



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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THE GRAND LODGE ORGANISTS OF THE UNITED GRAND LODGE OF NEW SOUTH WALES (and the A.C.T.)

The Dictionary defines the Organ as 'a large complex musical keyboard instrument in which sound is produced by means of a number of pipes arranged in steps or stops, supplied with air from bellows. The largest instruments possess three or more manuals and one foot keyboard and have the greatest range of any instrument.'

"Freemasonry encourages the study of the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. Of these we would regard Music as one of the most significant, by reason of its being a readily available medium of expression and one capable of refining and uplifting those taking part.

There is historical evidence that from the earliest days of organised masonry, music and singing played an important part in lodge meetings. Masonic verse can be traced back to about 1600 and records in the early part of the following century refer to songs being included in the ceremonial. Early instruments of accompaniment ultimately yielded to the organ and harmonium."

These were the words of Most Wor. Bro. Noel William Warren, Grand Master, when he wrote the foreword to the Manual of Masonic Music in 1978. He announced at the June Communication of the Grand Lodge that he had commissioned a small Masonic Music Committee, under the chairmanship of the then Grand Director of Music, Rt. Wor. Bro. Noel Melvin, to prepare the Manual. The fact that publication was approved at the following Communication in September, was a tribute to the diligence of that committee.

The United Grand Lodge of New South Wales was inaugurated in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney on 16 August 1888. The Installation of the first Grand Master, Lord Carrington, took place on 18 September 1888 before over 4000 Brethren at the Exhibition Building, Prince Alfred Park.

During the 113 years that have followed, there have only been 13 Grand Lodge Organists, but as the much-loved Banjo Paterson wrote in 'A Bush Christening,'

"On the outer Barcoo where the churches are few
And men of religion are scanty,"

So too is masonic membership information concerning the Grand Lodge Organists !

