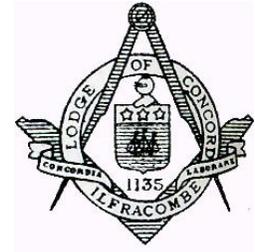




Lodge of Concord No. 1135

Ilfracombe

Warrant 12 September 1866



The initial step to establish a lodge in I was taken in Loyal Lodge, No. 251, Barnstaple, on 4 September 1866, when it was carried in open Lodge: 'That it is desirable and advantageous to Freemasonry to have a Lodge established at Ilfracombe and we, the undersigned. being members of Loyal Lodge No. 25 1, on these grounds beg to recommend that a Dispensation be Granted by Grand Lodge for the formation and establishment of a Lodge at the above named town of Ilfracombe.' Events moved swiftly after the passing of this resolution and on 12 September, only eight days after it had been decided to petition Grand Lodge, the Grand Master issued a Warrant to Bros John Jones, Samuel Jones, William Mitchell, James Hill, William John List, John Walkingame Tathain. James Hancock and others constituting the said brethren into a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons under the title or denomination of The Lodge of Concord. No. 1135. On 21 September, Rev John Huyshe, ProvGM, communicated with the Brethren named in the Warrant authorising them to open a Lodge 'under the said Warrant at a convenient place in the town of Ilfracombe and therein to initiate any number not exceeding ten Candidates, Provided that such several candidates shall have been previously duly proposed, balloted for and elected in open Lodge. Provided also that you do keep true Minutes of the proceedings the Lodges held under this Dispensation and present the same to us at the time when the said Warrant shall he formally opened.'

Acting on this authority the brethren convened a meeting on 3 October to ballot for five candidates. Amongst the brethren present was a R.F. Gould which gives rise to some interesting speculation. Was this R.F. Gould the famous Masonic historian? Bro Fisher of Wiveliscombe, Assistant Editor of the Transactions of the

Somerset Masters Lodge, who made a study of the life of Gould, says he thinks it quite possible. Gould had retired from the Army in 1865 and became a law student. He was already a mason and it would be quite natural for him to attend a ceremony which would be of particular interest to so keen a mason. Bro Fisher also states that it appears that Robert Freke Gould, the masonic historian, was born at Ifracombe during the time his father was the curate at Trentishoe and Martinhoe. The lodge was consecrated on 15 November 1866 by the Provincial Grand Master, but it is not known where. The occasion was only briefly noticed in the North Devon. Journal of 22 November 1866, but there was no reference to the place where the ceremony took place. The report stated: 'At 3 o'clock the brethren retired to Bro Lake's Royal Clarence Hotel, where an excellent banquet was provided by the worthy host.' Wherever the initial meetings were held, it is certain that the Royal Clarence Hotel was first recognised meeting place, this being named in a printed copy of lodge bye-laws, which were approved at the Consecration meeting, the first bye-law is worthy of being placed on record; it stated: " The meeting of the Lodge — 'The regular meetings of this Lodge shall be holden on the first Wednesday in every month at the Freemasons' Hall, adjoining the Clarence Hotel. Business shall be commenced at such time as may be appointed by the Master, and stated in the summonses; and the Festivals of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist shall be kept by the Brethren dining together on such a day or hour as maybe agreed on in open Lodge, at the regular meetings in December and June respectively' The Minute Book contains no record of the Consecration Meeting and the only mention of the ceremony is made at the Regular meeting held a month later, 12 December 1866, when it was reported that: 'The minutes of November 14th (the meeting adjourned from October 3rd) were confirmed and signed by the PG.M. Huish at the Consecration of the Lodge, November 15th, 1866.'

The Minute Books throw very little light on the meeting places of the lodge in its early days. The first printed copy of the bye-laws describes the meeting place as being in the 'Freemasons' Hall adjoining the Clarence Hotel,' and it was here that the lodge met for eighteen years. The lodge moved around for some years meeting at various venues but on 12 February 1896, a suggestion was made that a

committee to consist of the Master, two Wardens and the Secretary should consider the desirability of erecting a building to be used for Masonic purposes, a piece of land being available in Northfield Road. This became a proposition which was carried. This was the beginning of the movement which culminated in the lodge building its own temple in Northfield Road. The last regular meeting to be held in the Masonic Hall, 127 High Street, took place on 8 June 1898, when it was reported by the Master that he had already been promised £450 towards the building fund. On 12 October 1898 the Lodge met at the Ilfracombe Hotel and continued to meet there for a little over a year, the first meeting in the newly built Temple being held on 13 December 1899. The ceremony of laying the corner stone of the new lodge must have been one of the most colourful events in the social life of the town for many years as the brethren, wearing morning dress and silk hats and resplendent in their regalia, walked in procession from the temporary lodge room at the Ilfracombe Hotel to the site. A large number of sightseers gathered to witness the ceremony which was unique in the history of Ilfracombe. Brethren included Bro G. C. Davie, DepProvGM and seventy-nine others. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master was presented with a handsome silver trowel, suitably inscribed, with which the Corner Stone was laid by him and adjusted according to Masonic rites and ancient customs, a receptacle being placed under the stone containing the names the brethren and a record of the proceedings.



An extract from the Deputy Provincial Grand Master's address is an indication of the solemnity and impressiveness of the occasion. He said: 'It is not sufficient for masons to build themselves a suitable habitation; it is necessary to go much further than that if we are true masons. The building when finished would be but an abiding place; it is not the lodge itself The brethren themselves are the lodge and it is on them the honour and reputation of Freemasonry will rest. It is by their

conduct and mode of life and not by that building, however beautiful it may be, that the outside world will judge our order and form a favourable opinion of it, or the reverse. It is the duty of the members of the lodge to apply the Moral Plumb Rule to their masonic conduct and to remember that deviation from the principles and the tenets of the Craft, however slight, would tend to grow and if not corrected will injure the harmony and usefulness of the lodge, if it did not endanger or even destroy it. The Level of the Freemason symbolises equality. We do not mean that all members are an equality under all possible circumstances but we are bound together by the cement of a common brotherhood and all, if we do our duty as assigned to us by the World's Great Architect, will equally fulfil their purpose in the World and subserve to His Glory and the honour of the Craft. We must apply the Square to our individual lives by just, honest and upright conduct and to set squarely with our fellow men which implies that in our dealings our actions will be honourable and upright and such as will be expected of us. May these principles be handed down through this lodge, pure and undefiled from generation to generation.' The dedication of the new Temple took place on 14 February 1900.

Notice was given at the meeting on 9 January 1946 That with the permission of the G.M. another Lodge be formed in Ilfracombe. A resolution on the 13th February petitioning 'for a new Lodge to be consecrated in Ilfracombe in order to cater for the growing number of applications for initiation into Freemasonry' was carried after considerable discussion. Saint Nicholas Lodge No. 6377, was consecrated on 17 April 1947.

A dispensation was granted to hold a meeting of the Lodge of Concord on 8 September 1966 instead of 14 December 1966 for the purpose of commemorating the centenary of the founding of the lodge. On that day over one hundred brethren met at the Masonic Temple Ilfracombe, including Bro C. H. Crews, ProvGM, his Deputy and two Assistants. At the meeting on 10 May 1967 the Master expressed a special welcome to Bro W A. Passmore of St. Nicholas Lodge No. 6377 informing the brethren that one hundred years ago on 8 May 1867, Bro Passmore's great great grandfather had been initiated into Lodge of Concord No. 1135. The meeting of the Lodge held on 7 May 1999 was by

Dispensation it being the anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the temple in Northfield Road. The lodge was honored on this occasion by a number of Provincial Officers including Bro Robin Osorne, DepProvGM Master in Charge. At the meeting on 14 November 2001 the lodge was again honored with the attendance of R. O. Osborne, ProvGM, who during the course of the meeting presented Bro John Annear PDepProvGM, with a certificate in recognition of fifty years service of masonry The members of the lodge presented Bro Annear with a decanter to mark the occasion.

The Lodge meets at the Masonic Temple. Northfield Road, Ilfracombe on the second Wednesday in each month except June to October inclusive, and the first Wednesday in October.