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BRO. SIR HENRY BROWN-HAYES

On the 12th April 1903, the Grand Master of the U.G.L. of N.S.W. (Most Wor. Bro. J C Remington) held a Special Communication in the Sydney Town Hall for the purpose of celebrating the first one hundred years of Freemasonry in Australia. From that point on, Bro. Sir Henry Brown Hayes was assured of being a constant reference point in the history of Australian Freemasonry. Today it is considered that the assumption made by M. Wor. Bro. Remington was not quite correct in that Freemasonry in New South Wales could be dated from 1803 with the abortive quasi - Masonic Meeting which Brown Hayes had organised in Sgt. Thomas Whittle's cottage in Sydney town. Amongst many of our Freemasons he is only remembered for his attempt to hold an unauthorised Masonic meeting, whilst to others he is remembered as leaving behind Vaucluse House and a remembrance of a style of conduct which no self respecting Mason today would wish to emulate.

Messrs. Kramp and MacKanness ("K & M") in Volume One of their work "The History of the United Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Freemasons for the State of New South Wales" present us with some material about this man. These details seem to have been generally accepted as fair and accurate enough for them to be, in turn, passed on by many Masonic lecturers, both registered Official and otherwise, over the years. However, not all the details provided by "K & M" in respect of Sir Henry withstands close examination. It is again unfortunate, in my opinion, that Sir Henry and his activities have been quoted by quite a number of Masonic writers in the history of their respective lodges who have chosen to supplement their booklets with an account of the general Masonic history of N.S.W. without really researching this particular matter for themselves - in the process taking previously published material as being completely and entirely accurate.

It is recorded that the somewhat limited Masonic activity of Captain Anthony Fenn-Kemp of the N.S.W. Corps, predated Sir Henry by roughly one year. Fenn-Kemp's Masonic activities, that is, whilst on the mainland of the colony, were apparently restricted to his meeting with some French Rose Croix Masons and his initiation into Ancient Craft Masonry aboard their vessel "La Naturaliste" whilst it was lying in Sydney Harbour during one of the French Exploration Fleet's visits during

