a President of a Freemasons Lodge at Sydney, he will be put under a President at Castle Hill or Norfolk Island, to hard labour.” Luckily this did not happen. It would be some decades before a permanent Masonic Lodge was established in Sydney.

Despite these rough and ready beginnings, it was those Regiments holding an Irish travelling Warrant that were able to bring warranted Masonry to the Colonies. These Irish travelling Lodges via the military were transported to places such as Jamaica, India, America and other colonies, some of which still exist and can be considered rightfully as cousin Lodges of Lodge Fidelity. The first Military Lodge holding a travelling Warrant in Australia was the Lodge of Social and Military Virtues No. 227 Irish Constitution, which was attached to the 46th Regiment, and arrived in the Colony in 1814. They were replaced in 1817 with two regiments: the 48th with attached Lodge No. 218, and the 39th Regiment with the attached Lodge No. 128. The traveling Lodges had strict rules and regulations in their operation including their ability to initiate locals. The Ahiman Rezon – their Book of Constitutions – states that: ‘... no Military Lodge shall make any townsman or citizen a Mason, in any part of the British Dominions where he resides, or where such Military Lodge then meets.’ Traveling Lodge 227 was therefore legally constituted to initiate townsmen in Sydney during the time they were stationed.

On the second of November 1816, the Lodge of Social and Military Virtues No 227 of the 46th Regiment held the first public Masonic ceremony in Australia. This event was the laying of the foundation stone of Bro. Captain John Piper’s home, Henrietta Villa, at Eliza Point held with great pomp and ceremony. Masonic aprons were designed and created by the Government Architect Bro. Francis Greenway for the occasion. As a matter of interest, present at this ceremony, also were two Brothers dressed in full Knights Templar attire. This is a Templar apron from the early 19th century which was worn by W. Bro. John Beattie, who was incidentally the Foundation Immediate Past Master of the Australian Social Lodge No. 260 - the first stationary Lodge in Australia.

### **Australian Social Lodge No. 260 - the first stationary Lodge in Australia.**

As just mentioned by Wayne, the first stationary Lodge in Australia was the Australian Social Lodge, No. 260 of the Irish Constitution.

This Lodge, sponsored by Lodge No. 218 of the 48th Regiment, was founded in 1820 and remains active today, now known as Lodge of Antiquity No. 1 on the Roll of the Grand Lodge of NSW & ACT.

The Grand Lodge of Ireland issued Warrant no. 260 on the 6th January 1820 to allow the Australian Social Lodge to be established.

Thus, some 32 years after the arrival of the First Fleet, Freemasonry had been permanently established and began to flourish.

Before long there was interest in establishing other Lodges in the Colony. To enable this to happen on the 12th November 1821 members of the Australian Social Lodge sought a warrant from the GL of Ireland to grant them dispensation to form other Lodges so that brethren could work until a regular warrant was received. The Grand Lodge of Ireland agreed to this request, and the Leinster Masonic Committee was formed – named after the Duke of Leinster, the then Grand Master of Ireland.

The first dispensation issued by the Leinster Masonic Committee was on the 26th January 1824 to form the Leinster Marine Lodge No. 266. Further dispensations by the Leinster Masonic Committee under the Irish Constitution followed:

- 1834 Tasmanian Operative Lodge, No. 345 at Hobart
- 1840 Australian Felix Lodge of Hiram No. 349 at Melbourne
- 1841 Windsor Social Lodge No. 275 at Windsor
- 1842 The Auckland Social Lodge 348 at Auckland New Zealand
- 1843 Australian Masonic Lodge of Fidelity No 267, Sydney

Thus, our Lodge is listed as the sixth oldest permanent or stationary Lodge under the Irish Constitution in Australia and New Zealand.

### **Trouble brewing**

But there wasn’t always Peace, Love, and Harmony amongst members of the early Sydney Lodges.

The questionable behaviour of some of its members was only the beginnings of it. Arguments broke out as early as 1834 between the three Lodges in Sydney, these being: the Australian Social Lodge No. 260 Irish Constitution, the Leinster Marine Lodge of Australia No. 266 Irish Constitution, and the Lodge of Australia No. 820, English Constitution. Joseph Pashley, WM of Lodge 260 claimed members had joined the English Lodge No. 820 without advice or paying dues, Brother Spicer of Lodge 260 was suspended for defrauding fellow Lodge members, and Brother Ruen was expelled for 'drunkenness' and 'un Masonic behaviour.'

Following his conviction of perjury in 1838 Bro. Samuel Onions of Lodge 266 had his certificate destroyed in Open Lodge. However, it was the continuing issue of the status of free settlers versus ticket of leave brothers that created tension. The issue of 'free' vs 'ticketed' members was a foot as early as the 1820s.

Two distinct social classes developed in the early years of the Colony, namely 'the Exclusives' and 'the Emancipists.' The 'Exclusives' were a wealthy minority consisting of those who had emigrated to Australia as free settlers, military officers, high ranking Civil servants and well-off merchants. The 'Emancipists' were ex-convicts who had received an absolute or conditional pardon from the Governor, were of good behaviour and remained in the Colony after their term of transportation had expired.

Some of these ex-convicts had served time for very minor offences, others were part of a chain gang as punishment for carrying out more serious crimes. Often these two social groups were openly hostile to each other.

The early Freemasons were caught up in these dissensions.

Despite outwardly espousing Masonic qualities of paying no regard to matters of politics, religion, or status, issues relating to these matters often found their way into Lodge. In a letter from Lodge 260 to the Grand Lodge of Ireland, it was stated that Lodge no. 266 had introduced a By-Law prohibiting those who have 'however trifling his offence might have been, from being initiated or becoming a member.' The Grand Lodge of Ireland were swift to order this proposed By-Law to be 'expunged and be of no effect, being un-Masonic.' These principles that the Sydney Brethren were debating were matters contained in the Constitution of Freemasonry, or the Ahiman Rezon. This set out charges rituals and lectures relevant to Irish Freemasonry and originally written by Laurence Dermott for the Ancient Grand Lodge of England which was formed in 1751. This was adopted by the Grand Lodge of Ireland. 'Ahiman Rezon' is said to be of the Hebrew language and has various meanings including 'to help a brother' or the 'secrets of prepared Brethren.'

Dissension broke out between Lodge 260 and 266 each complaining to the Grand Lodge of Ireland about the character of their Lodge members. During 1842 much correspondence had reached Ireland causing dismay. Those caught up in the disagreements and often repeat offenders were Brothers Joseph Pashley and Hercules Watt.

These examples serve to indicate the unruliness of the 'troublesome 40s.'

### **Birth of Lodge Fidelity**

These "goings on" set the scene for the creation of the Australian Masonic Lodge of Fidelity.

What was sorely needed in these times was true and honest behaviour amongst its members; in other words, fidelity.

In 1903, on the 60th anniversary of this Lodge, Rt Wor. Bro. and Deputy Grand Master John Burt Trivett, alluded to "cause and effect" as being the generating force in the founding of the Australian Masonic Lodge of Fidelity. Our research leads us to agree.

Just six months prior to the foundation of Lodge Fidelity, communication had been sent from the Grand Lodge Ireland stating that 'Officers of 260 should be removed and Warrant suspended or handed to other brethren. [and] Power of granting dispensations should be removed.'

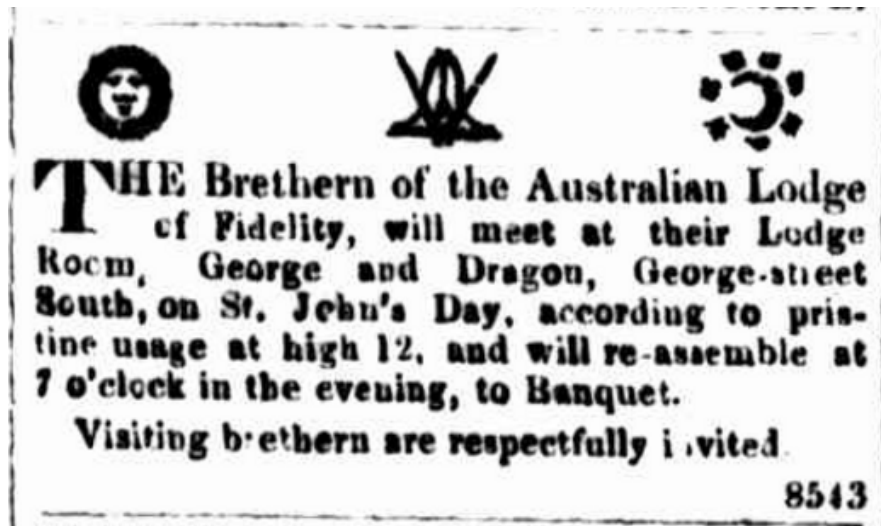
And it was. Our minutes of the 27th September, 1843, of an emergency meeting just one month after our foundation, state that the Warrant of 260, its Officers, and its Charter for granting Dispensations were suspended. It was a very close call regarding the existence of Lodge Fidelity – perhaps there was word down wind of communication about to be received.

So, it appears that Lodge Fidelity could be considered 'a rescue operation' for Lodge 260, and it was not the first time. Again, to quote from Bro. Trivett's 60th anniversary address:

It is opportune to mention here that Lodge Harmony EC now number five on our roll was formed in 1847 by former members of the suspended Lodge number 260 ... Here again it seems to me there is ample room for speculation as to the relations of cause and effect.

### **One door closes and another opens.**

On the 9th August 1843 at the George and Dragon Inn, George Street Sydney, The Australian Masonic Lodge of Fidelity of Free & Accepted Masons was open for the first time. The George & Dragon Inn



was located on the south-western corner of George and Liverpool Streets, Brickfield Hill. Brickfield Hill is now part of Sydney City on the edge of China town. The George & Dragon Inn has since been demolished and totally reconstructed at least twice. It is now known as the Sir John Young Hotel.

In examining these first minutes there is no mention as to what authority under which this new Lodge is to work, nor

is there mention of the formalities associated with the installation of the WM and his Officers. This formality however, would have taken place on the following St John's Day, that is the 27th December, 1843.

All that we are presented with is a brief statement as to whom were present, a request from a Mister John Fitzpatrick to be admitted, and correspondence from Australian Social Lodge No. 260 advising the Bros Watt and Pashley are suspended from the rights and privileges of Freemasonry for "unmasonic conduct until the pleasure of the Grand Lodge shall be known".

However, even though Bro. Pashley had been suspended by the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1843, we see him joining The Australian Lodge of Fidelity on the 2nd October, 1844 as an ordinary member. He was "balloted for and unanimously elected" by all Lodge members. Prior to his admission, he presented the Lodge with the gift of two Master Mason aprons, and one Fellowcraft Apron, which presumably he may have made himself, being a tailor.

The story of Joseph Pashley's life deserves a separate talk. His life ended on the 23rd December, 1848. After which Lodge Fidelity arranged the Masonic Funeral at which Brethren from Sydney, Maitland, Dapto, Parramatta, Windsor, and Penrith were requested to attend. This funeral was at his residence no. 8 Cumberland Street, Sydney, followed by a procession of Brethren in full Masonic Regalia.

A new masonic Lodge does not suddenly appear. Therefore, it would be reasonable to speculate that 'planning meetings' were held prior to 9th August 1843 to establish the foundation of the Lodge. The only correspondence yet to be uncovered regarding these prior meetings was a record of correspondence from the Grand Lodge of Ireland Archives noting: "A Dispensation from the Leinster Committee dated 2 August, 1843."

What do we know about those present at the first meeting of The Australian Masonic Lodge of Fidelity?

They were, in order of appearance in the first minutes:

- Bro Richard Godson WM - more about him later.

- Bro. Phillip Whelan SW, from Lodge 260 – a former Convict and publican of a few pubs in Sydney, one of which was the Britannia Arms Hotel. Australian Lodge of Fidelity held their meetings there from 1845 to 1849.
- Bro. William Jones, Junior Warden, from Lodge 266 and 260 – a free settler and printer. He was a colourful character, often embroiled in legal wrangles. He was a stationer, and bookseller, and many years the Clerk of the Parish of St Lawrence. He is recorded as being the first Brother in Lodge 267 who had a full Masonic Funeral by the ritual set out in the Ahiman Rezon, this being quite different from our Masonic funerals of today.
- Bro. Lewis Moore WM 260. He came to Sydney with the 46th Regiment. He was financially comfortable and concerned himself with many community activities including membership of the Glebe Congregational Church and Councillor for the Phillip Ward of Sydney from 1847 to 1851. He was a well disciplined and upright member of society and well regarded within the Masonic community.
- Bro. John Jacob Moses from Lodge 260 – was a convict, a Jewish East-Londoner, who opened a pastry and confectioners shop in George Street Sydney. He had a full and interesting life travelling between Sydney, Hobart, and England. He married a gentile in the first recorded Jewish Marriage ceremony in Australia, from which was also the first conversion in Australia of his wife to Judaism.
- Bro Peter Henry Valentine, from Lodge 260 – was a former convict. In due course became an emancipist and publican of the Pilot Inn. He became very wealthy acquiring property all over Sydney and Parramatta. A mine at Hill End is called Valentine's Mine which we believe belonged to him as we know of his venturing that way. And Valentine Street in Ultimo may have been named after him as he had previously opened a quarry near this location in 1839, as well as Valentine Street in Parramatta.
- Bro. John Forrester, from English Lodge 548 – a free settler, and watchmaker. He practiced his trade as watchmaker in George Street opposite St. Andrew's Cathedral.
- Bro. William Francis Hillyard, Secretary Lodge 266 – arrived as a bounty man like Godson, and his occupation upon arrival was listed as a Miller.
- Bro. William James is mentioned in the minutes, though not much is known of him.
- And last but not least, Bro. James Deane, presumably from Lodge 260. He was a servant of Bro Hercules Watt and ordered to blackball Isaac Moses – John Moses' Brother, and was asked by Bro Pashley for help in procuring the keys to the Lodge Chest. These issues were catalysts in dissention amongst Lodge members 1842 just before Lodge Fidelity was created.

Each of these early Brothers presents a VERY interesting story in their own right. However, for this talk, we will have look at our Foundation Master, Worshipful Brother Richard Godson.

### **Brother Richard Godson's Masonic Career**

He was Worshipful Master of Lodge Fidelity just three years after he arrived in Australia. We have found no record of his being initiated, passed and raised in Ireland, in England, or for that matter Australia. He must have been well regarded, being given the role of Worshipful Master of this New Lodge. It appears that the Lodge was founded with Master Masons in the positions of Office without former progressions. This operation was deemed regular according to the Constitution at the time, which was permitted in times of emergency, and the suspension of Lodge 260 and its Officers appears to be just that – an emergency. Godson remained WM during 1843 and 1844, again in 1848 through to 1849, and then finally 1856. In 1858 he is listed as being a member of Australian Social Lodge No. 260, after he and Lodge Fidelity restored Lodge 260 in 1846.

The picture to the left, we believe taken during the 1880s, is a hand-coloured photograph of Richard Godson wearing regalia as the Grand Treasurer of the Provincial Grand Lodge of New South Wales of the Irish Constitution. We also see him wearing Breast Jewels: one being his Mark Master Mason keystone jewel, and the other; his Royal Arch Jewel. He with other members of Lodge Fidelity were instrumental in creating a Provincial Grand Lodge for the Irish Constitution in 1857 which existed until its demise in 1885. Within the Provincial Grand Lodge, we know that he held two positions of office that of: Provincial Grand Treasurer of the 1870s, and Deputy Provincial Grand Master in 1882. This office was short lived, as in 1885 the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland ceased, and in 1888 the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales was formed.

Regarding his working career, Godson's contribution to the creation of the new Colony can still be seen in Sydney today.

For example, we know that he was the Supervisor of Works for the construction of the Water Police Court and No.1 Court, Circular Quay in Phillip Street, now called the Police and Justice Museum. One of the most significant construction projects he was involved in comprised the fitting of the stain-glass windows in the Western, or chancel-end of St Andrew's Cathedral. We now know he was not the only member of Lodge and Chapter Fidelity involved in this major project.

In the early 1860s the Godson family appear to have relocated to Parramatta where Richard took up a position as Superintendent of the Carpenter's Shop in Parramatta Gaol. He was in charge of many old bushrangers and early convicts. Having established himself in Parramatta, he became a founding member of 'The Widow's Son Lodge' No 278 IC, Parramatta on the 29th September, 1862. This Lodge became defunct in 1885. Here is a photo of Richard Godson, James Squire Farnell, Provincial Grand Master, John William Ward Guise and Brethren in front of the Woolpack Inn, Parramatta. This photograph was taken by Photographer Beaufoy Merlin around July 1870. Incidentally 'Photo Artist' Merlin joined Freemasonry in 1871, shortly following his arrival in Sydney in September 1870.







Members of the Widows Son Lodge No.278. Source: *Sydney Morning Herald* 25th Dec. 1843, p. 3

### **A long and productive Masonic career**

He has been referred to in the past as having been the ‘Guardian of the Lodge,’ so much so that when Fidelity lost its Warrant for a year and was subsequently and rather suspiciously recovered in our Royal Arch chest, the Grand Lodge of Ireland entrusted the newly found Warrant into the care of Godson for safe keeping. However, that’s another story for another time. As having been foundation master of two lodges, restoring the Warrant of Australian Social Lodge No. 260, holding office in Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland, and was First Principal in Fidelity’s Royal Arch Chapter, our Bro. Richard Godson can be remembered as having been a valuable contributor to establishing and maintaining Freemasonry in New South Wales.

At the closing years of his life he was held in high regard by the Masonic community. Then, On the 7th May 1895 disaster struck.

Richard Godson on the Tuesday evening at 5:52pm, embarked on a train at Granville station leaving for Parramatta. The Singleton Argus notes that:

... he hurriedly entered a second-class compartment. He then called out to the platform porter that he had no ticket. The official told him to remain on the train. He then appears to have walked to the end of the compartment for the purpose of entering the next and adjoining carriage. Missing his footing he fell between the cars on to the line and was killed almost instantly.

The article further describes Richard Godson as ‘... one of the oldest Freemasons of NSW and an enthusiastic exponent of the tenets of the Craft in their proper place. No one recognised the deceased until Mr. Ralph Richardson, a friend of the deceased of thirty-five years standing, identified him.’ He was buried at Rookwood Cemetery apparently without a Masonic funeral, leaving behind three sons and two daughters from two marriages.

At this point we end our talk about the foundation of the Australian Lodge of Fidelity, and its foundation Master Bro. Richard Godson.

We can say however, that this Lodge continued to grow from the rough and troublesome times of the 1840s up until the present day. Its members in subsequent years, and recent years, include a number of fascinating characters. And the numerous events, struggles and achievements of Lodge Fidelity that

have occurred over the last 174 years are worthy of exploring in depth, however, that's another story for another time, some of which are included in our book to be launched in October this year upon the 175th anniversary of our Lodge.

Wayne and I would like to thank you all for your attendance this evening and we hope that you have enjoyed, and also have been able to take something away from this talk that may enrich your understanding of Freemasonry, here in Sydney during the nineteenth century.



## **“Due to active service conditions . . . ”: Some Australian Masonic activities during the World Wars**

Presented originally to MAMR; Manchester, May 2015 and subsequently in Lodge Warringah No.83  
UGLNSWACT, 19 October 2017

*by Bro Neil Wynes Morse*



Figure 1

The Installed Master's Jewel for 1914-15 for Corona Lodge No 195 VC, presented to WBro Henderson in 1915, together with the Gallipoli Medal of J N Campbell [my grandfather] and an image of an unknown Australian soldier of WWI.

The Australian experience is that about 10% of freemasons who enlisted in WWI ended up with their name on an honour roll such as this one.



Figure 2  
The Honour Roll of the UGLNSW in Sydney.

The statistics are similar among the various masonic jurisdictions operating in Australia; in New South Wales 362 brethren died out of 3077 who went overseas; in Victoria 2244 went and, of them, 237 didn't come back - about 12% and 11% respectively. In South Australia, 711 members enlisted and 69 were killed or died of wounds - about 10%.



Nine Tasmanians died, from a total enlistment of 151. In Western Australia 94 died and Queensland suffered the loss of 135. There were 25 UGLE masons included in that Queensland total.

Although less than the overall Australian average of almost 15% [14.76%], ‘keeping score’ is not important.

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This is a narrative told by documents.

The first document is of three and a third foolscap pages and is held in the Australian War Memorial within a file with the title of ‘Societies general. Correspondence regarding “Masonic Brothers”. Organization of accounts of social gatherings. Indents for hospital and medical comforts and surgical stores’.<sup>1</sup>

It is a report of masonic activities among the members of the Third Australian General Hospital [3AGH].

It is not comprehensive, as it only covers the period from the departure of the Hospital from Australia in May 1915 to just after Anzac Day 1918.

A transcript of the entire document is attached as Appendix I.

According to the major references on the topic<sup>2</sup>, we learn:

3AGH was raised in early 1915 and sailed from Sydney on the RMS *Mooltan* on 15 May. In 1915 the establishment of a GH was 21 officers, 43 nurses and 77 ORs. It had 520 beds. It arrived in England on 28 June, and almost immediately received orders from the War Office to proceed to the Dardanelles. This was in response from the PDMS MEF Surgeon General Babbie for a hospital of 1,000 beds to be established on the island of Lemnos. In spite of the apparent urgency, 3AGH did not arrive at West Mudros until the beginning of August, and its equipment did not catch up with the staff for another three weeks. Although Babbie’s intention had originally been to provide initial wound surgery at Mudros, this was never achieved. The wounded continued to be evacuated directly to Egypt, while Mudros filled up with the thousands of cases of dysentery [mainly paratyphoid and amoebic] which were being evacuated from Anzac. The hospital was expanded to 1,700 beds. The hospital staff did not escape infection, and almost all the doctors were struck down by it at some stage. After the final withdrawal from Anzac on 19 December, the hospital was cleared by the liner *Aquitania*, and was able to revert to its proper establishment of 1,040 beds. 3AGH returned to Egypt on 20 January 1916, and took over the Egyptian Army Barracks at Abbasia, between Heliopolis and Cairo. Its opening there allowed the closure of 1 and 2 AGH, which were to accompany the four divisions of the AIF preparing to move to the Western Front. The hospital finally left Egypt for England in October 1916. On arrival it took over the

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<sup>1</sup> The NAA record details are: Series number AWM25, Control symbol 891/1, item barcode 457664.

<sup>2</sup> Likeman, R. *Gallipoli Doctors*; 2010, ISBN: 9780980637335; and the same author’s *From the Tropics to the Desert*, 2012, ISBN: 9780980637366 and *Australian Doctors on the Western Front*, 2014, ISBN: 9781925078121.

Kitchener War Hospital in Brighton, Sussex, and operated from there until its final move to Abbeville in France in April 1917.

The document details four meetings, two on Lemnos and two in France. Information is also given of civilian meetings attended whilst in Egypt and England.

The first meeting on Lemnos is described as follows:

A tent pitched upon a rocky hillside within sound of the guns of Gallipoli with all the turmoil of modern warfare surging around. Outside were armed sentries pacing their allotted beat ready to repel intruders should the occasion arise and within, to the dim light of a few hurricane lamps, a gathering of Masons such as had probably never before been known under like circumstances in the history of the Craft.

Whilst in Egypt and France, brethren from 3AGH visited local lodges. These included the Lord Kitchener Lodge [3402 EC], the Lotus Lodge [3296 EC], the Bulwar Lodge of Cairo [1068 EC] and several Greek lodges whilst at Abbesiah.

*a propos* of Lord Kitchener Lodge, the report states:

Through the kindness of the WM of Lord Kitchener Lodge a member of this Unit was initiated, Brother A Butler became a MM while in England and has proved himself a worthy Mason in every way.

There's probably a worthwhile little research paper in that sentence alone.

In the UK the installations at Lodge St. Cecilia, No. 1636 and Lodge Royal Brunswick, No 732 were attended. Other lodges visited included Lodge Royal York No 315, Lodge Altingworth No 1821, Lodge Knights of the Road No 3673, and Lodge Stanford No 1947.

The first meeting in France was in stark contrast to that on Lemnos:

Instead of a tent upon a hillside with a few tables, wooden forms and hurricane lamps was a room with snowy table linen, gleaming cutlery and glass, electric light and tables beautifully decorated with flowers, plants and fernery.

The Australian War Memorial does not hold a 'follow-up' document covering the period from late April 1918 until the unit's return to Australia. And the unit's official history does not mention any masonic activity at all.

But the brethren of 3AGH saw a benefit in their meetings, saying:

Undoubtedly these gatherings, which unite brethren from all parts of the world, are of valuable assistance to Masons while on active service, affording as they do an opportunity for brothers to know each other and to meet and be relieved for a while from the strain of the days that have past and are to come until their present task is ended.

The next document relates to the Fourth Australian Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company [4ABGROC].



Six Australian Railway Operating Companies were formed following a call for volunteers from the Australian State Railway services in 1916. Three were Broad Gauge units, and the others were Light Railway ROCs, running 60cm 'trams'. They performed three basic functions; the management of railway traffic, the provision of crews for locomotives, and the repair of rolling stock and other items needed to keep a railway in operation.

On 27 November 1918 a group of masons held a masonic 'social' to celebrate the Armistice. To commemorate the occasion, they produced a brochure [[Appendix II](#)].

It named all present, and also listed those who had apologised for non-attendance. Military ranks and units, as well as masonic ranks and affiliations, were listed.

The brochure explains the background to the meeting as follows:

After being together for nearly two years, and after several unsuccessful attempts, due to active service conditions, the masonic Brethren of the 4th Australian Broad Gauge, Railway Operating Company, A.I.F., met in social evening, somewhere in France, on 27th November, 1918, in the old city of "Dreadful Nights," in which the Company was stationed. They received the right good hand of fellowship from the French brethren, obtaining the use of their little Masonic Hall, showing plainly the scars of war.

The tables were laid down the centre of the hall, and, under the Chairmanship of Worshipful Brother Captain J. M. Bygott, a goodly number of Brethren sat down.

The usual toasts were honoured, as of yore, and in peace, love, and harmony, several enjoyable hours were spent.

The 'Somewhere In France', or 'old City of "Dreadful Nights"' was Dunkerque. To my knowledge, these two documents are the only records of Australian soldiers meeting as masons whilst on active service during that War.



Figure 3  
 Australian servicemen in uniform and wearing masonic regalia.  
 Members of a Wireless Training School, Moore Park, Sydney, 1917.  
 [This is the only image of Australian WWI servicemen in both regalia and uniform of which I am aware.]

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In the Second War we have records recording some even more trying conditions.

Sir David Griffin, a ‘guest of the Emperor’, but a profane, stated:

That in Changi intellectual escape was essential. Each man created for himself a microcosm into which he could crawl and the most contented prisoner was he who could build the most perfect microcosm and disappear most effectively into it. For Freemasons it was their Craft which offered some peace and salvation, and we salute their resolve and courage.’<sup>3</sup>

In his magisterial work on Freemasonry in the Far East District of UGLE entitled *The Craft in the East*, the late Bro. Christopher Haffner wrote:

Brethren in Changi Camp, Singapore, had been holding lodges of instruction under dispensation. Large numbers of prisoners were moved out of the camp at the end of 1942 to work on the infamous death railway. No masonic activity amongst these brethren is known to have taken place until 1944 when the railway was completed and the prisoners who were left were concentrated together.

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted by the unknown author of ‘Changi’ in the *NSW Freemason* Vol 37:2 for April 2005.

My third document is a scrapbook of Masonic activities on Singapore Island during the Japanese occupation. It was assembled by WBro H J Daley of Lodge Perseverance No. 411 of the NSW jurisdiction. It contains a record of his Masonic reminiscences in Malaya from 1941 to 1945; the notice papers, attendance records, members roll and minutes of what was called 'Lodge P.O.W., No. 00' held at Adam Park; a set of Tracing Boards and Working Tools used by this 'Lodge' during its exemplifications; the attendance book and minutes of the Selerang Masonic Study Group; the minutes of the LoC (Lines of Communication) Masonic Club for its meetings from February to April 1943; a New South Wales ritual typed out whilst in captivity; a list of brethren from that constitution held in Changi; and sundry other relevant documents.

I would like to quote some passages from the document by Bro. Daley which he entitled "Freemasonry in Malaya 1941 and whilst a Prisoner of War 1942-45"

I went to Malaya with the first contingent of A.I.F. troops and proceeded to Kuala Lumpur, where we arrived on 19 February, 1941. Early in March, a joint invitation from the three lodges in that city, Read (EC), Makepeace (EC) and Tullibardine in the East (SC), was received from members of the A.I.F. to visit the respective lodges. We took advantage of this opportunity and, during my stay of eight months, I attended sixteen meetings, including two Installations. The hospitality extended to our boys exceeded anything I have ever experienced.

Two of our boys, Bros. Wingfield <sup>4</sup>(Vic) and Allen (Q'land) were raised in Read and Makepeace Lodges respectively, and I had the privilege of presenting the WT under the N.S.W. constitution on each occasion.

During May of that year [1942, *ed.*], I discussed with Bro. Biggs (Wangaratta Vic) the possibilities of getting members together to form a study group and improve our masonic knowledge, but no suitable meeting place could be found.

Shortly after, a Church of England Chapel was established on the upper floor of a badly bomb-damaged building, the only access being by an outside staircase. The lower floor was used by the Japanese as a canteen for the troops. Padre Andrews (British), although not a mason, agreed to allow us the use of the Chapel and Wor. Bro. George Polain (Canobolas N.S.W.) agreed to occupy the chair.

Our first meeting was held on 8 July, 1942, at which ten brethren were present:- N.S.W. 4; Vic 3; Queensland 1; English 2 (one from Java and one Malaya). It was decided to use the N.S.W. constitution and hold rehearsal meetings every Wednesday with a demonstration of degree work once every four weeks. The lodge was named P.O.W. No. 00.

The members from Adam Park held a further meeting on 12th August, 1943, with Wor. Bro. Polain occupying the Chair.

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<sup>4</sup> Bro Wingfield was Bro. General Gordon Bennett's driver, and will be mentioned again. It has been said that Bro Bennett made it known that he expected all masons under his command to attend this raising!

Bro. W Lovell (Covenant, NSW) made a freehand drawing, from illustrations in an EC ritual, of the TBs and also made the WT's from cardboard.

The full report is at Appendix IV.

Bros Lovell and Polain also feature later in this narrative.

A book of records was preserved by WBro A G S Hindle of the Masonic group which met in the Clock Tower at Selarang, Changi. It was initially meant to be presented to Lodge Liberation No 674 VC, a lodge founded by, and for, ex-POWs, on its Consecration, but this did not occur. The proposed Foreword is printed at Appendix V.

Bro. Haffner's statement regarding activity on the railway has since been found to be incorrect - there was at least one meeting on the railway.

In late 1942 the Japanese commenced sending 'working parties' to various parts of South East Asia to undertake work mainly relating to infrastructure development. Most of these parties were sourced from the thousands of allied POWs held at the Changi camp in Singapore. Of these, the most remembered today were those sent to build the railway from Burma to Thailand. Each party was given a designation and the men I will talk about were part of 'F' Force. This group, of about 7000 men included some 3660 Australians, was despatched in April 1943<sup>5</sup>. After a march of 20 days, 'F' Force arrived at Shimo (Lower) Songkurai to commence work on the railway.

34.1% of all Australian prisoners of the Japanese died - the highest of all nationalities of POWs. The rate of death of the impressed labour (or *rōmusha*) from all over South East Asia used on the line is unknown - but is believed to be up to 75%. This latter figure comes into perspective when you recall that 60% of the Russians captured by the Germans died.

According to the Australian Official War History, Kami Songkurai was the worst camp on the railway; the facilities were even more primitive than elsewhere, the Korean guards more brutal, the IJA officers even more sadistic and the death rate reflected these conditions, being the highest on the line - 60 per cent for the Australians and 80 per cent for the British.

Among the officers to go with 'F' Force was an Army Chaplain, George Polain who had earlier attended masonic meetings in Changi<sup>6</sup>. He said:

It was often very trying to conduct a service in a hut with 300 men with the nauseous stench of the awful ulcer cases all around & having often four or six dysentery cases

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<sup>5</sup>McCormack, G and Nelson, H: *The Burma-Thailand Railway: memory and history*. Allen & Unwin. Sydney. 1993. This book is essential reading on the topic, particularly for non-Australian readers.

<sup>6</sup> Morse, N W: *The Roberts Hospital POW Masonic Association*. Unpublished paper. This paper outlines the activities of this group from December 1942 to May 1944 in the Changi camp.

squatting on their bamboo pans around one through the prayers, scripture readings & so on.<sup>7</sup>

Indicative of his masonic involvement is the fact that, on his return from Thailand, WBro. Polain is recorded as having delivered a paper on 'Signs and Symbols' to the Roberts Barracks Masonic Association on 19 February 1944.

Also with the F Force group were numerous Australian brethren, some of whom had attended Changi meetings. Late in 1943 Padre Polain formed a masonic group which he called the 'Kami Sankurai Club'. The first meeting was held on 13 October 1943 and 14 brethren attended.

Of these, nine had been members of the Roberts Hospital group but none of them had attended meetings of the Selerang group.

As previously stated, there were 14 brethren in attendance; twelve of them listed as an 'officer' of the 'lodge'. The card lists the attendees, and their 'positions' as:

WM: WBro. G Polain Canobolas Orange  
IPM: Bro. Barton San Souci 442 NSW  
SW: Bro. Hislop Concord 98 NSW  
JW: Bro. Biggs Wangaratta 66 Vic  
Chap: Bro. Thompson Melbourne Temperance 200  
Sec. Bro. Wingfield Balwyn 245 Vic  
DC: Bro. Browne Prince Alfred 94 NSW  
SD: Bro. Lovell Covenant, Bexley NSW  
JD: Bro. Kearton Wisdom 526 Vic  
IG: Bro. Pedvin Capital 612 Canberra ACT  
T: Bro. Goulding Monaro 164, Cooma NSW  
Treas: Bro. Hodge Ionic 709 Tungamah Vic

Also attending were Bros. N A Spratt (Ibis 361, Griffith NSW) and Jackson (Seddon 242, Footscray Vic).

Bro. Lovell said of the meeting:

I was on the Burma railway at a camp called Kami Sankurai, nine miles from the Burma-Thailand border. No words can describe the horror of that place, yet even there amidst death and despair there emerged a Padre Polain who formed a masonic meeting. About a dozen men met when the opportunity arose. It was a very risky business. At our first meeting I made cards to commemorate the meeting. The pencil and paper was somehow supplied by George Polain, a minor miracle in itself under the circumstances. It was the only bit of paper I managed to bring back.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> George Polain, *Report on the Work of Chaplains with "F" Force*, AWM 54, 554/7/4, Australian War Memorial.

<sup>8</sup> Personal correspondence from the late Bro. Bill Lovell, 1992.

For this it would appear that more than one meeting was held, but with no evidence this must be considered only a supposition.

Not long after I received a copy of the commemorative card, I found that the son of Bro. Pedvin was living in a neighbouring suburb. I gave Mr Pedvin a copy of the card and he, in turn, provided me with an extract from his father's diary for 14 October 1943, which reads:

Last night 12 of us attended a Masonic Club Meeting. Padre Pollane gave a most interesting talk on the different degrees up to the 30<sup>th</sup> Degree.<sup>9</sup>

The meeting was held just outside the cemetery, 'where the Japs did not patrol',<sup>10</sup>

The card issued to commemorate the meeting shows a group of men seated on logs under a tree outside the cemetery fence, with one, perhaps the tyler, leaning against the tree. The business of the meeting, as set out on the card, was a lecture by WBro. Polain entitled 'The Higher Side and Progress in Freemasonry'.

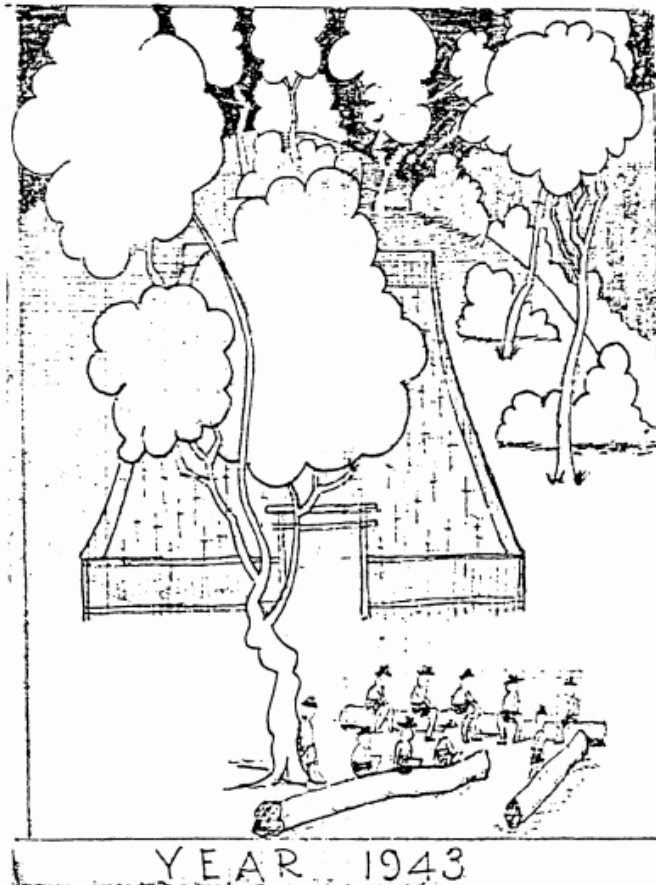
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<sup>9</sup> <sup>9</sup> Unpublished diary entry for 14 October 1943 by L J Pedvin, quoted by kind permission of his son, Mr Brian Pedvin.

<sup>10</sup> Personal correspondence from the late Bro. Bill Lovell, 1992.



# KAMI SANKURAI CLUB N°1 POW CAMP THAILAND



YEAR 1943

## INAUGURAL MEETING

WED 13 OCT. 1943

W.M. BRO. G. POLAIN

I.P.M. Bro Barton	S.D. Bro Lovell
S.W. Bro. Hislop	J.D. Bro. Kearton
J.W. Bro. Biggs	I.G. Bro. Pedvin
CHAP Bro Thompson	T Bro. Goulding
Sec Bro Wingfield	Treas Bro Hodge
D.C. Bro Browne	

Business:

A lecture "The Higher Side and Progress of Freemasonry" by Wor Bro. George Polain.

G Polain Carobolas Orange  
 McClouding Monaro 164 Cooma  
 N.A. Pratt Griffith  
 R. B. Edge Jonic 709 Lurgan  
 H. V. Thompson Melbourne Jampurna 200  
 W. Lavell Loversant 1 Bexley NSW  
 Jackson Liddons 245 Toobag, Vic  
 R. G. Biggs Mangaratta 66 Vic  
 J. B. Longfield Bilyung 245 Vic  
 W. A. Blyden Eno 4421 N.S.W.  
 L. J. Pedvin Capital 612 Canberra  
 H. M. Mone Mure Alfred 944 NSW  
 E. Kearton Woodon 526 Vic  
 A. S. Hislop Concord 98 N.S.W.

Figure 3  
The Kami Sankurai Card

Of the fourteen who were at the meeting at Kami Sankuria, all but two came home.

Bro. Hodge died of beri beri on 8/xii/43 at Kanburi, but has no known burial.

Bro. Thompson died of beri beri/cerebral oedema on 8/iii/44 at Changi, and was buried in AIF Changi Cemetery.

None of the fourteen is still alive.

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Sir David Griffin wrote: "For Freemasons it was their Craft which offered some peace and salvation, and we salute their resolve and courage."<sup>11</sup>

Brethren, in another Masonic Order there is a reference to the Jews rebuilding Jerusalem, with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, which concludes with the admonition:

‘to defend our country from harm,  
for work or war we either hand should arm.’

May the GAOTU assist us to have the same dedication to the Craft as the brethren whose activities I have outlined, and may the words ‘Lest we forget’ be with us not only on Remembrance Day, or on Anzac Day, but every day.

And perhaps a minute’s silence is insufficient.

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#### Acknowledgements

These are arranged in geographical order; starting closest to home.

In Canberra, Australia’s national capital, I have long enjoyed the support and assistance of the members of the Linford Lodge of Research, especially David Slater, Bob Nairn and Tony Pope. Pound for pound, they are the most knowledgeable, generous, and helpful of colleagues. Ta much.

As ever, the staff of the National Library, particularly those in the Petherick Room, provided facilities, advice and kindnesses well beyond their duty statements. Fellow Petherick Readers continue to be sources of both inspiration and encouragement. My comradely thanks to you all.

Bros Malcolm Galloway, Tom Hall, Greg Levenston, Ian Shanley and Ewart Stronach at Discovery LoR have shored up my confidence at critical times; this is essential to me ‘being happy, and communicating happiness’. Many thanks.

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted by the unknown author of ‘Changi’ in the *NSW Freemason* Vol 37:2 for April 2005.

Bros Robert Taylor, Brian French [since deceased], and Chris Craven in Sydney; Iain Taylor in Melbourne; David Cook in Brisbane; and Keith Knox in Wellington have all generously assisted me. Thank you all.

### THIRD AUSTRALIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL

Soon after the 15 May 1915, when the Third Australian General Hospital left Australia for active service abroad, it was found that several Masons were included among the officers and other ranks of the Unit and an endeavour was made to hold a social gathering on board.

The prime movers in this were Bros. L Logan, of No. 161 and Mark No. 8 NSW and J J Fraser of No. 508 EC Singapore whose efforts, for various reasons, met with no success.

The Unit was divided into several parties upon reaching England, sent to various places in the Southern Counties and re-assembled after some nine days at the Rest Camp on Southampton Common; a very beautiful spot on the outskirts of that ancient port.

During the week the Unit was stationed here various members were able to visit a Lodge where they were welcomed most heartily.

Only one visit was possible as the Unit entrained to Devonport, thence by HMT *Simla*, since a victim to submarines, to the Dardanelles and was stationed on Lemnos Island until six weeks after the evacuation of Gallipoli.

As it was the nearest Hospital to the firing line it can be readily understood that hard work and long hours were the portion of its staff for many months.

It was therefore impossible to organize any Masonic gatherings until the work of the Hospital had settled down and the first social meeting of Masonic brethren was held in the Post Office tent of the Third Australian General Hospital on St. Andrew's Day, the 30th November 1915.

Proved Masons to the number of twenty one from various Units on the Island were invited and an enjoyable evening spent.

The organization of this, the initial gathering of Masons under active service conditions, was well carried out by Bros. F Smythe, L Logan, C Stuart and J J Frazer, all, with the exception of the latter, from NSW Lodges. Here must be instanced the absolute necessity for strict examination before admitting strangers to any description of Masonic gathering.

The brethren mentioned above insisted upon this and in addition carried out an examination among themselves running through three degrees. They then passed to the various applicants for admission to the South and found one who, although he belonged to another Order, was not a Mason.

He was not admitted.

On the 29th December 1915 a second gathering was arranged to take place at the Motor Transport Depot.

Thirty four brethren attended and never was the universal spread of Freemasonry more exemplified than upon this occasion.

A tent pitched upon a rocky hillside within sound of the guns of Gallipoli with all the turmoil of modern warfare surging around. Outside were armed sentries pacing their allotted beat ready to repel intruders should the occasion arise and within, to the dim light of a few hurricane lamps, a gathering of

Masons such as had probably never before been known under like circumstances in the history of the Craft.

They came from the ends of the earth, these men with one end - to serve, from England, Canada, Scotland, the islands of Barbados, Florida, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Tasmania, India, the Straits Settlements, Mexico, from Egypt and ranks from a General down to Privates were able to relax and spend a few hours free from the strain and horrors of this world war.

A copy of the Menu and Autographs is attached.

The Hospital was next stationed at Abbassieh, Cairo, where it was possible to visit several established Lodges, notably the Lord Kitchener Lodge, the Lotus Lodge, the Bulwar Lodge and several Greek Lodges where, although the visiting brother was unable to understand the language, it was quite easy to follow the working of the various degrees and mightily interesting.

The Lodges in Cairo were doing most excellent work for the Craft and entertained many visitors at their assemblies.

Through the kindness of the WM of Lord Kitchener Lodge a member of this Unit was initiated, Brother A Butler became a MM while in England and has proved himself a worthy Mason in every way.

In October 1916 the Unit returned to England and was stationed for some months at the Kitchener Hospital, Brighton.

Here the resident Masons extended a welcome the memory of which can never be effaced, and the Australian brethren were at once made Honorary Members of their most excellent Club in the Queens Road.

Invitations to visit the many ancient Lodges in Brighton and Hove were given from all sides and many were the enjoyable evenings and days spent in the company of men who were truly brothers to their visitors from overseas.

Special mention must be made of two notable ceremonies that the Australian brethren were fortunate to witness - the Installation ceremonies of Lodge St. Cecilia, No. 1636 and Lodge Royal Brunswick, No 732 which were carried out in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the Craft.

Visits were also made to Lodge Royal York No 315, Lodge Altingworth No 1821, Lodge Knights of the Road No 3673, Lodge Stanford No 1947 and many others at whose meetings the visiting brethren were made to feel as much at home as in their Mother Lodges.

April 1917 saw the Hospital in France and on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1917 the third Masonic gathering on active service was held, but under very different circumstances to those previous.

It was possible to obtain a building and the Dental Operating Hut was cleared of its various impediments and re-furnished for the occasion.

Instead of a tent upon a hillside with a few tables, wooden forms and hurricane lamps was a room with snowy table linen, gleaming cutlery and glass, electric light and tables beautifully decorated with flowers, plants and fernery.

Twenty four brethren, whose Mother Lodges were far apart, gathered for an evening which closed in harmony at 11-0 pm.

Attached is a copy of the Menu with some of the Autographs of the Brothers present.

It may be of interest to note that of the twenty-one brethren present at the first meeting only three were left to carry on the work so ably commenced at the Dardanelles. The rest are scattered far and wide, from Belgium to Palestine, some may have made the greatest sacrifice of all, other wounded and invalided to their homes, while the rest are carrying on wherever they may be.

The fourth gathering held on the eve of Anzac Day, an anniversary that will live forever in the history of Australia and New Zealand, saw an increase in the numbers present.

Twenty seven brethren attended, including for the first time in the précis of these gatherings, a brother from the United States of America.

Brother A B Cole is a prominent member of the Craft in his country and has no less than thirty two degrees to his credit so the meeting was indeed honoured by his presence. The President, Brother L Logan, vacated the chair in favour of Brother A B Cole who conducted the proceedings for the remainder of the evening.

Many ranks were represented ranging from Colonels to Privates and some of the brothers came in for many miles around to this gathering which included an EA Freemason in the person of a member of the Unit, Brother S Porter, who was of valuable assistance in regard to the excellent dinner provided.

Various excellent songs and speeches were rendered and an evening enjoyed which recompensed the President, Secretary and Committee for their work. Attached is a copy of the Menu.

Undoubtedly these gatherings, which unite brethren from all parts of the world, are of valuable assistance to Masons while on active service, affording as they do an opportunity for brothers to know each other and to meet and be relieved for a while from the strain of the days that have past and are to come until their present task is ended.

. . . . . [sgd C. Stuart] . . . . Hon Sec.  
No 93 Lodge St John, Manly, N.S.W.

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“What may hap this night give it ear but not tongue.”

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A SOCIAL MEETING OF MASONIC BRETHERN ON ACTIVE SERVICE.  
HELD AT MUDROS WEST, LEMNOS, AEGEAN SEA.  
Wednesday, 29th December 1915.  
at 7-0. p.m.

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Chairman	Bro. W. Bond.
Director of Ceremonies	“ J. Gross.
Secretary	“ W. Phillips.
Treasurer	“ S. Bertram.
	Tylers
	Bro. G. Weedman Bro. F. Smythe

Committee  
Bro. D.S. Hall. Bro. C. Stuart. Bro. J. J. Fraser.



Bro. L. Clarke. Bro. G. Weedman.

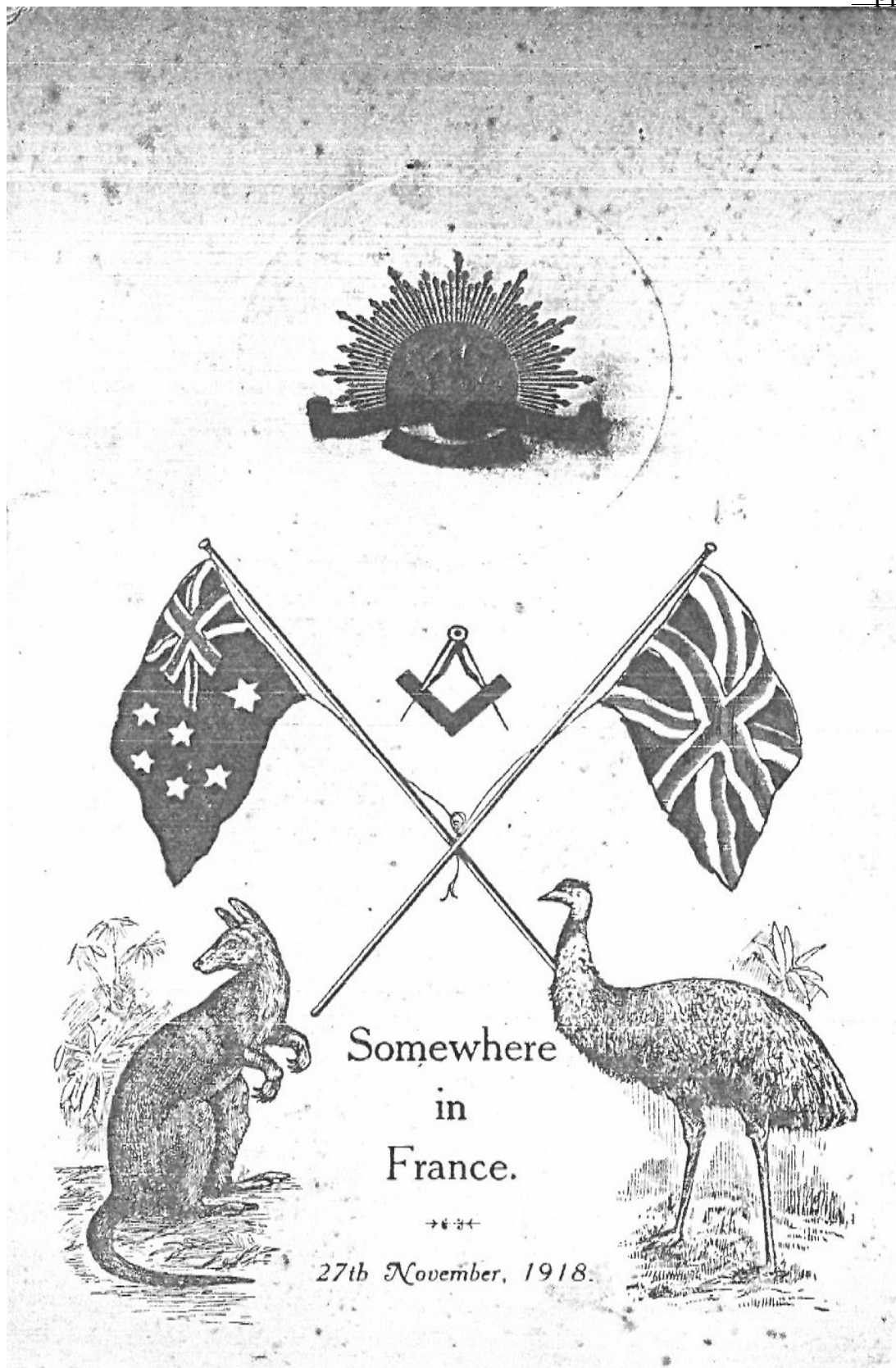
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MENU

Hors de Oeuvre  
Sardines a la Mode  
Saumon a Lemnos. Pommes Puree.  
Asperges. Sauce Beurre.  
Poulet Fricasse.  
Bouef Roti de veuille Anglais.  
Pommes Sautees. Pumpkin.  
Le Pouding de Saison.  
Compote de fruit a la Creme.  
Fromage. Celeri. Biscuits.  
Desserts  
Cafe Noir.      Liquers.

TOASTS

<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Responder</u>
Bro. W Bond.	The King & Craft
“ J.Gross.	Absent Brethren.      Bro. J.O’Connor
“ W.Bond.	Silent Toast
“ A.Clarke.	Present Meeting.      “ J.Fraser
“ W.Bond	Lord Kitchener      “ H.Beckett
“ P.Wall	Our Homes      “ S.Bertram
“ W.Phillips	Secretary’s Toast
“ G.Weedman	Tyler’s Toast



After being together for nearly two years, and after several unsuccessful attempts, due to Active Service conditions, the Masonic Brethren of the 4th Australian Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company, A.I.F., met in Social Evening, Somewhere in France, on 27th November, 1918, in the old city of "Dreadful Nights," in which the Company was stationed. They received the right good hand of fellowship from the French Brethren, obtaining the use of their little Masonic Hall, showing plainly the scars of war.

The tables were laid down the centre of the Hall, and, under the Chairmanship of Worshipful Brother Captain J. M. Bygott, a goodly number of Brethren sat down.

The usual toasts were honoured, as of yore, and in Peace, Love, and Harmony, several enjoyable hours were spent.

*The following Brethren were present—*

**Past Masters.**

**93rd CANADIAN INFANTRY.**

Capt. BYGOTT, J. M., Lodge Clementi 313, G.R.C., Canada.

**4th A.B.C., R.O.C.**

2 W.O. CHALK, R., Lodge Gregory 2139, E.C., Queensland.

Cpl. SKYRING, A.W., Lodge Townsville 1596, E.C., Queensland.

**Wor. Master (elect).**

Cpl. WRIGHT, S. J., Lodge Lord Saltoun 825, S.C., Queensland.

**Master Masons.**

Spr. ALLEN, M. W. R., Lodge Princess Royal 29, S.A.C., South Australia.

2 Cpl. BONNER, E. R., Lodge Concord 10, T.C., Tasmania.

2 Cpl. BENNETTS, A., Lodge Cunduden 91, W.A.C., West Australia.

2 W.O. BARNETT, W., Lodge Aslton 1105, S.C., Queensland.

Sjt. BRIGHTON, E. J. B., Lodge Caledonian 456, S.C., Queensland.

Sjt. GIBSON, C., Lodge Stanley 27, Q.C., Queensland.

2 W.O. GRAY, J. P., Lodge Waratah 170, N.S.W.C., New South Wales.

2 Cpl. GREEN, W. J., Lodge Maryborough 811, S.C., Queensland.

R.Q.M.S. HINDMARSH, R. W., Lodge St. George 1152, S.C., Queensland.

Spr. JUDD, C. E., Lodge Havelock 24, V.C., Victoria.

Spr. JEWELL, J. D., Lodge York 5, W.A.C., West Australia.

Spr. LAWSON, R., Lodge Bundamba 898, S.C., Queensland.

Spr. MORTON, N. B., Lodge Bundamba 898, S.C., Queensland.

Spr. LAMB, W., Lodge Burns St. Mary 505, S.C., Queensland.

Spr. PROUDFOOT, G., Lodge Perth 122, S.C., Scotland.

Cpl. PORTER, W. E., Lodge Toowoomba 38, Q.C., Queensland.

Sjt. ROSS, P. L., Lodge Friendship 17, W.A.C., West Australia.

Lieut. SKYRING, E. H., Lodge Capricornia 3642, E.C.,  
Queensland.  
Sjt. SPARKES, W. P., Lodge Dee 41, Q.C., Queensland.  
Cpl. SNAPE, G., Lodge United Tradesmen 5, Q.C., Queensland.  
Cpl. THOMAS, D. A., Lodge Semaphore 33, S.A.C., South  
Australia.  
2 Cpl. WATSON, A. G., Lodge Maryborough 811, S.C., Queens-  
land.

#### **RAILWAY OPERATING DIVISION, ROYAL ENGINEERS.**

C.Q.M.S. PROBERT, F., Lodge Robert Mitchell 2956, E.C.  
England.  
Spr. PURVES, C., Lodge St. Andrews 199, S.C., Scotland.



*Circumstances prevented the following Brethren of the Com-  
pany from being present, but the hope was expressed that,  
when possible to meet again, they would be with us:—*

Lieut. BURCHELL, R. J., M.C., Lodge Boronia 42, W.A.C.,  
West Australia.  
Cpl. BARNETT, G. T., Lodge Maryborough 811, S.C., Queens-  
land.  
Spr. BLYTH, J., Lodge Northcote 191, V.C., Victoria.  
Spr. BOWIE, W. U., Lodge Greenock Kilwinning 12, S.C.,  
Scotland.  
Spr. FOURRO, J., Lodge Temple 12, Q.C., Queensland.  
2 W.O. FIELD, E. G., Lodge Murray Bridge 44, S.A.C., South  
Australia.  
2 Lieut. GRAY, G.W., Lodge Mostyn 18, S.A.C., South Australia.  
Spr. MOLINEUX, R., Lodge Thomas Jones 2441, E.C., Calcutta.  
2 W.O. NEISH, J., Lodge St. Clair 826, S.C., Queensland.  
Cpl. PRITCHARD, W., Lodge Southern Cross 1321, S.C.,  
Queensland.  
2 Cpl. SAMPSON, A., Lodge Proserpine E.C., Queensland.  
1 Cpl. WARD, V., Lodge Operative 1, T.C., Tasmania.  
2 Cpl. GIBBS, C. S., Lodge Torrensvile 58, S.A.C.

## TOASTS.

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*Chairman* :—CAPTAIN J. M. BYGOTT.



The King.

Proposed by THE CHAIRMAN.



The Craft.

Proposed by Cpl. A. W. SKYRING.

Response by BRETHREN.



Our Brethren at Home and Abroad.

Proposed by 2/W.O. R. CHALK.



Our Fallen and Absent Brethren.

Proposed by Sergeant W. P. SPARKES.



Tyler's Toast.

Proposed by 2/W.O. W. BARNETT.



God Save the King.

FREEMASONRY IN MALAYA

1941

AND WHILST A

PRISONER OF WAR

1942-45.

BRO. H J DALEY  
LODGE PERSEVERENCE  
NO. 411 NSW

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FREEMASONRY IN MALAYA

1941

I went to Malaya with the first contingent of AIF troops and proceeded to Kuala Lumpur, where we arrived on 19th February, 1941. Early in March, a joint invitation from the three lodges in that city, Read [EC], Makepeace [EC] and Tullibardine in the East [SC], was received from members of the AIF to visit the respective lodges. We took advantage of this opportunity and, during my stay of eight months, I attended sixteen meetings, including two Installations. The hospitality extended to our boys exceeded anything I have ever experienced. The visiting AIF brethren always exceeded the number of members, sometimes as great as two to one and our representations to be allowed to affiliate or in some way to share the expenses were thankfully declined. The members of these lodges invited our members to their homes and helped to make our stay in Kuala Lumpur very pleasant.

Two of our boys, Bros. Wingfield [Vic] and Allen [Q'land] were raised in Read and Makepiece respectively and I had the privilege of presenting the WT under the NSW constitution on each occasion.

I left Kuala Lumpur in October, 1941, and was able to visit one more lodge in Johore Bahru before war broke out.

I took my apron with me and, in December, 1941, with the rest of my surplus gear, it was sent to the AIF kit store in Singapore which fell into the hands of the Japanese on 15th February, 1942. I understand a number of aprons were destroyed by the Japanese.

1942-45

On 17th February, 1942, the AIF marched into Selerang Barracks, Changi, as prisoners of war and I was one of a party of 3,000 sent as a working party to Adam Park, Singapore on 4th April, 1942.

During May of that year, I discussed with Bro. Biggs [Wangaratta, Vic] the possibilities of getting members together to form a study group and improve our masonic knowledge, but no suitable meeting place could be found.



Shortly after, a Church of England Chapel was established on the upper floor of a badly bomb-damaged building, the only access being by an outside staircase. The lower floor was used by the Japanese as a canteen for the troops. Padre Andrews [British], although not a mason, agreed to allow us to use of the Chapel and Wor. Bro. Polain [Canobolas, NSW] agreed to occupy the Chair.

Our first meeting was held on 8th July, 1942, at which ten brethren were present, representing the following constitutions:- NSW 4; Vic 3; Q'land 1; English 2 [one from Java and one Malaya]. It was decided to use the NSW constitution and hold rehearsal meetings each Wednesday with a demonstration of degree work once in every four weeks. The lodge was named P.O.W. No. 00.

Wor. Bro. Polain was moved suddenly to another camp and further movements brought to our camp a very close friend of mine, Wor. Bro. J K Ainsworth [Hunters Hill, NSW] who was most anxious to assist the brethren and occupied the Chair.

Bro. A Cale [Prince of Wales, NSW] had a NSW ritual and we copied out the various charges for the members, none of whom had previously held office. After three rehearsals, we gave our first demonstration of degree work on 19th August, 1942. Refreshments in the south consisted of coffee and sandwiches, rice bread and sardines.

All brethren were thoroughly tried and proved before being admitted and the door securely tyled both inside and out. The CO of the Camp, Bro. R F Oakes [Wellesley, NSW] was present and arrangements were made that, in the event of any interruption by the Japs, we would immediately change over to a religious meeting.

Our objects were to assist all those brethren interested to share the work of the lodge and change them round each meeting.

We were able to hold three further meetings - membership was now twenty two - when we were moved to another camp and no suitable meeting could be found for further activities. Wor. Bro. Ainsworth left with a party for Japan on 22nd November, 1942, where he subsequently dies of pneumonia.

My apron was found in the AIF kit store by a friend who recognised it and forwarded it to me in Adam Park. Later I buried it with official AIF records and reclaimed it after two and a half years and brought it home.

When visiting the camp hospital at Adam Park, I discovered the Attendance Book of Lodge Makepeace, Kuala Lumpur, which had, in some way, reached Singapore and was used as an Admission and Discharge book at the hospital.

Our party returned to Changi on 27th December, 1942, and there were approximately 10,000 AIF troops still in camp. Suitable buildings were difficult to find, although in the hospital area [Roberts Barracks] one Association had been formed known as Changi Prisoner of War Masonic Association, under Vic Constitution and they were holding regular meetings in the Chapel in that area. Wor. Bro. F C Stuart, Lodge 39 [Vic] was the President.

Several Groups in Selarang area had formed study groups and were well organised, but not all were able to give any demonstration work due to unsuitability of buildings. The position was now raised as to whether it was constitutional for us to gather and work according to the ritual and a Central Committee of PMs was formed to consider the whole matter and to advise the various groups. We were fully aware that we had no authority and could not initiate any members but, as a MM, I felt sure anything we were able to do, under such conditions, to assist our brethren, taking all precautions to prevent intruders from entering our meetings, would be approved by our G.L. However Rt. Wor. Bro.

Wylie, PGD England, P Asst DGM, Eastern Archipelago, who was a POW, agreed to accept full responsibility to report to GL England and charged senior men of each Constitution, which desired to demonstrate degree work, to see that all precautions were taken.

The members from Adam Park held a further meeting on 12th August, 1943, with Wor. Bro. Polain occupying the Chair.

Bro. W Lovell (Covenant, NSW) made a freehand drawing, from illustrations in an EC ritual, of the TBs and also made the WTs from Cardboard. I borrowed a NSW ritual and typed a complete copy in addition to copies for each officer of his work in each degree, so that all could learn their work without interruption.

More parties were sent away and the remaining British troops moved into our area and our activities again came to a standstill.

On 17th June, 1943, with Wor. Bro. Allan Halloran [Prince Alfred NSW] I interviewed Comd AIF troops, Bro. F G Galleghan, and he arranged to make a building available for our use and, at a meeting on 6th July, it was decided to work under NSW constitution.

This Group, known as Selarang Masonic Study Group, held only two further meetings when the hospital was moved into our area, taking over all available buildings.

The Hospital Group obtained the use of a Chapel where some most interesting lectures were given each month and many of our members joined. This Changi Prisoners of War Masonic Association continued its activities until our move to Changi Gaol in May, 1944. Included in the group were brethren from twelve different Constitutions, viz:- English, Irish, Scottish, Netherlandic, South Africa, United States, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, West Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. The membership was over two hundred.

After conference with the Comd British troops [Bro. E B Holmes] and AIF [Bro. F G Galleghan] the Committee agreed that, as we would be closer confinement and under stricter supervision in the Gaol area, we would cease our activities until released.

The war finished on 15th August, 1945, and, although the camp was still under Japanese supervision, we held a Masonic Thanksgiving Service, at which over 300 were present, in an open air Chapel on 28th August, 1945.

During the periods when we could not obtain the use of a building, small groups would assemble in secluded spots to study and learn the work of the Lodge. Not on any occasion during the three and a half years were we interrupted by Japanese guards.

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FOREWORD

It is fitting that this book should be presented to the Lodge of Liberation No. 674 on the register of the UGL of Vict on the night of its Consecration.

It contains the original records of the Masonic gatherings held by the brethren who were interred as Prisoners of War by the Japanese in Malaya during the Second World War. Such meetings were held only under the grave risk of beatings and even of death, and some of the brethren suffered much in consequence.

The Masonic Fraternity gives due honour to those of its members who were determined to maintain their Masonic Fellowship even under such circumstances.

These records, carried with great difficulty out of the days of bondage into the happy days of 'Liberation' could not be delivered into worthier hands than into those of the Foundation Members of the Lodge which bears that inspired name, all of whom are returned Prisoners of War.

Among the signatures are names of gallant men who never came back, but whose names are recorded on the honour roll in the Grand Lodge Above. To their memory this book is gratefully dedicated. Lest we forget.

J J Benjamin  
C T F Goy  
Chaplains to the Forces  
and Grand Chaplains UGL of V

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This book is a presentation to Lodge Liberation, No 674 on the Register of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria, on the occasion of the Consecration, 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1949.

It contains the record of a small group of Freemasons which met in the 'Clock Tower' at Selarang, Prisoner of War Camp, during the early days of captivity in 1942.

In all Prisoner of War Camps Freemasons contrived to meet, and many interesting records have been preserved. The largest being a complete history of the "Changi Prisoner of War Masonic Association", out of which has come Lodge Liberation with all Foundation Members ex-Prisoners of War.

It is fitting that this record of the Clock Tower group, carried under grave risk through the hazardous experiences of those grim years, by Wor. Bro. A. Hindle, should be presented to Lodge Liberation.

In February 2015, at the after proceedings of a meeting of the Discovery Lodge of Research in Sydney, the then Grand Archivist, Bro Brian French, advised me he held an interesting letter to a Lodge Secretary in early 1916, which he subsequently supplied to me.

The writer, Bro FW Pantlin, had been a Staff Sergeant in the Australian Medical Unit in the Boer War, and was appointed a CSM on his enlistment in the AIF [as a WO2]. At the time of his enlistment he was aged 49 years and eight months. After service in the Dardenelles and Egypt, he was sent home as 'over age and needed for service in Australia'.

The addressee was Bro GEG Boesser, the Secretary of Lodge Emulation No.121, which met at the Masonic Hall in Castlereagh Street, Sydney. Consecrated as Lodge of Emulation 2071 EC in December 1883, it joined the UGL NSW in 1888.

The text follows:

Tel-el-Kelir  
Egypt  
17<sup>th</sup> January 1916

Dear Bro Boesser

Very many thanks for your welcome letter received some time ago. I hope you will forgive me for not replying before, I am quite well although have had some very rough times and many close calls, especially during the first 3 months after landing.

I had the honour of being in the first boat of troops that touched the Gallipoli shore at Anzac, on that never to be forgotten dawn of Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April.

Three of my comrades of the Engineers were shot dead as we scrambled ashore over the stoney beach. We were towed ashore from the warship Londou, and the Turks opened fire just before our boat grounded. There were 96 of us packed in the boat, twenty Engineers, and 76 Infantry of the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, (West Australians) Two other ships boats (smaller) each with about 50 men in them, were connected to ours in the tow. This made roughly 200 in our party. Two other tows were at the same time landing in similar numbers about 300 yards apart from us, one from the Battle ship Queen, and the other from the Prince of Wales, altogether 600, which formed the covering party. Just as our boat grounded the first Turkish rifle shot was fired. Soon afterwards a regular fusillade of bullets were whistling over our ears.

Our orders were not to fire but use the bayonet only. So jumping out of the boat up to our waist in water, we were having a very hot and very cold time together. As soon as thrown off, bayonets fixed and the Infantry charged the rough scrubby hills which slope from the waters edge. The Turks were intrenched about 100 yards from the water. While the Infantry were driving the Turks from their trenches, the Engineers were busy making a rough road up the hill to enable water and ammunition to be carried to the firing line.

Our troops were coming ashore by now as fast as possible, and strengthening the firing line, while the Turks were also being reinforced. All through Sunday - day and night – the fighting was very fierce. The bombardment by our warships continuous.

The din was awful.

On the next day much the same happened, and in the afternoon we were supplied with our first rations, bully beef and biscuits. We bought 2 days rations ashore – but they were spoiled by salt water. As each day passed our Boys kept the enemy at bay and were fast making

their positions more secure by continuous digging – everyone doing his best and not a complaint – even those seriously wounded, were quite happy with a drink of water and a Cigarette.

As time wore on, days to weeks, + weeks to months, the Turks chance of driving our Lads into the sea became a thing of the past, and the system of underground warfare was continued right up till our evacuation. Thank God my health has been very good from the day of landing till the evacuation. I lost a nephew killed during the second week – It was very hard leaving the bones of our Brave Lads behind.

I often think of you all especially on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, and of the many happy hours I have spent in our Little Lodge. I hope you and all the brethren are quite well and that it will not be very long before we meet again.

So will close with  
My Best Wishes  
From Yours Sincerely  
And Fraternally  
*Sgd*

P.S.

My address  
Warrant Officer F.W. Pantlin  
8<sup>th</sup> Field Coy Engineers  
3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Division  
Egypt

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Bro Pantlin returned to Australia in 1916 and recommenced his role as a military trainer. He left the Australian Army in the 1930s with the rank of Major. He died in October 1952.

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FINIS

