

290 - A START ON THE HISTORY. A STUDY IN METHOD?

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2014 marks the centenary of masonic research in this jurisdiction.

As part of the celebrations for this 'auspicious solemnity', I have commenced assembling background material for a 'centenary history'.

There have been three separate lodges involved in masonic research in Sydney; the Sydney Lodge of Research No. 290; the Research Lodge of New South Wales; and this one, the Discovery Lodge of Research. The latter pair share a common number, No. 971.

The first, and probably most interesting, was the Sydney Lodge of Research No. 290.

I suppose the first question to be asked is: 'Where are the records?'

They're here, courtesy of the Grand Archivist, Bro. Brian French.

Well, about two-thirds of them are. The middle volume is 'currently unavailable', 'and we don't know where he are'. So we have coverage from the 'Inauguration Meeting' on 20 March 1914 to 19 September 1933 and from 15 November 1949 to 16 October 1956. So we're only missing 16 years out of 42, or 38%!

Tucked into the first minute book were several loose sheets of paper. They were the petition for the foundation of the Lodge, and the final papers of the Lodge's life, the letter from the WM

to the Grand Secretary asking that the Warrant be withdrawn, and the Grand Secretary's reply that it had been done.

What other resources are available?

There's a file box of papers in the Archives. In July Brian let me forage through the box and bring away some of its contents. The Warrant wasn't there!

The contents of the archives box included a number of 290 Transactions, the 'Order of Service' for the Consecration and Installation in 1914 presented as a scroll, several 1950s Installation Programmes, some early Lodge Syllabi, and, a major surprise, a file of papers detailing an attempt to 'resurrect' 290 in the period 1962-4. These appear to be the papers compiled by Bro E D A Bagot, the Deputy Chairman of the Masonic Education Committee of Grand Lodge, who had been directed to plan and implement the restoration of 290.

Even though the attempt failed, to have such a collection of papers is fascinating as many details relating to the background to the 'closing-down' of 290 are made available. There is a paper in this alone.

By the way, Bagot was an interesting chap - his entry in the ADB is worth reading.

Given how the Lodge ended, there must be documents in the archives of the old Board of General Purposes. So that will become an area of inquiry.

Cramp and Mackaness wrote the 'official history' covering the period.

'An interesting movement during Most Wor. Bro. Carruthers's administration was the establishment of a Lodge of

Research. The Grand Master reported on 10 December 1913, that such a Lodge was advocated by Brethren who were seeking more light, and the matter had been taken up by the energetic Wor. Bro. S Scott Young, who offered to take over all the preliminary work in connexion with the movement. The Grand Master reported that he had issued a number of circulars with very favourable results. A preliminary meeting was held on the same evening after Grand Lodge had been closed in due form.

The matter received further notice on 11 March 1914, when it was reported that a large number of Brethren had signed a petition for a new Lodge to be known as "The Sydney Lodge of Research". The objects of the new body, it was stated, would be the study of the history of Freemasonry and the dissemination of Masonic knowledge by means of reading, discussing and publishing papers dealing with such matter as pertained thereto. The petition was granted by the Board.'

C&M, vol 2, p356.

Harry Kellerman wrote volumes 4 and 5 of the 'official history' and made the following mentions:

Hungerford, E

'He was Foundation Master of the Sydney Lodge of Research in 1914, Worshipful Master again in 1916-17 and in 1939-40.'

K, vol 1, p20.

Halloran, A

' ... Foundation Member of the Sydney Lodge of Research, 1914.'

K, Vol 1, p105.

Mudge, R C

'He joined the Sydney Lodge of Research in 1933, becoming Master in 1935-6.'

K, vol 1, p107.

Re 971

'The Research Lodge filled a need felt since the withdrawal of the Charter of the Sydney Lodge of Research in 1956,'

'In September 1968 the Sydney Lodge of Research was erased and its assets consisting of a number of copies of its Transactions from its inception and a Bank Balance of \$257 was transferred to The Research Lodge of New South Wales.'

K, vol 2, p451.

The reports contained in the Proceedings of the Quarterly Communications of the Grand Lodge are useful, as they give the 'official' version' of various happenings regarding the Lodge.

Then, because it's a research lodge, there's the Transactions.

The first WM of the Sydney Lodge of Research was RWBro. J C Highway, at that time the GSW of the UGL of NSW. In his Address to the Brethren at the Constitution and Installation of the Lodge on 20 March 1914 he said:

I have heard that a doubt has been expressed as to the utility and necessity of such a Lodge as this. Might I say in reply that I think our Grand Lodge, in not having a Lodge for the study of Masonic subjects and for the enlightenment of the Craft, has lagged behind our sister Grand Lodges.

290 Trans, vol 1.

It appears that the Discovery Lodge of Research, successor to 290, doesn't have a full set of 290 Transactions, nor a full set of 971 papers. Work is underway to 'restore that want'.

The on-line catalogue of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry at GQS has records of what's probably a full set of 290's Transactions. They've been approached for access.

'The Livingston' has some:

<<http://www.nymasoniclibrary.org/collections/collections.htm>>

v.6-11 1919-24

v.18-22 1931-35

v.23-27 1936-1940

v.28-32 1941-1945

And we have had a favourable response about their use.

A couple of other opportunities also exist in the Transactions of other research bodies; for example the current electronic index to AQC has the following entries:

Sydney Lodge of Research (L.971) 116:251; *now* "Discovery Lodge of Research" (*UGL-NSW&ACT*); *see*: (*Harashim#49*)

Sydney Lodge of Research L.290* (1914) (ceased, 1956/1968) (*See also*: 63:318), *now* New South Wales Research L.971 (1968) (*UGL-NSW*), Sec. Andy Walker <awalker@fastlink.com.au> (1998), Sydney, Australia; O.E. Green's lecture to (1923), on Prichard's [*MD*] 104:258

Sydney Lodge of Research L.290* (1914) (ceased, 1956/1968), 'Making Masons on Sight' (Voorhis, H. van B.), in *Transactions* (1933) of the Sydney Lodge of Research (*UGL-NSW*); *See*: Jones, Bernard E. [*FG&C*]

Sydney Lodge of Research L.290* (1914) (ceased, 1956/1968), *now* New South Wales Research L.971 (1968) (*UGL-NSW*), Sydney, Australia; C.E. Green, Past District Sub. GM (SC), his lecture delivered to (1923), on Prichard's [*MD*] 94:127

Then there's the masonic press of the time. In 1913-14 there were several masonic newspapers operating in Australia, some local in focus, and others with a wider view. Naturally the best resource will be my forthcoming 'A Bibliography of Australian Masonic Serials'. But, until that's available, the best reference is

“International Masonic Periodicals, 1738-2005: a bibliography of the Library of the Supreme Council, 33^o S.J.” by Larissa P. Watkins.

Having worked out what was around then, all that is needed is to find out what copies are available now, and where. Good luck lads!

It pays to look outside Australia; in “The Philaethes” for February 1985, you can read:

In the Yearbook of Harold V.B. Voorhis, Vol. XXV, 1952, between pages 148 and 149, is a letter from W. Brother Leslie Hall of Sydney Lodge of Research No. 290, of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. The late Brother Voorhis, who had personally met with Brother Leslie Hall in 1952, on the occasion of a visit by Hall to New York on business, asked Brother Hall to give an account of his initiation in a Research Lodge. Brother Hall complied in a letter from which the following is cited:

In trying to figure out the way to give you the story of my initiation into a Research Lodge, the following is the way it happened.

I decided I wanted to join the Masonic Order. I had some very good friends who were in the Craft, one particularly, a University man with a B.Sc. and F.Z.S., and it was this man (who was also an affiliate of the Sydney Lodge of Research) who made the ball start rolling. Having spent a lot of time myself, as a Research Chemist, the name “Research Lodge” appealed to me, and I figured it would be the very one which I should like to join, not quite knowing what the research would be, but luckily for me it turned out to be Research into Masonry and so suited my purpose as I had been interested for a long time in

the study of the mind, the occult and initiation ceremonies.

The officers of Research Lodge mostly consisted of Past Masters and they eventually rotate until one takes the chair in Research, but unfortunately these men forget most of their ritual and I understand now, that a consternation broke out in a sort of fever when they heard that a candidate wished to be initiated. The entrance fee had been fixed at twenty-five guineas against the average six to ten guineas at any other Blue Lodge. That was supposed to keep it, so that at that fee, no one would want to join as an initiate. (Twenty-five guineas is approximately \$58.44. which in this country, is high for initiation fees.)

Thus Brother Leslie Hall was duly initiated on October 17, 1944; passed on November 21, 1944; and raised on June 16, 1945; all degrees conferred in a [the] Lodge of Research. He was later to be Master of Research Lodge No. 290 in 1950. He was active in other areas of Masonry, taking the chair of his Mark Lodge in November 1952 and presiding over the Knights Templar in June 1953.

Enough of the paper records, what about 'regalia'?

I've never seen a 290 PM's jewel, so some months ago I asked Bro Craven if he's got one. Watch this space.



The illustration is of the Lodge's logo. I assume that it was at the centre of the PM's jewel. "Qui legit discit" translates as "he who reads, learns". Would it be a good basis for a 'centenary jewel'?

All three of the gavels have been 'passed down' to Discovery, and are use tonight. Where the rest of the 'kit'; the DC's baton, the VSL, the officers' collar jewels, the Tyler's sword, is, I don't know.

So, where to from here?

Let's start with policies, and then, perhaps, go on to people.

The objects of the Lodge are set out in the original by-laws. They 'shall be the study of Freemasonry, particularly its History, Symbols and Legends, and the dissemination of knowledge by the reading, discussion and publication of papers dealing therewith.'

At various times the work of the Lodge was reviewed. Firstly, after two years of operation, the initial WM gave a paper on the aims of the Lodge and whether they had been achieved. Then, as a general rule, the WM gave a resume of the year's work on his last night. This was published in the Transactions.

Using an incomplete set of the Transactions, and such minutes as are available, I have 'constructed' a table of papers presented to the Lodge by title, author, date and publication 'place'.

Using the author list, and the minutes, we can get a feel for the 'active' membership, and we can see who was contributing to the post-lecture discussions.

The minutes also tell us who was joining, and for how long.

T B C ...

APPENDIX 1

Box 340
GPO Sydney
October 22 1956

JS Miller, Esq,
The Grand Secretary,
The United Grand Lodge of NSW
279 Castlereagh St,
Sydney

Dear Sir & M W Brother,

It is with regret that I have to inform you that I consider the state of affairs in the Sydney Lodge of Research, No. 290, is such that it should not be permitted to continue to function under the present Charter. I therefore request that you submit the matter to the Board of General Purposes. In support of my recommendation I put forward the following facts and details.

I am of the opinion that the grant of £400 made by the Board in 1952 was unnecessary, as, if the dues by members of the Lodge were properly collected - and a conscientious drive for more and suitable members made, there would have been no necessity for the Lodge wanting such grant.

Here, I am to state that during my term of Mastership since March 1956, by personal canvass of the members - Subscribing and Corresponding - in the matters of outstanding dues, I have collected an amount which now brings the Balance at Bank and cheques in hand to the sum of £1244.8.7.

Further during my term of office, besides having had printed and circulated the Transactions for 1955, a Book known as Volume

43 (containing Sydney Lodge of Research Lectures of 1951 and 1953) has also been published and forwarded to all who were members during those years.

I am also to state that it is my intention to repay to the Board of General Purposes the grant of £400 mentioned. However, although I have signed a cheque for this amount, the Lodge Treasurer refuses to add his signature to it, as well as to other cheques passed for payment by the Lodge on October 16 1956. One of the cheques is for £55.0 - for United Grand Lodge rent of Room 4. On that evening the Treasurer's resignation was received; i.e., for his office only.

Later, I moved that "Owing to the resignation of the Treasurer, all Lodge cheques be signed, pro. tem., by the Worshipful Master and W.Bro. F.F. Whale, and that the Bank be advised accordingly." This motion was not seconded.

I then moved "that the Worshipful Master be empowered to sign all cheques until a successor was appointed and that the Bank be advised accordingly."

Again, there was no seconder.

I am now in the position that I am unable to pay the debts of the Lodge, and ask for a direction by the Board in overcoming this difficulty.

I desire to maintain the dignity and good name of Freemasonry - with outside business firms.

I further state that the present personnel of the Subscribing Members of this Lodge now unfortunately comprises a small number of brethren with little or no research capabilities and consequently, the purposes for which the Lodge was formed in 1914, are lost.

The average attendance per meeting from March to October 1956 is 16 5/8; 17 Pastmasters made 54 attendances altogether - during the period; while 20 Master Masons attended on 79 occasions, altogether.

During the year, there were two deaths, and three subscribing members resigned, two at the last meeting. W.Bro C L Griffiths has just moved his residence to Wollongong, W.Bro. R L Watt left for Canberra and cannot attend. W.Bro E R Dibbs forwarded a letter of resignation on July 17 last but withdrew it on August 18.

Finally, the Lodge's Honorary Editor W.Bro Griffiths reported to me in February 15 1956 that discussion had been deteriorating for years. At one time, Pastmasters skilled in research, well posted on other constitutions and practices, and in the great side-degrees, could be relied on for constructive comment and debate, valuable not only to non-attending members and correspondents but to Lodge prestige in Australia and the world.

Repetition is fruitless unless it brings out fresh material. The discussion is more valuable than the lecture.

A justification for existence of a Lodge of Research is good reading in Transactions, which attracts Elder Brethren of the Craft, mature of mind and deeply experienced in Freemasonry, to counsel us and take office; and junior brethren to join us in search of wider knowledge of Freemasonry than ritual and ceremonial provide.

Yours fraternally

D Terry (W.M.)

Actg. Sec.

Bagot, Edward Daniel (1893-1968)

Edward Daniel Alexander Bagot (1893-1968), businessman and political organizer, was born on 25 December 1893 at Henley Beach, South Australia, son of Edward Arthur Bagot, who had been an Anglican clergyman, and his wife Harriet Lilian, née Massy-Dawson. He spent his childhood in Western Australia and in England where he was educated at private schools at Framlingham and Lowestoft, Suffolk. At 15 he was trained at Ilford in wireless telegraphy; this led to a job with Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co. In 1912 he was second operator on the *Olympic* when it assisted the stricken *Titanic*.

Bagot returned to South Australia before World War I and in 1915 joined the Postmaster-General's Department in Adelaide as an engineer operator. On 20 September 1916 he married Christobel Ballantyne Bollen at West Adelaide. Next day he embarked for service with the Australian Imperial Force as a lieutenant, 1st Australian Wireless Signal Squadron. He served in Mesopotamia, was twice mentioned in dispatches and promoted captain in 1918, and wrote the squadron's history. In 1919 he returned to Australia, depressed about his prospects as a civilian. He soon returned to Mesopotamia where he organized a trading company and was a director of the *Times of Mesopotamia*. His wife joined him, and their only son was born in 1922 at Basra where Bagot was secretary of the British and Arab chambers of commerce. In 1924 he became managing director of the Eastern Transport Co., which pioneered the Beirut-Bagdad-Teheran cross-desert motor-mail service.

In 1925 Bagot returned home and established an Adelaide-Darwin motor-transport service which eventually failed. In 1928 he began working in insurance and, while president of Adelaide's Constitutional Club, in October 1930 he and others founded the Citizens' League of South Australia, a militant, rightist, political organization. As its full-time secretary until 1936, Bagot was able but rambunctious, at times overbearing, and politically naive in his public and private statements. He led local protests against the

appointment of Sir Isaac Isaacs as governor-general. He participated in the anti-Labor Emergency Committee of South Australia, established by leading members of the Liberal Federation to contest the 1931 Federal elections but which was largely motivated by fear of Bagot's league; with Labor defeated and economic recovery at hand, the league's influence faded. Bagot had been a typical example of the many former A.I.F. officers who were prominent in sporadic conservative political organizations during the Depression.

At the 1934 Federal elections Alec Bagot stood unsuccessfully for Adelaide as an independent but held the Southern seat in the South Australian Legislative Council in 1938-41. In 1944 at Broken Hill he joined the Government Insurance Office of New South Wales, did well and moved to Sydney. He edited the institution's journal, *Security*, from 1946 and in 1951 was promoted to production supervisor. He retired in 1963 and two years later published a well-researched biography, *Coppin the Great, Father of the Australian Theatre*.

Bagot suffered from chronic lymphatic leukaemia for four years before he died on 12 June 1968 in Sydney; his body was returned to Adelaide for burial with Anglican rites. His wife survived him; their son had been killed in action in 1944.

Sourced from: Lonie, John, 'Bagot, Edward Daniel (1893-1968)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bagot-edward-daniel-5091/text8499>, accessed 5 September 2012.