

# Freemasons and Freemasonry in Queensland: 1859-1989

by Dave Lauder

To the historian, fact must precede inference and opinion. In reading historical works of Queensland, the author has often noted incorrect statements and omissions about the Masonic ranks and details of the men who are the subject of this paper. The objective of this paper is, therefore, to provide a concise document outlining the history, structure and, more importantly, the people who have led Freemasonry in Queensland from 1859 until the present. It is not without a feeling of déjà-vu, that on reading a recent paper (Biskup, 1988) in this *Journal*, that the names of Sir Arthur Morgan, J.F.G. Foxton, John Oxley, William Jolly and Sir Leslie Wilson all appeared — and all are instantly recognisable to a Masonic historian as Freemasons. Whilst a lot of detail covered in this paper is available in Richards (1959), that work is scanty on detail of Scottish Freemasonry, as the relevant records were missing at the time of Richards' compilation. Irish and English Freemasonry in Queensland have been well documented in Harley (c.1930) and Fowles and White (1909) respectively.

Freemasonry may be simply described as a fraternal association of men, based on the principles of brotherly love, relief and truth. Membership in Australia is open to all men who profess a belief in a Supreme Being and are of good character. Contrary to a popular urban myth, and on the basis of the above definition, the association is not anti-Catholic. However, the existence of atheist forms of Freemasonry in Europe provoked the hostility of the Roman Catholic Church from 1738.

It is important to note that Masonic Lodges are not connected with, nor should they be confused with, other Lodges, notably Orange, Oddfellow, Forester, Druid, Buffalo, Good Templar and Protestant Alliance, all of which exist(ed) in Queensland and were separate and distinct organisations, although some individuals may have been members of one or more. An example of this may be found in the 1911 funeral of Thomas Waring Robertson (reported in the *Queensland Freemason*, Vol.III, No.8), which was attended by members of Masonic, Orange, Oddfellow and Good Templar Lodges, each group dressed in full regalia and marching in the funeral procession.

## FREEMASONRY IN QUEENSLAND

Freemasonry in Queensland, and the colony itself, both officially began in the same year; 1859. From that time, the association has had amongst its ranks men who contributed widely and importantly to the life of the State. Indeed, the first European to sail up the Brisbane River, John Oxley, is known to have been a Freemason.

The first Lodge (of Freemasons) was established in Brisbane on the 13th July 1859 at the Freemasons' Hotel, Albert Street. Those present consisted of James Watkin Jackson, John Fowles, Alexander Gaskarth, Ratcliffe Pring, Richard Sheridan, John Heussler, John Goodwin, James Morton, Henry Born and John Mackenzie. At this first meeting, fourteen names were read out as being desirous of joining the new Lodge. The fourteen are detailed in Richards (1959), but notably included Charles Lilley (later the Premier 1868-1870) and John Petrie (later the first Mayor of Brisbane). This first Lodge was named North Australian Lodge and numbered No.1098 on the roll of the United Grand Lodge of England, from whom the Lodge obtained its Charter (or Warrant). North Australian Lodge is currently No.1 on the roll of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland, the totally-autonomous governing body of Freemasonry in this State.

The formation of other Lodges followed, the first ten being; North Australian (Brisbane, 1859), Queensland (Ipswich, 1861), Prince of Wales (Brisbane, 1861), Leichhardt (Rockhampton, 1862), St. Patrick (Brisbane, 1863), St. Andrew (Brisbane, 1864), Duke of Leinster (Brisbane, 1864), Hiram (Brisbane, 1865), Victoria (Brisbane, 1865) and Kennedy (Bowen, 1865). Until 1920, new Lodges had a choice of overseas Grand Lodges from whom to request a Charter — i.e. England, Scotland or Ireland, the choice usually determined by the homeland of the founders. Hence in the above list, St. Patrick and St. Andrew chose to request Charters from Ireland and Scotland, thus obtaining for themselves the distinction of being the first Irish and Scottish Lodges in this colony respectively.

As the Lodges were a long way from their mother countries, local control was vested in a Provincial Grand Master, who was at the head of a Provincial Grand Lodge. The English and Scottish Provinces were subsequently constituted as Districts in 1867 and 1880 respectively, hence the title of the Provincial Grand Master also changed to District Grand Master. The following men held the office of Provincial (or District) Grand Master in Queensland:

### Provincial (or District) Grand Masters of England

Sir Augustus Charles Gregory	23 December 1862
Alfred John Stephenson	30 June 1906
Alexander Corrie	2 June 1915

### Provincial (or District) Grand Masters of Scotland

In 1904, the Queensland Scottish District was divided into two

Districts, the southern district retaining the title “Queensland”.

(a) (Southern) Queensland

William Martin Boyce	17 April 1866
Arthur Macalister	12 March 1875
John Douglas	6 January 1879
Thomas Mylne	30 May 1895
Thomas Stephen Burstow	16 November 1907

(b) North Queensland

Edward David Miles	7 May 1904
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**Provincial Grand Masters of Ireland**

Maurice Charles O’Connell	24 September 1866
Theodore Unmack	25 October 1881
Sir Samuel Walker Griffith	26 October 1893
George Samuel Hutton	6 April 1898

In the above list, the observant Queensland historian should note three Premiers of Queensland (Macalister, Douglas and Griffith), a President of the Legislative Council and four times Acting Governor (O’Connell), a member of the Legislative Council (Miles), the first Town Clerk of Brisbane (Boyce), a Mayor of Toowoomba (Burstow), two top public servants (Gregory and Mylne), and a few colonial businessmen (Stephenson, Corrie, Unmack and Hutton).

Whilst the three Constitutions were autonomous, they generally worked closely together, sharing meeting places and other property. For example, when the first Scottish Lodge, St. Andrew, drew up a set of By-laws, it had no local Provincial Grand Master to ratify them. The members of the Lodge therefore sought, and received, ratification from Gregory, the English Provincial Grand Master. Similarly, when the first Scottish Provincial Grand Master, Boyce, was appointed, he had to resign his position as Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the English Constitution.

Prior to the turn of the century, Queensland Freemasonry had two central meeting places for Brisbane Lodges and the conduct of District business. The first building was the Freemasons Hall in Albert Street, on the site where the Wesley Central Mission now stands. When this building proved inadequate to cope with a growing organisation, a new Hall was constructed in Alice Street. The foundation stone was jointly laid by Gregory, Unmack and Mylne on the 21 August 1885 after a procession of Masons (in Masonic Regalia) from the Albert Street Hall to the Alice Street site. Over a year later the new building was ready for occupancy, with the dedication taking place on the 1 December 1886.

As early as 1887, meetings were held between representatives of the different Constitutions (English, Scottish and Irish) to discuss the possibility of forming an autonomous Grand Lodge of Queensland, though these discussions proved fruitless. Finally, in

1904, all but one of the Irish Lodges and fourteen of the Scottish Lodges decided to “go it alone”, forming the Grand Lodge of Queensland on the 25 April 1904, consisting of 39 Lodges.

However, the majority of Lodges in the State (50 Scottish and 62 English) retained their original allegiance, and refused to recognise the local organisation. The principle of non-recognition is one of the greatest impositions one Grand Lodge can place on another, as this debars fraternal association. (The remaining Irish lodge — Kangaroo Point — returned its Irish Charter and obtained an English Charter.) Hence from 1904 until 1920, there was not only a Grand Lodge of Queensland, but also the remaining Districts of England and Scotland — all chartering new Lodges throughout the State as the occasion demanded.

The men who held the office of Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Queensland, together with the date of their installation into that office, were:

George Samuel Hutton	25 April 1904
Lord Chelmsford	29 November 1906
Adolphus Marcus Hertzberg	11 August 1909
James Stodart	31 July 1917

It is worthy of note that Freemasonry, which teaches religious tolerance, had allowed the election of a member of the Jewish faith to the position of Grand Master in 1909.



*John Douglas in  
Masonic regalia when  
Foundation Master of  
Lodge Torres Straits  
No.820 S.C. (1895).*

Both Burstow and Corrie were of the opinion that the problem existing between the Queensland, Scottish and English Lodges would have been resolved earlier, but for the intercession of World War I. Hence on 30 April 1920, the Lodges of the Scottish and English Districts met together to form the Queensland Grand Lodge (note the different name from the Grand Lodge of Queensland), with Alexander Corrie as Grand Master. The Queensland Grand Lodge was only a temporary institution formed to facilitate complete unification, for a year later on 27 April 1921, the two Grand Lodges merged to form the current body — the United Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Queensland, with a roll of 281 Lodges. By 1926, only two Lodges in the State had not joined this body, and to this date they still belong to the United Grand Lodge of England. These two English Lodges meet in Gladstone and Silkwood.

The Grand Masters of the United Grand Lodge of Queensland, together with their dates of Installation, from 1921 until the present were:

Alexander Corrie	27 April 1921
Charles Stumm	17 July 1923
Robert Nicholas Fernehaugh	
Quinn	16 July 1924
Charles Stumm	12 August 1925
William Herbert Green	13 August 1929
Sir Thomas Herbert John	
Chapman Goodwin	14 July 1931
William Herbert Green	4 July 1932
Sir Leslie Orme Wilson	25 July 1934
Eustace Alfred Jones	27 August 1946
Benjamin Henry Matthews	4 July 1951
Thomas Gilbert Henry Jones	14 July 1954
Horace Benjamin Milliner	3 July 1957
John Paterson	12 July 1961
John Austin Robert Thompson	14 July 1965
Sir Alan James Mansfield	17 July 1968
Norman William Bauer	14 July 1971
John Fergus Stephenson	10 July 1974
Alphonso Jean Gardiner	
Nicholson	30 July 1977
Franklin James Morgan	26 July 1980
Sir Walter John Burnett	16 July 1983
Murray George Winders	19 July 1986
Malcolm James Kinross	8 July 1989

The Masonic and civil careers of all but the last of these men are comprehensively traced in Henderson (1988), however it is worth noting that the above list contains three Governors (Goodwin, Wilson

and Mansfield), a Police Commissioner (Bauer), two Justices (Stumm and Matthews) and a Professor of Chemistry (T.G.H. Jones).

By 1921, the main building at Alice Street was again proving inadequate, hence moves were again made to construct a larger building. The foundation stone was laid by Charles Stumm on the 25 April 1928, the choice of date being significant as the building was designated a "Memorial" building to the servicemen who were killed during World War I. The building was completed at a cost of £130,000, and dedicated on 9 December 1930. The Ann Street Masonic Memorial Temple is still the home of Queensland Freemasonry, although the name has recently been changed to Masonic Memorial Centre.

In 1933, the former Alice Street Hall was presented as a gift to the University of Queensland, aimed at establishing a Medical and Dental School within the University. In return for the gift, the University established three perpetual scholarships, known as the Queensland Masonic Scholarships.

It is stated in Masonic ritual that the virtue nearest to a Freemason's heart should be charity, and no work on Freemasonry in Queensland would be complete without recording to some degree the work of the Craft in this area. In the early days, all Lodges maintained a Benevolent Fund from which monies could be disbursed to assist members who had fallen on ill-times. An example of this occurred in 1897, when A. Crawford, a member of Stanley Lodge No.680 Scottish Constitution (now No.37 U.G.L.Q.) was accidentally killed, leaving his widow and seven children without any form of financial support. The Lodge made an immediate grant of £20 and circularised other Lodges in Queensland to contribute to a relief fund. The printed balance sheet of the fund (contained within the minute book of Stanley Lodge) shows that some 33 English, 37 Scottish and 15 Irish Lodges donated a total of £602/17/8. This money provided for the purchase of a block of land, house, piano (Mrs. Crawford was a music teacher), insurance, registration and stamp duty. After paying the funeral expenses, the balance of £189/13/1 was invested so that rates and taxes for the next five years could be paid, as well as providing an income of 10/- per week for the same period. It was reasoned that with this assistance the family would be able to cope, and within the five year period, two of the children would be in employment and be able to assist.

With the formation of U.G.L.Q., one of the immediate benefits of a single organisation was the greater resources available for centrally organised charitable work. Prior to U.G.L.Q., each of the Scottish and English Districts and the Grand Lodge of Queensland had established individual benevolent funds, and in 1926 the "Freemasons Homes of Queensland" began with the purchase of a house on an eleven acre parcel of land at Sandgate to house aged



*Sir Samuel Walker Griffith in Masonic regalia when Provincial Grand Master of the Irish Constitution in Queensland (1893-98).*

Masons. By the late 1930s, the house was replaced by three buildings comprising 15 bedrooms, dining room, lounge, kitchen, matron's and staff quarters. After numerous building campaigns, the Freemasons Homes now consists of a hostel section and an infirmary. As at 31 March 1989, there were 289 resident in the Hostel and 230 in the nursing home. In addition, 24 were resident in self-contained flats and a further 31 in nearby houses owned by the Homes.

As stated in the introduction, the objective of this work is to provide a concise document outlining the history, structure and brief details of Freemasonry in Queensland. A complete history would take volumes, as there are approximately 450 Masonic Lodges in Queensland, each with their own history contained within the Lodge minute books. To date, seven Lodges have celebrated their 125th Anniversaries, and over fifty more their centenaries. Many stories remain to be told.

## TITLES

In the foregoing discussion, the full titles of organisations have been dispensed with for the purpose of brevity. The full titles of the Grand Lodges referred to are given below.

United Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Queensland

Queensland Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons

Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Queensland

United Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of England

Grand Lodge of Scotland of Antient Free and Accepted Masons

Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Ireland

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