



The History of St Thomas Lodge 4198

1920 – 1995

Written by W.Bro Ray Fish

PREFACE

The following pages are an attempt, by an amateur to record the history of the St. Thomas Lodge No.4198. The challenge, if such was the intention, was made by a Senior Past Master of the lodge early in 1994. This challenge? was taken up and work started in July of that year. Access to the minute books of both the General Purposes and Finance committee and of the Lodge meetings was available and it is from these sources that this history has been compiled. Several times the question has been raised; "Who are the Sponsors of the St. Thomas Lodge". Unfortunately this information was never revealed in the books scrutinised. However it can be assumed that due to the prominence of subscribing members of the Northcote Lodge No.2659, six in number, of the eighteen founder members of the St. Thomas Lodge that the Northcote Lodge was indeed the sponsors of the lodge. This has been confirmed to me by present Senior Members of the Northcote Lodge verbally but not by the production of documentary evidence. Therefore I leave it to the reader to form his own conclusions.

Brethren of the lodge. He went on to add that the present to the I.P.M. took the form of cut glass and thought it was inadvisable to bring it into the lodge that evening. W.Bro. Killey thanked the W.M. and said that he would be pleased to show the Brethren the gift at some future date. The W.Master reminded the Brethren that the Alms that evening would be donated to the Samaritan Fund of the Royal Masonic Hospital and made an inspired plea for the Brethren to be generous, and that the amount collected would be made up to the next highest Guinea from the Charity Bag. The minutes show that the amount collected was £6..6s..6d. (£6.32½).

At the March meeting the W.Master had the pleasant task of congratulating W.Bro. W.L.Penberthy a Past Master of the lodge, upon the day of the lodge meeting being his 25th. birthday as a Mason.

At the June lodge meeting the W.Master congratulated Bro.H.Picken, currently a Steward in the lodge, on his election to the City Council. Here again is an example of the ties existing between the Civic Authority and the Brotherhood.

On researching the minute book for the purpose of producing this history an amusing item appears in the minutes of the lodge meeting for July. The lodge Treasurer W.Bro. S.J.Ashelford gave notice of motion that at the next lodge meeting he would propose that Bye-Law No. 13 of the St. Thomas Lodge No. 4198 be altered to increase the Annual Dues payable under clauses (d)(e)(f)(g) and (h) by 3 shillings per member from 1st January 1950. The W.master then thanked the Treasurer for his careful attention to the lodge finances, and congratulated him on the fact that it was 25 years ago that night that he had been initiated into Freemasonry. One wonders what surprises the present Treasurer has up his sleeve for current Members of the lodge when he reaches the 25th. Anniversary of his installation into the Chair of King Solomon? Following this birthday present to the lodge the W,Master wished everyone a Happy Holiday, it being the last meeting before the summer break.

On returning from the summer holiday the September lodge meeting saw the first recorded work "on the floor" by a well repected W.Bro., I refer to M.H.Buller, who on this particular evening gave an explanation of the First Tracing Board, at this particular time he was a Steward in the lodge. Having been initiated into the lodge in 1938 Bro. Buller was slow to start his Masonic career due to his long service in the Royal Artillery during the war. Following this explanation, the W.Master congratulated Bro. Buller on a "brilliant exposition".

Date of Warrant 3rd. November 1920.

Consecrated 21st. December 1920.(St. Thomas Day).

Chapter One

Early in 1920 a number of Freemasons resident in Exeter were united in the opinion that there existed a need for a new Craft Lodge in the city. At that time there were five Craft Lodges meeting in the city, of which St. John the Baptist No39; date of warrant 1732 was the oldest Craft Lodge in the country; there are currently eleven Craft Lodges meeting within the city boundaries. This fact illustrating the strong ties that exist between the City of Exeter and the Brotherhood of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of England.

These original Freemasons, there were fourteen in number, were desirous to formulate this new proposed lodge to serve that part of the city to the west of the river Exe, and it was with this in mind that the lodge, if approved, would be known as the St. Thomas Lodge. It was agreed that a condition of membership would be that members of the lodge must reside in, or have business in St. Thomas. This was made very clear by the fact that a certain Bro. John Lake, a subscribing member of the Northcote Lodge No. 2659, was refused founder membership. He was employed as an engineer with the company of Hucklebridge and Son whose premises were at that time on the east bank of the river adjacent to Exe bridge, clearly the "wrong side" of the river. However, Bro. Tom. Howard, at one time a City Councillor, and a subscribing member of the same lodge as Bro. Lake, namely the Northcote Lodge, was the Landlord of the Seven Stars Public House which stood at the end of Okehampton Street, hard by Exe bridge; on the west bank of the river, was admitted as a founder member. Bro. J. Lake was however proposed and seconded as a joining member at the inuagural lodge meeting immediately following the consecration ceremony. He was an Alderman of the City of Exeter and had at one time been a director of Exeter City Football Club.

The first formal meeting of these original Brethren took place at Gandy Street on the 20th. August 1920 and it was resolved to officially petition the Provincial Grand Lodge and if successful, to forward the petition to the United Grand Lodge of England. It was realised that for their petition to have any chance of receiving approval it would need the support of a Freemason of high standing in Office and also of similarly high social standing in the community, This they had in no lesser person than John Stocker Esq., who was currently the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the province of Devonshire and also Chairman of the Exeter City Council Education Committee; a Master builder (Retired). It is also a possibility that he was Chairman of the St. Thomas Urban District Council Education Committee, this however has been the subject of some discussion between older Brethren within the St. Thomas Lodge and a certain element of doubt exists as to the accuracy of this statement. Whatever, though a small man in stature he was a big name in Freemasonry and within the local community. The John Stocker schools were named after him; they had previously been known as the St. Thomas Board School. He was later honoured for his community work by the award of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.). Whilst his brother, Henry Stocker, was the current Provincial Grand Secretary for Devonshire.

Having obtained the support of such a prominent dignitary in both Masonic and Local Community spheres, four of the original fourteen masons at that meeting in August 1920 were delegated the responsibility of presenting the petition to Provincial Grand Lodge. These four Brethren being:

W/Bro. W.R. Brealey. P.M. Semper Fedelis Lodge No. 1254.

W/Bro. W.H. Pike. P.M. Northcote Lodge No. 2659.

Bro. E.H. Bradley. Northcote Lodge No. 2659.

Bro. L. Jones. Northcote Lodge No. 2659.

A further four meetings, held at Gandy Street, were needed before the new lodge could be consecrated, amongst other items of business the Lodge Bye-Laws needed to be agreed upon and written, two items of interest to present members of the lodge are;

1. All offices of the lodge were to be progressive, including that of

organist. If the Brother invested as Organist was not an instrumentalist he was required to go round to the back of the organ and pump the bellows. This rule continued until the organ was fitted with an electric pump in later years.

2. It was decreed that the W.Master of the Lodge and his two Wardens should be responsible for the costs of any and all visitors to the lodge,

This rule to the best of my knowledge has never been rescinded. However currently all lodge officers upon investment pay a small sum, proportional to rank, into the lodge hospitality fund. Perhaps?! this was instituted in order to releive the burden upon the senior Officers.

It is obvious to all that the petition was successfull in its application and every thing proceeded toward that eventful day of the 21st. December 1920 (St. Thomas Day) when the Lodge of St. Thomas No.4198 in the register of the United Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of England was consecrated in the Kings Hall, Okehampton St. St. Thomas, Exeter. This building, situated along Okehampton St. was at one time in previous years a cinema but is currently in use as a night club.

The consecration officers were as follows:

Consecrating Officer

R.W.Bro. G.C. Davie. Provincial Grand Master.

Assisted by

W.Bro. J.W.S. Godding.	P.G.D.(Eng).	Asst. P.G.M.
W.Bro. Charles C. Davie.		P.S.G.W.
W.Bro. M. Brutton Ford.		P.J.G.W.
Bro. The Rev. R.D. Chapman M.A.		P.G.Chap.
W.Bro. H.J. Stocker	P.A.G.D.C.(Eng).	P.G. Sec.
W.Bro. H.J. Stamp.	P.A.G.D.C.(Eng).	P.G.D.C.
W.Bro. P.S. Shobbrook.		P.G.Org.

At the conclusion of the consecration ceremony the Provincial Grand Secretary assumed the Chair of King Solomon as the Installing Master and proceeded to instal his brother, W.Bro. John Stocker. P.G.D.(Eng). D.P.G.M. as the first Worshipful Master of the newly created lodge. Upon completion of the installation ceremony the W.Master then invested his officers from the founder members of the lodge. Their names, Mother Lodge Nos. and rank in the new St. Thomas Lodge are as follows;

	Lodge.	Rank.
W.Bro. John Stocker P.G.D.(Eng). D.P.G.M.	39	W.M.
W.Bro A.A. Davey.	1254	acting I.P.M.
W.Bro. W.R. Brealey.	1254	S.W.
W.Bro. W.H. Pike.	2659	J.W.
Bro. the Rev. B.C. Bennett.	112	Chap.
W.Bro. F. Chick.	2659	Treas.
Bro. L Jones.	2659	Sec.
Bro. H.E. Bradley.	2659	D.C.
Bro. W.B. Trick.	2659	S.D.
Bro. H. Dymond.	39	J.D.
Bro. Geo. Lane.	39	A.D.C.
Bro. W.J. Reed.	1254	Org.
Bro. F.J. Way.	1284	Asst Sec.
Bro. J. Reed.	39	I.G.
Bro. W. Clement.	3721	Steward.
Bro. T. Howard.	2659	Steward.
Bro. W.A. Rampton.		Tyler.
Bro. W.H. Ayear	39	

At this first lodge meeting a goodly number of Honorary Members were proposed, seconded and voted into the lodge, seven being Provincial Grand Officers and two other Brothers. A remarkable feature being that one of these honorary brothers, a Bro. Edmund Snow was celebrating his ninety ninth birthday on the Festival of St. Thomas. It is recorded in later minutes of the lodge that he was a regular attender at lodge meetings until his death on the 13th. December 1923 aged 100 years and 357 days, a Freemason for 79 years 95 days, having been initiated into St. John the Baptist Lodge No. 39 on the 31st. August 1844.

This first lodge meeting was closed with the membership of the lodge being eighteen Brethren plus a further seven who had been proposed and seconded as joining members, also two candidates for initiation, these two being a Mr. Edwin James Maunder, a Post Office Overseer at Exeter Post Office and a Mr. Albert Ernest Shapcott, Chief Accountant, City Treasurers Office, Exeter.

The Brethren then retired to Deller's Cafe, Exeter for the Consecration Banquet which commenced at 7pm. at a cost, for the four course meal, of Eight Shiillings and Sixpence (42p) excluding wines. The inaugural minutes record that about 200 Brethren attended the consecration, and greetings were received from 37 lodges, 103 of these Brethren attending the Banquet. The lodge is very fortunate that in addition to possessing a copy of the Consecration summons attached to the minutes, it also has in the lodge archives a copy of the menu card produced for the banquet. Also discovered in the lodge archives, during the research for this history, was a sheet of paper listing the estimated costs for forming the lodge. These costs are set out below:

		£	s	d
Warrant to G.L. London		14	0	0
P.G.L Fees 1 year	£2.62½	2	12	0
Registration of Bye-Laws	25p		5	0
Rent of Hall for Consecration	£6.50	6	10	0
1 W.M. collar Chain and Jewel	£10.00	10	0	0
17 Officers collars at 14/- +50%	£17.13	17	17	0
17 Officers collar jewels at 10/6 +50%	£12.62	12	12	6
3 pairs gauntlets at 30/- + 50%	£ 6.75	6	15	0
Candidate requirements	£2.50	2	10	0
1 Minute book	£3.00	3	0	0
1 Attendance book	£3.00	3	0	0
1 Dec. book	£1.25	1	5	0
1 receipt book Treas.	50p		10	0
General printing, Bye-Laws, Circulars	£30	30	0	0
Postage	£ 8.00	8	0	0
	<u>£118.82½</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>6</u>

Note: Nothing allowed on this estimate for founders Jewels

To complete this account of the formation of the lodge, the founder members of the lodge were obliged to pay a founders fee of 10 Guineas (£10.50) plus a further £5.00 to assist the financial footing of the lodge in its first year of existence. The lodge was to hold its meetings at Gandy Street and would pay an annual rent of £15.00 (the current annual rent for the year 1994 being £2774.75). The standard dress in the lodge being dinner jackets and bow ties until the introduction of clothes rationing during the second world war when dark grey or black lounge suits were acceptable, the relaxation of this rule has never been withdrawn. Taking everything into consideration it could be said that the St. Thomas Lodge was away on a well founded start of its existence.

Chapter Two

The first meeting of the new Lodge took place at Gandy Street on Wednesday 12th. January 1921. At this Lodge ballots were taken for the acceptance, as joining members, of the Brethren who had been proposed and seconded at the consecration ceremony the previous month together with the ballot for the first initiate into the lodge, Mr. Edwin James Maunder, an Overseer at Exeter Post Office. A second ballot for initiation was held for a Mr. Albert Ernest Shapcott, Chief Accountant, City Treasurers Office, Exeter. Brother Maunder was an active member of the lodge until he was obliged to resign on his being transferred from Exeter to Leeds in November 1929.

Brother Shapcott was the first initiate into the lodge to reach the Chair of King Solomon, this being in 1931. He continued to play an active part in the lodge until his death in 1944. During his year in office as W. Master, W. Bro. Shapcott initiated into the lodge a young man who in subsequent years was to have a very profound and powerful effect upon the lodge, one James J. L. Gore.

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday the 9th. February 1921 following the initiation of Bro. E.J. Maunder, the first ever explanation of the First Tracing Board given in the lodge was rendered by Bro. L. Jones, the lodge secretary.

Following this labour, there took place the presentation of the first ever gift to the lodge. This took the form of a complete set of working tools, the gift of Bro. L. Jones, which had been made locally from one of the wooden piles which formed part of the bridge which was built in the year 1257 by Walter Gervase to connect the parish of St. Thomas to the city of Exeter. The wooden pile in question having been withdrawn from the river bed in 1903. Are these the working tools framed and displayed in the bar at Gandy Street?

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 13th. April 1921 the first double passing ceremony to be conducted took place when Bros. Maunder and Shapcott were passed. This is now a well established custom of the lodge. Following the passing of these two Brothers an explanation of the Second Tracing Board took place, another first occasion in the lodge; this explanation was given by Bro. H.E. Bradley D.C.

The first dispensation handed down by Provincial Grand Lodge was issued for the purpose of allowing the lodge to hold its November lodge meeting on Friday 11th. November 1921 instead of Wednesday the 9th., no reason is given for this change in standard date of the lodge meeting either in the minutes of that meeting or the dispensation from P.G.L. Recorded in those lodge minutes is the raising of a Bro. George Cork. Or could the change of date of the lodge be due to the significance of the actual date, it being just three short years since the signing of the Armistice of the Great War of 1914/18?

The end of the year 1921 saw the original lodge membership rising from 18 brethren to a total of 35. The lodge had a number of Brethren subscribing to the Fortesque Annuity Fund, the Devon Masonic Education Fund and also to the Devon Aged Widows Fund.

Following the Initiation of a Mr. Albert V. Potter at the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 12th. April 1922 the W.Master W.Bro. W.R. Brealey proposed and W.Bro. A. Davey seconded the resolution; "The W.Master and Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge No. 4198 offer their most sincere and hearty congratulations to W.Bro. John Stocker P.G.D.(Eng). D.P.G.M. upon the attainment of his Masonic Jubilee, assuring him of their deep affection and praying that the Great Architect of the Universe that He will vouchsafe to him many years of health and happiness.

As W.Bro. John Stocker was 72 years of age when he was installed as the first W.Master of the St. Thomas Lodge, it is evident that he had been initiated into Freemasonry at the age of 23 years.

Moving on into 1923 an interesting item appears in the minutes of the lodge held on the 13th. June of that year, in that a letter from the Chairman and Secretary of Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd. was read to the Brethren on the subject of investing in shares, by Brethren, in the company in order to raise £900.00 that was urgently needed. The reason for this cash not being specified in the lodge minutes. W.Bro. Brealey stated that at the next lodge meeting to be held on the 11th. July he would propose that the sum of £30.00 from the lodge funds be invested in the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. Ltd.

On the summons for the lodge to be held on Wednesday 11. July 1924 appears the first apparent change in the original policy of restricting membership of the lodge to residents of or persons working in St. Thomas. The lodge summons shows that a Mr. John Ponsford, a schoolmaster living at Kenton was to be balloted for as a candidate for initiation. Also on this summons appeared a notice of an emergency lodge meeting to be held

Bro. Cyril L. Wills. This was the second such emergency lodge meeting being called within the short history of the lodge. The first time being on Monday 18th. June 1923 for the purpose of raising a Bro. Alfred V. Angel. The end of the year of 1923 saw the lodge membership now standing at a total of 48 members.

The next months passed quietly for the lodge, it was continuing with its normal business and accepting new candidates for initiation. Then in the closing stages of 1925 the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. John Stocker, a Past Master of the lodge was honoured by the bestowal of Honorary Freeman of the City of Exeter. This was acknowledged by the lodge in that a letter of congratulation was sent to him from the lodge signed by the W.Master on behalf of the brethren of the lodge. At the lodge meeting held on the 9th. December 1925 the Secretary reported that he had received a letter from Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd. that from the 1st. January 1926 the rent levied on the lodge would be of the same order as that of the other lodges using the hall. This would be a fee of One Guinea per member per annum. It would appear that inflation was present in 1926!

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 13th. October 1926 a lecture was presented on the special features of the Bristol Working of the Craft Degrees by W.Bro. Vincent Thompson, and having completed that portion referring to the First Degree, the lodge was opened in the second degree, when W.Bro. Vincent Thompson continued and concluded his lecture. W.Bro. Thompson, it must be added was a visitor to the lodge, being a Past Master of Lodge No. 187. Was this the Brother who gave his name to the Exeter School of that name situated at Ringswell Ave.? and is currently named St. Lukes High School. It is thanks to the efforts of W.Bro. R.D. Studley, P.Pr.J.G.D. Past Master of the St. Thomas Lodge that Brethren in the lodge are able from time to time visit Bristol lodges and witness at first hand the Bristol Working.

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 14th. September 1927 a letter was read from W.Bro. Henry Stocker P.A.G.D.C. ProvG.Sec. pointing out that at the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting held on 22nd. June a sum of Ten Guineas (£10.50) was voted to St. Thomas Lodge, as a supplement grant to the money sent on behalf of the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls, to enable the St. Thomas Lodge to acquire Life Governor ship.

At the regular stated lodge held on Wednesday 14th. March 1928, a remarkable occurrence took place in that a Brother of a Foreign Constitution was admitted into the lodge after making a declaration of adherence to the Book of Constitutions and promising obedience to the Grand Master, and the Rules and Regulations of United Grand Lodge. This declaration was made by Bro. John Thomas Gammon having been initiated into Freemasonry in a regular Lodge under the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia. The W.Master then handed Bro. Gammon a Grand Lodge of England Certificate, the same having been signed by Bro. Gammon.

Following this ceremony the W. Master, W.Bro.R.H. House then proceeded to present a Grand Lodge Certificate of British Columbia, Canada; to a visiting Brother from the province of B.C. This presentation was to Bro. Edgar Behrens, a member of Unity Lodge No. 106 British Columbia.

At the lodge held on Wednesday 10th. October 1928 the W.Master informed the lodge that that morning one of the Brethren of the lodge, Bro. F.L. Wilkins had been married, and that the following telegram had been sent; "Hearty congratulations, good wishes for future little Lewises" W.Master and Brethren St. Thomas Lodge No.4198, to which he had received the following reply "Many thanks for congratulations. With regard to reference to future Lewises, your presentatin shall be attended to" Len.

The year of 1928 was marred for Freemasonry in Devon by the death on the 31st. August by the Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother George Christopher Davie, for the ensuing months, until the installation of a successor, the Province was in the hands of W.Bro. John Stocker, D.P.G.M a Past Master of St. Thomas Lodge. At the lodge held Wednesday 12th. December the W.Master, W.Bro. R.H. House read a letter from the Provincial G. Sec. stating that the M.W.The Grand Master, the Duke of Connaug had appointed R.W.Bro. Sir Henry Y.B. Lopes, Bart, D.L., M.A. to be the Provincial Grand Master of Devonshire.

At the same lodge meeting a letter was read that had been written by the Semper Fidelis Lodge regarding the insufficient accomodation of the present lodge building, and the following recommendation was "The Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge are of the opinion that this matter is worthy of further consideration". Was Gandy Street beginning to be a little on the small side for the City'S Masonic activities?

Two items of interest which arose during the (months) of 1929 are;

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 8th. May the W.Master. W.Bro. W.H. House, on behalf of the lodge wished Bro. Alfred Angel God speed and success in the state of California to which place he intended to sail on the 12th. June. Bro. Angel was initiated into St. Thomas Lodge on the 8th. December 1926.

The other item being the lengthy discussion which took place at the lodge meeting of Wednesday 13th. December concerning the motion to close the lodge for the summer vacation for the months July and August each year. The minutes of that lodge meeting show that the proposal was defeated by one vote, and so St. Thomas Lodge continues to meet 11 times per year to this day.

At the December 1929 meeting of the lodge a letter was read from Bro.E..J. Maunder tendering his resignation from the lodge as he only visited Devon during the month of August each year. Bro. Maunder was the first initiate into St Thomas Lodge and was an active member of the lodge until his transfer by The General Post Office. In the previous month, Bro. Maunder explained that he had retired from work and having settled in Leeds he could see little opportunity of being able to visit his Mother Lodge in the future.

The year of 1930 was uneventful in the life of the lodge, it quietly went along its way bringing new members into Freemasonry, at the end of the year the membership stood at 73, four initiates being brought into the lodge during the year. To close this chapter covering the first decade in the life of the St. Thomas Lodge it is worth recording that on several occasions the Immediate Past Master was presented with the gift of an Illuminated Scroll, in addition to a Past Masters Jewel, as a tangible mark of appreciation for his work for the lodge during his year of office. Another interesting point is that the Installation banquet was held each year at different venues other than the Festive Room, Gandy Street, as it was then known in those distant days. Installation banquets were held at the following establishments; Dellers Cafe, Royal Clarence Hotel also the Rougemont Hotel. The Installation banquet of 1930 was held at Dellers Cafe at a cost of Seven Shillings and Sixpence (37p) excluding wines.

Chapter Three

The year of 1930 drew to a close with the 10th. anniversary of the formation of the lodge passing without any recognition being made in the Temple at the December lodge meeting. The lodge did make its first association with Exeter City Police Force by balloting for initiation a Mr. William John Bishop, a traffic Inspector, residing at 2, Stafford Terrace, Heavitree, Exeter. Mr. Bishop was duly initiated at the Janurary 1931 lodge meeting.

At the lodge meeting of Wednesday 13th. May 1931 the W.Master informed the Brethren present that the Deputy Prov. Grand Master W.Bro John Stocker and his brother W.Bro. Henry Stocker, Prov. Grand Secretary had both been honoured by being elected Honorary Members of the 30th. degree in Freemasonry. The following resolution was unanimously carried; "That the hearty and sincere congratulations of the Brethren of St. Thomas Lodge be extended to the first Master of the Lodge W.Bro. John Stocker Deputy Provincial Grand Master upon the very great and unique honour conferred on him and also on his brother, W.Bro. Henry Stocker, Provincial Grand Secretary of being made honorary Members of the 30th. Degree in Freemasonry". This resolution is duly recorded in the minutes of the lodge meeting.

At an Emergency Lodge meeting held on Wednesday 27th. May 1931 at Gandy Street an unusual occurrence took place in that a Bro. Joseph Simmons, of Holy Cross Lodge no. 3679 was raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. Unfortunately no reference is made in the minutes recorded, of that meeting, of Bro. Simmons Mother Lodge or the reason for the raising taking place in St. Thomas Lodge. Yet another Emergency Lodge meeting was called for Wednesday 23rd. June. On this occasion it was for the ceremony of raising Bro. William J. Bishop to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. No reason is apparent for this procedure which has now occurred on a number of occasions during the lifetime of the lodge.

Wednesday the 9th. September 1931 could be regarded as a "Red Letter" day in the life of St. Thomas Lodge, for it was at this lodge meeting that James Joseph Latham Gore was initiated into Freemasonry. No Brother initiated into the St. Thomas Lodge since then has any doubt as to the effect the late W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore, D.P.G.M. had upon the life of the lodge in the years to come.

Also at this lodge meeting a letter was read from W.V. Cole & Sons calling the Brethrens attention to the fact that they had been authorised to print and publish in book form the Craft Masonic Ceremonies as formerly worked by St. John the Baptist Lodge No. 39 and St. Georges Lodge No. 112, the price being Six Shillings and Sixpence (32p) per copy. The W.Master informed the Brethren that this book would be of great interest and assistance to all and that those desiring a copy should give their names to the Secretary. Was this then the introduction of the "39 Ritual" into St. Thomas Lodge? And also into the Exeter Craft Lodges in General?

At the lodge held on Wednesday 11th. November 1931 the W.Master W.Bro. A.E. Shapcott said; "That it being Armistice Day our thoughts were with those who had lost relations and friends and also of absent Brethren and asked the Brethren present to show their sympathy. The Brethren showed their sympathy in the usual Masonic manner by rising. Also at this lodge meeting there arose the first occasion where a Brother made Petition for assistance from the Board of Benevolence. Upon the proposition by W.Bro. John Stocker, D.P.G.M., seconded by W.Bro. W.R. Brealey, it was unanimously resolved to support the Petition of Bro. Green to the Board of Benevolence for financial assistance to enable him to carry a business which he had started at 97, South St., Exeter as a printer and Manufacturers Agent. He having, at the age of 58 years, been discharged from his position as Manager for a firm of printers, which had changed hands and undergone re-organisation. The petition was then signed in open lodge, by the W.Master, Wardens and about 40 of the Brethren and immediately passed over to the Provincial Grand Secretary for forwarding to London. It would seem that redundancy is not as recent as we would expect it to be. The W.Master on behalf of the Brethren of the lodge then congratulated W.Bro. J. Lake, Chaplain, on his election to the Exeter City Council.

The December 1931 lodge meeting was the occasion of the raising of J.J.L. Gore to the sublime Degree of a Master Mason, the fifth new member of the lodge within the current year, this putting the total membership of the lodge at the close of 1931 to 76 Brethren.

January 1932 started with the lodge presenting no less than five Grand Lodge Certificates at the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 13th. An explanation of the G.L.C. was given by Bro.E. House, Lodge Secretary, to the five Brethren received into the lodge during 1931. At the Installation Lodge meeting on Wednesday 10th. February 1932, prior to the installation ceremony, two ballots for membership took place. The first being for a joining member, Bro.J. Lock, a subscribing member of Holy Cross Lodge No. 3679 Wallsend on Tyne Bro. Lock was employed as a tutor at St. Lukes College, Exeter. The second ballot was for a candidate for initiation, a Mr. Edward Chanter, a Master baker living at 12 Edmund St., Exeter. Yet again another instance of candidates outside St. Thomas now being admitted into the lodge. Following the Installation of the new W.Master, the I.P.M. W.Bro. A.E. Shapcott was honoured with the customary gift of a Past Masters Jewel and on this occasion a gold watch to mark the appreciation of the Lodge for the work undertaken on behalf of the lodge by W.Bro. Shapcott during his year of office.

At the lodge meeting of Wednesday 13th. April 1932, an interesting labour on the agenda for that evening was to consider and determine a Notice of Motion given by the Treasurer at the previous lodge meeting "That a Brother living more than twenty five miles outside of Exeter, and who has previously been a subscribing member of the lodge shall pay annual dues of One Guinea (£1.05). Apart from the initial Dues set down at the formation of the lodge, this is the first mention of the subscriptions payable by the Brethren to appear in the minute book. Was this item the announcement of the creation of the Country Member status within the St. Thomas Lodge?

On Wednesday 11th. June 1932 at the regular stated lodge, the Charity Steward Bro. E.U. Foster reported that in accordance with instructions from the Finance & General Purposes Committee, he had seen, and received permission from Brethren, whose contributions were below the sum of Five Guineas, for their contributions to be added to the Lodge contributions and he would propose; "That all contributions below the sum of Five Guineas (£5.25p), contributed by the Brethren towards the 1932 Festival for Boys, be added to the lodge contributions, in order that the lodge may become a Vice President of the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys, with 10 votes annually for as long as St. Thomas Lodge remains in existence. This proposal was seconded by a Bro. C.A. Jackson and carried unanimously.

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 8th. June 1932 the W.Master gave a report on the lodge contribution to the 1932 Festival for the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys. The total raised by the lodge was £304 0s. 6p. (£304.2½p), this may seem small fry by today's standards but from the formation of the lodge in 1920 the monthly average amount collected in the Alms bag was of the order of £1. 2s 6p (£1.12½p) then the lodge could feel proud of the contribution made to the Festival, this was evident by the letter received from the D.P.G.M. W.Bro. J. Stocker. A full list of Brethren making a contribution to the Festival together with the amount they donated is entered in the minutes of this lodge meeting.

At the lodge meeting of October 1932 following the initiation of a Mr. A. Chanter into the lodge, Bro. A.J.B. Webb asked the W.Master if a notice of motion placed before the lodge was in order. The notice in question being to donate a sum of 10 Guineas to the Mayor of Exeter's Fund for the Kings Dwellings and Club. Bro. Webb observing that this was not a Masonic Charity. The W.Master gave his reply, which was obviously favourable to the charity for a formal Proposal and Seconding took place and this was carried unanimously by the Brethren present. To any Brother who has doubts as to the granting of petitions to organisations outside the Brotherhood then this should provide concrete proof, if such be needed in addition to studying the annual reports sent out to Brethren by United Grand Lodge in London.

On Wednesday 14th. December 1932 the lodge was host to W.Bro. Vincent Thompson once again, who gave a lecture on the Bristol working of the Third Degree. W.Bro. Thompson was a Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer Bristol, his Mother Lodge being No.187, and he entered his name in the visitors book on this occasion as being a member of St. Georges Lodge No. 112, Exeter. Obviously W.Bro. Thompson had taken up residence in Exeter since his first visit to the lodge in 1926 and had become a joining member of St. Georges Lodge.

The year of 1933 commenced with the normal election of the Master elect taking place at the January lodge meeting and his Installation the following month on February 8th.

At the April lodge meeting a proposal by W.Bro. M.W. Gilpin, seconded by W.Bro.W.Bro.W.J. Lord. That the sum of 50 Guineas be subscribed to the appeal fund of the Freemasons Hospital and Nursing Home, The amount to be paid in three annual instalments. This again showing the cost of living in the mid nineteen thirties compared with those of today. Another example being the cost to the lodge of the Past Masters Jewel presented to the I.P.M. two months earlier, this being Seven Pounds. Today a sum of £75.50 is the norm for carrying out alterations to an existing P.M. Jewel. The May lodge meeting saw the reading of a letter of thanks from the V. W.Bro. Surtees for the letter he had received from St. Thomas Lodge congratulating him on his appointment as Provincial Grand Chaplain. It was resolved that this letter be filed. The year progressed and the returns presented to the City Clerk of the Peace showed that at the end of the year the membership of the lodge had increased to 85, five initiates being brought into the lodge during 1933.

The year of 1934 started with the usual lodge meeting to elect the master for the ensuing year, at the January Lodge meeting. The Installation Ceremony taking place on Wednesday 14th. February. It is noteworthy that two guests at this meeting were Members of the Civil Authority of Exeter. The first being W.Bro. F.J.W. Templeman, a subscribing member of the Northcote Lodge No. 2659 and current Mayor of the City of Exeter. The second being Bro. R.J. Rew, P.P.G.D., a subscribing member of Davie Lodge No. 3721 and currently the Sheriff of the City of Exeter. The attendance of these two dignitaries reinforcing the comment passed in the first chapter with regard to the ties existing between the City and Freemasonry. As was now a well established custom of the lodge the Immediate Past Master was presented with a gift in addition to a Past Masters Jewel; costing Seven pounds. This gift being a gold watch and chain. Following the installation the banquet was held once again at Dellers Cafe situated in Bedford St. at a cost of Seven Shillings and Sixpence (37¹/₂p). Oh what a stable economy existed in Britain during the Thirties!

Continuing through the year Of 1934 the October lodge saw the first floor work carried out by Bro. J.J.L.Gore who gave an explanation of the second Tracing Board following the Passing of Bro. J.W.H. Webb. The contents of the Alms Bag £2 17s 0d (£2.70) was donated to the Gresford Colliery Disaster Relief Fund.

This was a mining disaster where an underground explosion occurred at Gresford Colliery near Wrexham, North Wales, which caused a great loss of life. At the following lodge meeting of November 1934 a letter was read in open lodge from W.Bro. T.J. Templeman W.Master of the Northcote Lodge and Mayor of Exeter, thanking the Brethren of St. Thomas Lodge for their subscription of Three Guineas towards the Gresford Colliery disaster fund. It can be assumed from this information that the Mayor must have made a Public Appeal to the Citizens of Exeter with regard to this National Tragedy.

At the lodge meeting of the 12th. December 1934 a Bro. of the Irish Constitution was admitted as a joining member to the lodge. This was Bro. Frederick C.Hill, a Subscribing Member of Leinster Lodge No. 387, Irish Constitution. His signed Declaration of Obedience to the United Grand Lodge of England is attached to the minutes of the lodge meeting. Also at this Christmas lodge is the annual proposal that Ten Guineas (£10,50) be donated to the Fortescue Annuity Fund. the amount to be made up of Five Guineas from the Lodge Funds, the Officers Fees of Honour for the current year, and the balance from the Charity Stewards Fund. Is this honour Fund that Officers of the lodge now pay into the lodge Hospitality Fund?

The life of the lodge carried on as normal at the start of 1935 and at the Installation meeting in February a notice of motion was declared by Bro.E.M.Foster, Charity Steward, that at the next regular stated lodge he would propose that the St. Thomas Lodge would pay an annual subscription of Two Guineas for the first year and One Guinea annually thereafter to the Exeter Lodge of Instruction. Thus St. Thomas Lodge became, and still is, a Member of the Lodge of Instruction which meets at Gandy St., as at the following lodge meeting this notice was proposed, seconded and carried. At the March lodge meeting of 1935 it was resolved that the W.Master and his Two Wardens should serve on a committee for the purpose of deciding how the Exeter Freemasons would celebrate Their Majesties forthcoming Silver Jubilee. At the May lodge meeting a sum of Ten Pounds was voted to be donated to the fund being raised by the Exeter Lodges for the entertainment of the Old People at the Exeter Institutions on the occasion of their Majesties Silver Jubilee. At this same lodge meeting a letter was read from the St. Dunstons Institute for the Blind appealing for financial help for

War Blinded men and their dependants. The W.Master proposed and the Senior Warden seconded that the sum of Two Guineas be sent to St. Dunstons from the Charity Bag. As the sum placed into the Charity Bag at this lodge meeting raised £1 12s 2d it can easily be seen that in 1935 Two Guineas was a reasonable amount of money, such a sum being the average weekly wage for a person following a skilled trade.

At the lodge meeting of Wednesday 12th. June the W.Master referred to the subject of a "Ladies Night", after discussion it was resolved that a ladies night should be held and a committee was elected to make the necessary arrangements. This first Ladies Night held by the lodge took place on the 22nd. November 1935, and at the January 1936 lodge meeting the W.Master read a report and Balance sheet for the Ladies Night showing a credit balance of Four Guineas. It was voted that this balance be placed in the lodge Charity Fund. Unfortunately no mention is made in the minute book of the venue at which this Ladies Night took place nor of the number of ladies attending with their husbands or friends. However another "first" had been made, the lodge now entertains its Ladies each year in order to enable the Brethren to make amends for their absence from home on lodge nights.

At the lodge meeting of Wednesday 13th. November the lodge was host to the V.W.Bro. The Right Rev. Lord Bishop of Crediton P.G.Chap. (Eng) who gave an address entitled "Some Inner Meanings of Freemasonry. At the December lodge meeting following a "Raising" ceremony a lecture entitled "Some Thoughts on Craft Masonry" was delivered by W,Bro. W.J. Lord a Past Master of the St. Thomas Lodge. And so St Thomas Lodge approached the end of 1935 with a total membership of 88 Brethren.

The year 1936 commenced for the lodge in its usual manner of Electing the Master for the year together with the lodge Treasurer, Charity Steward and Tyler. The Installation Lodge meeting in February was marred by the death and subsequent mourning for the late King George V. The W.Master referring to the Kings death, moved that "This Lodge desire to place on record in the minute book, its sorrow and sympathy with His Most Gracious Majesty the King, on the lamented death of His Most Gracious Majesty, King George V". The Brethren expressed their sorrow and sympathy in the usual Masonic manner by standing whilst the Organist rendered the Dead March in Saul.

Toward the end of 1935 the lodge had been informed by the Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd., that plans were at an advanced stage for the enlargement of the lodge room and also the refurbishment of the organ. At the lodge meeting in May the W.Master referred to the installation of the new organ and instructed the lodge Secretary to write a letter of appreciation to the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. Ltd. Did this mean that from henceforth the organ did not require manual pumping?

An interesting item of information was included in the business of the July lodge meeting inasmuch that the Secretary read a letter that had been received from United Grand Lodge stating that; the business to be transacted in any particular lodge is confidential to its members and should not be disclosed on the Summons posted on the Notice Board. The W.Master assured the Brethren that this matter would be attended to. Does this imply that when a Brother invites a Guest into the lodge that this Guest cannot be offered a summons and therefore be unaware of the work to be carried out until it actually occurs? Thankfully no longer the case.

The W.Master enquired, at this lodge meeting, the wishes of the Brethren relating to a St. Thomas Lodge, Ladies Night. It was proposed and seconded then carried that a Ladies Night be held in the near future and that the Brethren who had served on the Committee of the last St. Thomas Lodge Ladies night be re-elected with power to add to their number. This proposal was carried unanimously, needless to say. This second Ladies Night held by the St. Thomas Lodge took place sometime during the month of November, for at the December lodge meeting the W.Master thanked the committee and Brethren for making the evening a success and that the balance of £2 14s 6d (£2.72½) accrued would be placed in the Charity Bag. And so yet another successful year came to an end.

The New year of 1937 commenced with the usual business of the Election of the Master Elect together with the election of Treasurer, Charity Steward and Tyler taking place at the January lodge meeting. After a full list of Labours shown on the summons was completed the lodge was closed.

The Brethren were then entertained by an organ recital given by the lodge organist, Bro. J.J.L.Gore, who had held this office for the past two years having been invested organist by W.Bro. E.House following his installation as W.Master of the lodge in February 1934.

The year of 1937 continued with the Installation of the W.Master at the February lodge as usual. The installation Banquet being held, for a change, at Freemasons Hall, Gandy Street, at a cost of Six shillings and Sixpence per head. Still a stable economy prevails! The lodge continued its activities initiating new members throughout the spring and early summer. At the October lodge meeting the W.Master announced the date for the third successive Ladies Night which was to be held on the 19th. November, and requested that the Brethren do their utmost to make the evening a success. At the December lodge the W.Master thanked the Brethren for making the Ladies Night a success and that the balance, undisclosed in the minute book, would be placed in the Charity Bag. And so 1937 drew to a close with the annual returns to United and Provincial Grand Lodges showing a total membership within the lodge now standing at 90 Brethren.

The lodge meeting of January 1938 saw the usual labours attended to followed by the proposal for initiation of two new candidates. One of which was to become a Brother much respected in the lodge in later years and whose advice was often sought and which was cheerfully and freely given. I refer to the late W.Bro. Marshall Hubert Buller, P.P.G.W. who was duly initiated into the lodge on 13th. April 1938. One of W.Bro. Buller's masonic yarns was that at the festive board following his initiation a tankard of beer was accidentally upset over his head and shoulders. He being brand spanking new so to speak thought this was a custom of the lodge and made no comment. At this same lodge meeting the W.Master made reference to the Grand Lodge Nomination of W.Bro. the Rev. B.C.Bennett P.P.G.Chap., a founder member of the lodge, to the office of United Grand Lodge Assistant Grand Chaplain. The W.Master announced that a service of thanksgiving would be held at Alphington Church, of which the Rev. W.Bro. was Rector, the date to be given later. This service eventually took place on Sunday 29th. May 1938. Also at this April lodge meeting the W.Master made reference to the serious illness of the Provincial Grand Master and requested the lodge Secretary to write to the P.G.M. expressing the lodge's wish for a speedy recovery. Unfortunately at the May lodge meeting it was with great sadness that the W.Master had the task of informing the Brethren of the death of the Provincial Grand Master the R.W.Bro. Lord Roborough P.G.W. And moved that a vote of Condolence with the Family and Relations of the Late Provincial Grand Master. Also that an appreciation of the great and valuable services he had rendered to the Province of Devonshire, and the the Craft in general, by the Late Provincial Grand Master be recorded

Following the usual monthly lodge meeting held in June at which a Brother John Pickering was raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, an emergency lodge meeting was called for the 28th. June for the purpose of raising Bro. Marshall H. Buller to the Third Degree. From the lodge minutes researched this far it would seem that the St. Thomas Lodge had to resort to emergency lodge meetings in order to complete its annual work schedule. At the lodge meeting of Wednesday 13th. July 1938 the W. Master read a communication from Provincial Grand Lodge informing all Brethren that the V.W. Brother W.F. Surtees, The Lord Bishop of Crediton had been appointed Provincial Grand Master of the Province of Devonshire. The Secretary was instructed to write to him expressing the congratulations of the W.M., Officers and Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge on his appointment and assuring him of the Loyalty and Esteem of every Brother of the Lodge. The W. Master also read the notice of Provincial Grand Lodge to be held on Saturday 20th. August 1938 at the Guildhall, Plymouth, to install the Provincial Grand Master. Any Brethren wishing to attend the installation were to give their names to the Secretary before 27th. July. At the September lodge meeting the P.G.M. was elected an Honorary Member of the lodge. The letter received from the P.G.M. thanking the Lodge for their congratulations and good wishes and also for the honour of being appointed an Honorary Member of the lodge is attached to the minutes of the November lodge meeting.

At the lodge meeting held on the 14th. December an unusual entry appeared on the Lodge Summons, that being that all Officers would wear evening dress whilst all Visitors and Brethren could wear evening or dark morning dress. This is the first reference of a deviation from the standard evening dress rule. The year closed with the lodge showing a Membership total of 91 Brethren, four initiates being accepted into the lodge during 1938.

The year of 1939 started in the usual manner by the election of the Master Elect also the lodge officers. At the meeting the Secretary reported upon the successful Ladies Night that the lodge had held although no date is given as to when it took place. The small balance accrued was as usual paid into the lodge Charity Fund. As is customary the January lodge minutes have attached to them the receipts from United Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodge and the local Clerk to the Peace with respect to the list of Brethren of the lodge. Also attached is the receipts for the Insurance premiums with respect to Accident and Fire Policies. Was this a

new regulation/innovation within the lodge or was it that these receipts had previously been filed elsewhere?

At the Installation Lodge meeting on Wednesday the 8th. February 1939 a procedure hitherto unknown in the lodge was that the address to the W.Master was given by the retiring I.P.M. and not by a Provincial Officer. No mention of the reason for this deviation from normal practice is given in the minutes. At the end of the entry in the minute book however there is a considerable list of apologies for absence from the lodge meeting headed by the P.G.M. D.P.G.M. also several other Provincial Grand Officers. Once again Dellers Cafe in Bedford Street was to be the caterers for the Installation Banquet, still at a cost of Seven Shillings and Sixpence (35½p).

The year progressed with lodge gaining new members both from initiation and two joining members. At the July lodge meeting reference was made by W.Bro.W.Walters that the lodge had made a donation of Fifty Guineas to the Royal Masonic Hospital, thus gaining Vice Patron status within the charity. Also that the Brethren in the lodge had also made contributions to the sum of £86 . 3s . 6d. Also at this meeting W.Bro. J.Howard P.P.G.D.C. proposed the sincere thanks of the Brethren of the lodge for the stirring work he had done in respect of the Roborough Memorial Fund, the lodge having contributed the sum of £139 . 14s . 6d. to this fund.

Before the next lodge meeting took place, the outbreak of the Second World War occurred on Sunday, 3rd. September. This had the immediate effect of the September lodge being cancelled and there was no festive Board at the Oct. lodge. This is indicated in the lodge minutes of the October meeting by the entry of the address given to a newly Initiated Brother at that lodge meeting. The entry reads; the W.Master addressed Bro. Davies. "It is customary after an initiation for the Brethren to leave Labour and go to Refreshment and at the Refreshment Board the most important toast is that of the Initiate. Unfortunately owing to the International Crisis occurring at this time this cannot be done. I as the Master of this Lodge speaking on behalf of the Past Masters, Officers and Brethren of this Lodge congratulate you on your entry into Freemasonry, give you a Hearty Welcome into this Lodge and sincerely hope that you will

be spared to enjoy many years of Health and Happiness as you grow older in Freemasonry. You will appreciate its great Principles and Virtues and you receive joy and comfort from them, but let me assure you that you are expected not only to be a Receiving Centre but to radiate the light of those good things not only to our Brothers in Freemasonry but to the outside world who are not Masons". The W.Master then stood and said;"Bro. Davies, on your Initiation I salute you, welcome you to our Lodge and wish you well".

The November and December lodge meetings were also conducted without a Festive Board following the lodge. This was due entirely to the Government closing all Restaurants, Cinemas and Dancehalls Etc. at the outbreak of hostilities. This situation, fortunately did not last more than the first few months of the war and by the New Year of 1940 things had returned to 'normal' with respect to Public entertainment and it was business as usual. The year of 1939 ending with the lodge membership now standing at a total of 97 Brethren of whom 3 were initiates and 1 joining member.

The year 1940 started in the usual manner by the election of the Master Elect for the ensuing year along with the Lodge Officers. A very welcome notice shown on the lodge summons was the return of the Festive Board following lodge meetings. However the February Installation summons showed that instead of the usual Installation Banquet being held the Festive Board would only consist of a repast at a cost of Four Shillings per Brother. This again being a wartime regulation brought in restricting the total cost of a meal, at any catering establishment, to Five Shillings per person. At this Installation lodge meeting the retiring W.Master, before commencing the installation ceremony, informed the Brethren that he had sent a Greetings Telegram to W.Bro.J.Stocker D.P.G.M. on his 92nd.. birthday on behalf of himself, Officers and Brethren of the lodge. It was with great sorrow that at the lodge meeting the following month that the W.Master informed the Brethren of the passing of our esteemed and revered Deputy Provincial Grand Master W.Brother John Stocker the first Master of St. Thomas Lodge. The Brethren expressed their sorrow in the usual masonic manner whilst the Organist rendered the Dead March in Saul.

It was at the lodge meeting on Wednesday 8th. May that the war made its first impact upon the lodge. It was at this meeting that the W.Master made a feeling and sympathetic reference to Bro.J.L.Greet who had received a communication from the War Office informing him that his son was posted missing as a result of enemy action. This was the type of Telegram that

brought the first news to Parents or Wives that a loved one had been affected by the fighting. The first Telegram was followed in due time by one that told of the Ultimate act, "Killed in Action" or a lesser sorrow, "Wounded in Action", or most probably the best news "Taken Prisoner". In some isolated circumstances no further news was received by Next of Kin other than the Posted Missing telegram. These are the casualties having no known grave.

At the lodge meeting on Wednesday 12th. June 1940 following the business of the meeting, which consisted of a Raising, the lodge being closed in Due and Antient Form was then concluded by the W.Master reciting a Prayer for Absent Brethren in accordance with wishes of the Provincial Grand Master, The Lord Bishop of Crediton, whilst the Brethren stood to order in the usual Masonic manner. This prayer being a reference to Brethren serving in the armed forces, this practice being observed throughout the duration of the war.

At the lodge meeting of Wednesday 11th. September 1940 the first indication of Freemasonry's contribution to the war effort is recorded in that the Secretary reported that he had received a letter from United Grand Lodge suggesting that Freemasons should contribute to the Countries urgent needs by surrendering their Masonic Jewels to Grand Lodge for the purpose of being melted down and the proceeds presented to the Treasury as a Masonic gift. Another feature of the effect of the war upon the lodge was that it had become customary to add the names of all the Brethren of the lodge serving in the Armed Forces to the list of Brethren sending apologies for absence from lodge meetings. By the end of the year the number of Brethren appearing each month on this list was four, their names being; Bro. M.H.Buller.

Bro. J.W.Killey. Asst. Secretary.

Bro. W. Leaker.

Bro. H.Gayton.

The year of 1940 closed with the lodge membership totaling 95 Brethren. Two Brothers resigned the lodge during the year and there was the death of W.Bro. John Stocker earlier in the year.

Chapter Four

The lodge meeting held on Wednesday 8th. January 1941 saw the lodge entering the Third Decade of its life, it was also the year in which the lodge was to become of age, but more of this later. At the Jan. lodge was the usual business of electing the Master for the forthcoming year also the lodge Officers. On the completion of the lodge agenda and before the lodge was closed the W.Master congratulated Bro. A.E.Rowsell, on behalf of the Officers and Brethren of the lodge, on his appointment of acting Chief Constable of Exeter. The Installation lodge was held on Wednesday 12th. February. The Installation taking place in the presence of the Provincial Grand Master, The R.Worshipfull. the Very Rev. The Lord Bishop of Crediton who gave the address to the W.Master. The I.P.M. W.Bro.G.A. Jackson received a clock, in appreciation from the Brethren of the lodge for his work for the lodge during his year of Office. This was in addition to the customary Past Masters jewel. The Installation Banquet then took place in the Dining room at Gandy Street at a cost of Five Shillings, this being the maximum sum under the wartime regulations as mentioned in the previous chapter. At the April lodge meeting the W.Master made two announcements to the Brethren concerning two Founder Members of the lodge. The first was of a sad nature in that W.Bro.F.Chick, a one time Treasurer of the lodge had passed on to the Grand Lodge above. The Brethren expressing their sorrow in the usual way among Masons. The other item was of a much happier note. The W.Master informed the Brethren that he had sent congratulations on behalf of the Officers and Brethren of the lodge to W.Bro. W.R.Brealy, a Past Master of the lodge, on the occasion of his Golden Wedding Anniversary.

At the May lodge meeting the W.Master had the very onerous task of extending the sympathies of the lodge to Bro.G.L.Greet who had received news that a seconded Son had been reported missing as a result of enemy action. The Brethren of the lodge showed their sympathy in the usual manner among Masons. The presence of Bro. Greet in the lodge at such a time of anguish to himself and his Wife speaks highly of his loyalty to his lodge in particular and to Freemasonry in general. Brother Greet's actions must have been an inspiration then and should serve as an example to us all even today in 1995.

During this May lodge a Brother Courteney J.E.Tanner was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason and during the ceremony the lodge was called from labour to refreshment and from ~~refreshment to labour~~. This was a practice regularly conducted at Raising ceremonies but which in modern days has been discontinued. At the July lodge meeting a rather unusual item of business was raised. This was that the Secretary reported that an account had been presented by Messrs. Townsend, North St. Exeter for the sum of £2.. 5s.. 0. for the payment of photographing the Lodge Warrant. No reason is given in the lodge minutes for this action being taken. Can it be that in these trying times that the W.Master and his Officers thought it expedient that a copy of the Warrant be made, should enemy action destroy the original? From this information another question arises, where is this photograph today?

At the September lodge meeting the W.Master referred to the absence of W.Bro. G.Lane owing to him having undergone a serious operation. The Secretary was instructed to write a letter to W.Bro. Lane expressing the lodge's wishes for a speedy recovery and also congratulating him upon his receiving the collar of Provincial Grand Senior Deacon. W.Bro. W.T. Baker was also congratulated, in the lodge, upon his receiving the collar of Provincial Grand Steward. The W.Master then went on to congratulate Bro. A.E.Rowsell upon his appointment as the Chief Constable of Exeter. The Secretary was also asked to write to Bro.J.L.Greet congratulating him on being promoted to Superintendent in the City Police Force. These two announcements serving to emphasise the links between the City and Freemasonry.

The year of 1941 drew towards its end with the lodge continuing to add to its total Membership, no less than three candidates being proposed for initiation at the October lodge and subsequently being approved and balloted for at the November lodge meeting. Two of these candidates being serving Officers in the Armed Services. The December lodge meeting took place as normal on Wednesday 10th. December. The lodge summons for that meeting also carried the summons for an Emergency lodge meeting to take place at Gandy Street on Monday 22nd. December. This Emergency lodge was to observe and celebrate the 21st. anniversary of the consecration of St. Thomas Lodge on Saturday 21st. December 1920, St Thomas Day.

On **S**unday 21st. December 1941, St. Thomas Day, a Divne Service, to mark the anniversary of the lodge was held in the Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Alphington. The service being conducted by the Rector, W.Bro.B.C.Bennett P.A.G.C. and a founder member of the lodge. The Provincial Grand Master, the Right Rev. Bishop Surtees, Lord Bishop of Crediton was to have attended but was unfortunately indisposed. The lodge is very fortunate to possess in its archives a copy of that Order of Divne Service marking that occasion. The following evening, Monday the 22nd. December the Emergency lodge meeting was held at Gandy Street with the Provincial Grand Master accompanied by other Provincial Grand Officers being in attendance. The lodge was opened in Due and Antient Form with Solemn Prayer. The P.G.M. was saluted by the Brethren in Due Form followed by the D.P.G.M. The Minutes of the Consecration meeting were then read by the Assistant Secretary, Bro. J.J.L.Gore. The W.Master then addressed the Brethren as follows:

Brethren our next business is to mark the progress of the lodge, I am sure you will agree with me that our first thoughts should be of our first Master W.Bro. John Stocker, Deputy Provincial Grand Master. We owe much to his wonderful example and influence and I feel sure shall continue to do so for many years. The W.Master then called the attention to the unique fact that all the principle chairs in the lodge that evening from the Senior Warden to the Assistant Director of Ceremonies were occupied by Founder Members of the Lodge who occupied the same Office in 1921, and declared that our first concern on this occasion was to do honour to the Founders of the lodge for the Foundation so well and truly laid 21 years ago. The W.Master then went on to read a short historical survey of the lodge, which is reproduced below:

At the consecration of the lodge there were 18 Founders, 4 have passed on and 3 have resigned leaving 11 still actively interested.

Of the 21 Masters only one, W.Bro. John Stocker, D.P.G.M. P.G.D. has passed on, one has left the district leaving 19 still retaining their interest in the lodge.

The total membership from the Consecration until now is 129; of this total 20 have passed on and 14 have resigned, leaving a total subscribing membership of 95.

70 candidates have been initiated

The first initiate to reach the chair was W.Bro. A.R. Shapcott in 1931.

5 members are serving in H.M. Forces.

The lodge is a patron of the Royal Masonic Hospital, a Vice -President of the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys, a life Governor of the Royal Benevolent Institution for Girls and holds 103 votes in the Grand Lodge Charities.

The lodge is a Patron of the Aged Widows Annuity Fund, a Vice Patron of the Fortescue Annuity Fund and the Devon Education Fund.

The total contributions of the lodge and the Brethren to the various charities amounts to over £1,700

We have £300 invested in war stock, £104 in the Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd., and £100 on deposit.

50 Guineas was subscribed to the Million Memorial Fund.

This historical survey was printed on a card, on the reverse side of which was printed the menu for the celebration dinner which followed the lodge meeting. The menu being;

Hors d'Oeuvres
Mulligatawny Soup
Roast Turkey
Baked Potatoes
Green Peas
Christmas Pudding
Fruit Mould

A specimen of this card giving the historical survey and the menu is attached to the page in the minute book.

The W.Master, W.Bro.E.M.Foster then concluded his address to the Brethren as follows; some months ago I felt that I should like to mark this evening in some special manner and it occurred to me that a Volume of the Sacred Law would be a very desirable addition seeing that for 21 years we have been using one belonging to St. John the Baptist Lodge No. 39, our Mother lodge, to whom we are most grateful for the loan. I approached my two Wardens BRO.A.E.Wilkins and Bro.F.L.Wilkins and they readily agreed to share with me in the gift of this beautiful Volume. I should like to add our sincere thanks to W.Bro.F.A.F.Coles P.P.G.T. for his generosity in embossing the cover with the name and number of the lodge and for the beautiful illuminated inscription under the cover The W.Master then handed the Volume of the Sacred Law to the Right Worshipful Grand Master who opened it and placed it on the Pedestal, at the same time reciting the following prayer; Almighty God. Great Architect and Ruler of the Universe who hast directed the sun, moon and stars in their courses and controlled and ordered the mighty forces of Nature we offer Thee our thanks that Thou hast laid down for us in the Volume of the Sacred Law such rules for our conduct in this life that our Brethren in Masonry and Mankind in general may be the better for our examples and finally bring us to the Grand Lodge above." So Mote It Be.

It is this Volume of the Sacred Law that is in regular use in the lodge on nine meetings of the year. It is also worthy of note that the bookmark used in the V.S.L. incorporates a Founders Jewel. The book is now fifty three years old and as such can be regarded as being of value not only for its antiquity but also it's place in the lodge artifacts. It must not be forgotten that the lodge also possesses another Volume of the Sacred Law which is only brought out for use on two occasions in the year, the Installation lodge in February and Domestic night in January. This highly prized possession of the lodge, is the John Stocker Bible which was given to our First Master, by his Mother, on the occasion of his Twenty First birthday in 1869.

After greetings had been received from 39 lodges by the W.Master the Prov.G.Master took the chair and addressed the Brethren. He said how glad he was to have been given the opportunity to take part in the unique ceremony just completed and to join with members of St. Thomas Lodge in

this celebration of the lodge's consecration. He apologised for his indisposition at the service the previous day, held in Alphington Church. He was impressed by the W.Masters summary of the lodge and paid tribute to the late Deputy Prov.G.Master, W.Bro. John Stocker whose talks, wisdom, loving care, brotherly sympathy, advice and reproofs had made for better Masonry. He knew from personal contacts the love and affection the late D.P.G.M. had for St. Thomas Lodge. He, the Prov. G.Master, was glad to learn that the lodge had gone forward without friction during its existence. The fact that only 70 initiations had taken place showed how careful the lodge had been in its choice of members. He congratulated the lodge on its support of Masonic charities both central and local.

They were gathered together that evening to congratulate the lodge on its past and express good wishes for its future. The lodge would be encouraged by the rehearsal of those virtues and instil in them fresh determination to continue. He thanked the Rector of Alphington, W.Bro.B.C. Bennett P.A.G.C. for the use of his church and the excellent address given and the opportunity it gave for the Re-Consecration and Re-Dedication of the members prior to tonights ceremony. He concluded by thanking the W.Master on his arrangements for the Service and the Emergency Lodge and for all he was doing for Masonry in general.

The lodge was then closed in peace, order and harmony at 7.25pm. The Prov.G.Master then recited the prayer for absent Brethren serving in the Armed Sarvices.

Following the lodge meeting a dinner was partaken in the dining room at Gandy Street at which 84 Brethren sat down.

This then was a fitting climax to the end of the year of 1941, the lodge had become of age and despite the problems and ravages of war it was going from strength to strength and increasing in numbers.

The year of 1942 started in the usual manner of the lodge meeting of Wednesday 14th. January being the usual business of electing the Master for the coming year along with the lodge Officers. At this meeting however the W.Master had the sad task of announcing the death of W.Bro. Henry Stocker Prov.G.Secretary, the brother of W.Bro. John Stocker our first Master. He went on to say that W.Bro. H.enry Stocker had given over fifty years service to Freemasonry in the province.

The year progressed with the Installation lodge being held in the presence of the Prov.G.Master on the 11th. February. March and April lodges being held without incident, but it was a completely different situation in the month of May. It was in the early hours of the morning of the 4th. May 1942 that the war came to Exeter. German bombers flew up the estuary and carried out a Baedeker raid upon the city. These air raids were carried out by the Luftwaffe, indiscriminately bombing English towns and cities of outstanding beauty rather than industrial importance. The name of Baedeker came from the fact that the targets of these raids were chosen from a pre-war travel guide written by Herr Baedeker in which he described the Gems of English Architecture and English cities such as Exeter, Coventry, Bath Etc. The raid on Exeter lasted some two and a half hours, during which the German High Command claimed to have dropped 1000 bombs. Be that as it may, as well as causing 80 fatalities and over 100 injured, extensive damage was caused to Churches, shopping premises and over 1000 houses were completely destroyed. Dellers Cafe was one of the completely destroyed buildings, St. Thomas Lodge would never hold a Festive Board there again. One of the buildings to be slightly damaged in this air raid was the Masonic Hall in Gandy St. the roof of the building receiving slight damage, but in addition a large amount of water damage was sustained making the whole of the premises untenable for some time to come. It was as a result of this damage that the lodge meeting of 13th. May could not be held, this was the first time that St. Thomas Lodge failed to meet as planned.

It was due to the efforts of the Prov.G.Master the Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of Crediton and the generosity and understanding of the Dean of Exeter that the June lodge was able to take place, the lodge being held in the Great Hall of the Deanery in Cathedral Close on Wednesday 10th. June. Needless to say that a dispensation from the Prov. G.Master was required in order that the lodge could be held at this alternative venue. It was at this June lodge meeting that the acting W.Master informed the Brethren that as the result of the air raid the roof of the Temple had been set on fire and it was only the prompt and courageous action of the Stewardess and her husband that the fire was extinguished and so further extensive damage was prevented. However the lodge room would not be tenable for some considerable time.

The acting W.Master, W.Bro.E.M.Foster then went on to explain the reason for the absence of W.Bro.A.E.Wilkins. W.Bro. Wilkins wife had recently been very ill and the shock of the air raid had brought on a relapse which had necessitated Mrs. Wilkins to be taken away from Exeter in order to recover. The acting W.Master then went on to remark that although no member of St. Thomas lodge had been injured in the raid some had seen their homes suffer damage. He therefore requested any Brother who had changed address, even if only temporarily, to inform the Secretary of their new address. The acting W.Master then referred to impending wedding of the Rev. B.C.Bennett, a founder member of the lodge and the Secretary was instructed to write and convey the congratulations and best wishes of the Officers and Brethren of the lodge. The next labour of the evening was to pass a Bro. Leslie J.Liddon to the Second degree or that of a Fellow Craft Freemason. War or no war, nothing was going to stop St Thomas Lodge from carrying out its Masonic duties. Before the lodge was closed W.Bro.G.A.Jackson gave notice of motion that at the next regular stated lodge he would propose, That the sum of Ten Guineas be voted from the lodge funds to the Mayor of Exeter's Air Raid Distress Fund.

The lodge meeting of Wednesday 8th. July 1942 took place in the Great Hall, The Deanery, Cathedral Close due to the Temple at Gandy Street still being untenable. At this meeting Bro.Liddon was raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. Under the circumstances existing at the time Bro. Liddon can be deemed to have partaken in a unique ceremony. How many other Exeter Freemasons were Initiated, Passed or Raised in such an eminent room? Following the ceremony W.Bro.L.Jones stated that at the next Regular Stated Lodge that he would propose that Ten Guineas be voted from the lodge funds to Bro. and Mrs Cause, Steward and Stewardess of the Gandy St. premises, as a mark of appreciation of the wonderful work they did in saving so much of the lodge rooms during the recent air raid. W.Bro.G.A. Jackson proposed that the Secretary be instructed to write a letter to Bro.M.H.Buller (serving with H.M.Forces) on his forthcoming marriage and offer him the lodge's congratulations and best wishes. Also to write to the other Brethren serving with H.M.Forces to let them know the lodge was carrying on.

The final lodge meeting to be held in the Great Hall at the Deanery was an emergency lodge meeting called for Friday 7th. August 1942, this was for the purpose of passing Bro.Clifford A.Reynolds, who was serving with H.M.Forces and was on leave. Bro. Reynolds having been initiated into the lodge in April. This now brought the total number of brethren serving in the armed forces to five. The need to call an emergency lodge, and on a month when the the lodge did not normally meet suggests that ceremonies had to be conducted when it was at all possible due to the contingencies of the war situation.

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 9th. September the W.Master, W.Bro.A.E.Wilkins had the sad task of informing the Brethren of the death of the Grand Master M.W.Bro. H.R.H. The Duke of Kent, our present Grand Master's Father. The late Duke of Kent was a serving officer in the Royal Air Force and met his death as the result of an air crash in Scotland. Needless to say this was met with dismay and the Brethren paid tribute in the usual manner among Masons. At this lodge meeting there occurred an unusual, though not unheard of occasion, in that a ballot took place for a candidate for initiation and this ballot was immediately followed by the initiation of the candidate, a Bro.Charles Evans, a Master Printer aged 46 years. as brother Evans was not serving in the Forces the ceremony can be regarded as unusual if not indeed unique. In accordance with the notice of motion to vote the sum of Ten Guineas to Bro. and Mrs. Cause W.Bro. L.Jones proposed and Bro.J.J.L.Gore seconded the motion and this was duly carried. And so closed the first lodge meeting to be held after the repairs to the wartime damage to the Temple had been carried out. The lodge was back at Home!

At the November lodge meeting a ballot was taken for a joining member who had been proposed the previous month. This was for Bro. Alexander Duncan, a subscribing member of Carribee Lodge No. 2829 and St. Georges Lodge No.3421, Dominica. The ballot was sucessful and Bro. Duncan was welcomed to the lodge by the W.Master. It can only be supposed that here was an example of the war bringing Brethren from different countries together in somewhat unusual circumstances.

The year of 1942 came to a close without any further events of an unusual nature occurring within the lodge.

The New year commenced with an emergency lodge meeting being called for on Tuesday 5th. January 1943. This was for the purpose of Raising Bro. C.Reynolds, who was serving as a Captain in the Armed Forces and who obviously was on leave and therefore available for this important event in his Masonic career to take place. No festive Board took place after this raising ceremony, and the minutes show that the lodge opened at 6pm. and was closed at 7.35pm., there being no other labours to undertake. The normal January lodge meeting was held on the 13th. day of the month at which, in addition to the usual business of electing the forthcoming Master two ballots were taken for candidates for initiation. It would seem that 1943 was not going to see any reduction in the normal activities of the lodge. At this meeting the W.Master referred to the honour that had been conferred on Bro.A.E.Rowsell, Chief Constable of Exeter, by His Majesty the King. No reference is made to the Honour conferred nor to reason for its bestowal. It can only be conjecture that it was for some recognition of a deed or deeds carried out during the blitz upon the City in May 1942. After the greetings had been given by visiting Brethren, Bro. A.G.Chanter said that he had received an Airgraph from Bro. W.Leaker conveying his good wishes to the W.M. Officers and Brethren. As a matter of interest, an Airgraph was a letter written on a special form limited to two pages by which servicemen serving overseas, and their families could communicate with one another. The letter having been written and addressed to form was then photographed. By this method large numbers of letters could be sent overseas or brought back to this country on a single roll of film, the film was then processed and the letters were then delivered to the relevant address. W.Bro.A.E.Jackson also conveyed to the lodge the best wishes of Bro.M.H.Buller. Both Bro.Leaker and Bro. Buller serving in the forces.

W.Bro. E.M.Foster then presented to the lodge, on behalf of Bro. F.Webber of the Bermuda Lodge, a metal plaque of the Coat of Arms of the City of Exeter, made on board H.M.S. Exeter just before her loss in the historic battle of the River Plate

W.Bro.L.Jones had this plaque chromium plated and mounted and Bro.F.L. Wilkins had it suitably inscribed. In accepting this very interesting memento on behalf of the lodge, the W.Master said it was the warm welcome extended by the St. Thomas Lodge to him on his visits to the city, which prompted Bro. Webber to show his appreciation in this way. The older Brethren in the lodge will no doubt remember the battle of the River Plate. To the younger Brethren may I please give a short explanation. The battle of the River Plate was the first major sea battle of the second world war. In late autumn 1939 the German pocket battleship, Admiral Graff Spee, a sister ship to the Bismark and the Turpitz, was engaged in combat by the three light cruisers, H.M.S. Ajax, Exeter and H.M.N.Z.S. Achilles in the South Atlantic. After a severe battle the Graff Spee fled into the harbour of Montevideo, Uruguay, South America. Under international law the vessel had to leave the protection of a neutral country after having been granted time to carry out temporary repairs. On leaving the shelter of the harbour, proceeding downstream to the estuary of the river and out to sea, where the two remaining cruisers were waiting to resume the battle. The captain of the Graff Spee scuttled the warship and then committed suicide by shooting himself rather than, on the one hand continue the fight with a battle damaged ship, or on the other hand return to harbour and face internment for the duration of the war. This plaque now has a place on the wall of the bar, at Gandy Stret, to the left of the fireplace. Here then, with the presence of this plaque, is yet another artifact to be treasured as being part of the history of not only the lodge but the city as well.

The installation meeting of Wednesday 10th, February 1943 was to be remembered by its unique nature. The Installing Master, W.Bro. A.E. Wilkins had the unusual, but very pleasant task of installing his Son, Bro. F.L.Wilkins, Senior Warden, as his successor to the Chair of King Solomon. Is this an occasion unique in the history of the Province or even the country?

Another unusual practice, due to the exigencies of the war forcing deviations from standard practice to take place, the minutes of the May lodge meeting contain the following entry. The W.Master reported that owing to Bro. Reynolds being unable to attend lodge meetings due to his service in the Armed Forces, the W.Master had presented him with his Grand Lodge Certificate outside of the lodge at a private meeting. The W.Master went on to say that Bro. Reynolds had signed his certificate in the presence of the W.Master and also the Immediate Past Master. By taking this course of action a Brother had received his just due and the constitution of the Brotherhood had been adhered to.

The year progressed towards its close without any unusual occurrences or ceremonies taking place and the December lodge meeting took place with the A.G.Chap. W.Bro. Prep. B.C.Bennett, a Founder member reading a paper entitled; "Masonic Mysteries". The Secretary reported that he had received a letter from the P.G.Secretary saying that the P.G.M. had given permission for the January lodge meeting to be held on Monday the 10th instead of Wed. the 12th. of the month. No reason is given for this change of date.

The January 1944 lodge meeting took place with the usual business of the lodge domestic night taking place. I.E. The election of the Master Elect and the election of the Treasurer, Charity Steward and Tyler as usual, for the forthcoming year. The following month saw the installation of the Master Elect, Bro. W.J.Shapland, but not before ballots had been taken for a joining member to the lodge, also two candidates for initiation. Once again St. Thomas Lodge was showing that in spite of the difficulties of the period, it was not prepared to stand on one side when Masonic work had to be done.

The month of March 1944 was of particular interest in that the regular stated lodge meeting held on Wednesday 8th. March for the purpose of initiating a new Brother into the Craft. An Emergency Lodge meeting was called for Wednesday, 22nd. March for the Passing of a Brother who was a member of the United States Navy serving in this country. The remarkable story of Brother William Henry Hill's initiation into Freemasonry is that: He was proposed and balloted for in the Keystone Lodge No.778, Montgomery Alabama, U.S.A. and initiated in the Mother Kilwinning Lodge, Scottish Constitution.

Before putting the questions to the candidate the W.Master made the following address to Bro. Hill and the Brethren. "Bro. Hill. I feel I must direct your attention to the unique circumstances under which this Emergency Lodge is called. It is the first time in the history of the St Thomas Lodge that we have had a candidate from another country, an English speaking nation, the great United States of America. The occasion is also unique in the fact that Bro. Hill was proposed in Keystone Lodge No. 778 Montgomery, Alabama, initiated in the Mother Kilwinning Lodge holden under Scottish Constitution, and now comes to the St. Thomas Lodge to be passed, and we hope, at some future date to be raised. We are grateful to Grand Lodge, and through them, Provincial Grand Lodge, for the honour in allowing our lodge to take part in this unique ceremony. We are seeing the international meaning of Freemasonry. Masonry universal is no longer a figure of speech but a living example of its true meaning. You, Bro. Hill, will remember this day, as a very special one in your Masonic career. We extend to you, a very warm welcome to this very much bombed city, and particularly to this building which did not escape the insane fury of our common enemy. Our Temple was badly damaged in the raid of May 1942, and the room we are now using was our refreshment room. But the spirit of Masonry lives on, and may you, and every Brother present this evening, so dedicate his life and actions, so to make those great principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth not only a part of his Masonic Duties, but to spread its principles abroad, so that War and all that it means, is banished from the face of the Earth".

Brother Hill was then examined, entrusted and subsequently passed to the second degree or that of a Fellow Craft Freemason.

The regular stated lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 12th. April was a rather tame affair following the emergency lodge meeting the previous month, an initiation took place of a Mr. Herbert Thomas Howe. However on the 21st. of the month it was the occasion of yet another emergency lodge meeting, this time to raise Brother Hill to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. Before commencing the ceremony the W. Master welcomed Bro. Hill who had been unwell and expressed his pleasure at his recovery.

The W.Master extended a warm welcome to all visitors to the lodge especially the following Brethren who had obviously accompanied Bro. Hill.

Bro. Roscoe C.Hodge. Roosevelt Lodge No.510. Pontiac. Mich.

Bro. Charles W.Ott. Gate of the Temple Jerusalem Lodge No.506.

Bro. Anton Landig. Gate of the Temple Jerusalem Lodge No.506.

The ceremony of raising Bro. Hill was carried out, and the St. Thomas Lodge had once again made history not only for itself but for Masonry in general.

At the May lodge meeting a double passing ceremony was to have taken place but the W.Master announced that one of the Brothers to be passed was unavoidably absent and therefore an emergency lodge would have to be called. Sure enough, an emergency lodge meeting was called for Thursday 1st. June for the purpose of raising the Bro. absent at the May lodge. It would seem that St. Thomas Lodge was as busy during the war years as it is today and enjoyed a full calendar such as we do today.

At the July lodge meeting the W.Master had the unhappy task of informing the Brethren that the lodge Treasurer, W.Bro.H.E.Bradley P.P.D.G.D.C. had passed to the Grand Lodge above, and paid great tribute to him for his many years of service to the lodge in particular and to Freemasonry in general. The W.Master also referred to the very anxious time that Bro. H.L.Jones had been under going, his son had been torpedoed and as a result had suffered a double fracture of the leg as well as swallowing a considerable quantity of oil whilst floating in the sea before being rescued. On a much lighter note the W.Master read to the Brethren a letter which had been received from the Keystone Lodge, Montgomery, Alabama. U.S.A. thanking the W.Master and Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge for their hospitality to the Brethren of Keystone Lodge and for Passing and Raising Bro. Hill. This letter is attached to the page of the minute book. The latter months of 1944 passed without any undue circumstances arising to mar the programme of the lodge. Two emergency lodge meetins having been called, one in October the other in December. Both for the purpose of Raising Brothers in the lodge. No mention is made of seeking or receiving dispensation from P.G.L.

It can only be assumed that standard policy of obtaining dispensation was discontinued during the war due to lodges having to work at extreme short notice due to wartime conditions.

The year of 1945 started in the usual manner for St. Thomas Lodge in that the Master for the forthcoming year was elected along with the Treasurer, Charity Steward and the Tyler. Also at this lodge meeting W.Bro. A.E. Wilkins presented to the W.Master on behalf of the St. Thomas Lodge a beautiful engraved Inner Guard sword to mark the Installation of the Immediate Past Master, and in his remarks said, " It is a very unusual thing for a Father to instal his Son, and I wanted to mark it in some way, and this is what I wished to do." This sword, which is inscribed with the names of Father and Son together with the appropriate date is now to be found outside the door of the Temple, where it is used by the Tyler to ward off all Cowans and non-masons.

At the Installation lodge meeting on Wednesday 14th. February, an interesting item was that in addition to, the usual presentation of a Past Masters Jewel to the Immediate Past Master, the I.P.M. was presented with a list of the Past Masters, Officers and Brethren of the lodge also the gift of a Tea Trolley, Tea Set and an electric kettle which was to be presented at a later date. In his reply, when thanking the members of the lodge for their splendid gift, the I.P.M. said that during his year of office the lodge had met sixteen times. Could this be a record number of meetings held in the space of a year?

The year progressed toward late spring and the lodge meeting of Wednesday 9th. May was notable by it being the first meeting to be held following the end of the war in Europe and the signing of the Surrender Declaration by the German High Command on 5th. May. At this lodge meeting the W.Master, W.Bro. C.E. McGahey, addressed the lodge as follows: "Brethren. When W.Bro. G.A. Jackson was W.Master of the St. Thomas Lodge in 1940 he had hopes that the War would end during his year of office. Subsequent Masters have hoped and prayed that peace would crown their year as Master. It has fallen to my proud lot to be able to welcome peace in Europe very early in my year. A number of Brethren thought we should postpone this ceremony to another evening, and many are absent owing to duties connected with the peace celebrations, or are attending thanksgiving services. I felt I should like to hold our lodge this evening and be the first to take place in this building after the end of hostilities in Europe, and thereby write a page of history in the already illustrious annals of the St. Thomas Lodge.

We like many lodges throughout the Country have maintained our meetings through the darkest days of war, when our shores were threatened by the enemy, and air raids, and I thought it only right that we should hold this, our regular lodge on V.E. plus one day, 18 hours after fighting ceased in Europe.

Before we commence the business of the evening I would like you to stand to order for a few minutes and pour out our thankful hearts to the Great Architect of the Universe for the success granted to our armies and those of our allies. For the courage, fortitude and endurance of our Solders, Sailors and Airmen, men of the Merchant Navy, Civil Defence and all who were in any way concerned in bringing this bloody conflict to a peaceful conclusion. For the wonderful example set by His Gracious Majesty and his Queen, for His guidance and fortitude to our Ministers of State, and those who planned and directed the final overthrow of the Nazi tyranny. I would like you to remember the sick and wounded. Those who have made the supreme sacrifice. Particularly I would like you to think for a moment of those who mourn for loved ones who will not return. Whilst you are on your feet I would like you, also, to remember the late Franklyn Delano Roosevelt. A man who has done more than anyone to unite the two great English speaking nations. A man who has won the admiration of the whole world by his courage and steadfastness of purpose in support of the oppressed. One of the greatest advocates of the four freedoms. A man who has won the love and affection of everyone by his fight against an incurable disease without sparing himself in the cause of the underdog. I was proud to find only a few days ago that Franklyn D. Roosevelt was a member of our order."

The Brethren stood to order in the usual Masonic manner. The first verse of the National Anthem was then sung by the Brethren. The normal business of the lodge then proceeded with the W. Master extending a warm welcome to a joining member, a Bro. A.F. Dee-Shapland. Also at this lodge meeting a double passing ceremony was carried out. The final labour of this eventful evening was the proposal as a joining member to the lodge of Bro. Alfred Spencer Howard, Superintendent headmaster of the West of England Institute for the Blind, St. Davids Hill, Exeter, a subscribing member of the East Norfolk Lodge No. 5496, Gt. Yarmouth.

The minutes of the lodge meeting held on the 13th. June 1945 record that a service of Thanksgiving for Victory in Europe was held by the lodge at St. Davids Church on Sunday 3rd. June, the W.Master thanked the Officers and Brethren of the lodge for their magnificent support in attending this service. As was the normal practice at every lodge meeting, the prayer for absent Brethren serving in the armed forces was recited by the W.Master whilst the Brethren stood to order. Also, as was customary throughout the war, these serving Brethren were named in the minutes of every meeting as offering their apologies for their absence.

At the July lodge meeting the W.Master welcomed the return of Bro.J.W. Willey who had been serving with H.M.Forces throughout the war. Bro. Willey was invested with the collar of lodge Secretary, this duty having been carried out during Bro. Willeys sbsence by the Asst.Secretary, Bro.E.A.Ash. A feature of the lodge summons up to this date being that Bro. Willey had been shown to be lodge Secretary on the summons but beneath his name had appeared the note, within brackets, that he was on active service. Also at this lodge meeting the W.Master invested the Chief Constable of Exeter, Bro. A.E.Rowsell, with the collar of Steward. It can only be assumed that the pressure of his position during the war must have been responsible for the delay in Bro. Rowsell taking up lodge offices. Also at this lodge meeting the W.Master informed the Brethren that for the last six years the Lodge Charter had been deposited in a place of safe keeping in case of loss through enemy action. Now that hostilities in Europe had ceased the Charter had been returned and would be at all meetings of the lodge in future. This report explains the reason for the photograph of the lodge Charter mentioned in an earlier chapter of this history.

Before the lodge was opened on Wednewday 12th. September 1945 the W. Master made the following announcement: "Brethren. Since our last regular stated lodge, Japan has accepted unconditional surrender and war throughout the world has ceased. Before commencing the business of the evening, I am sure it is your wish that we should pause for a few moments in silence, and offer our grateful thanks to the Great Architect of the Universe for the success granted to our Armies, and those of our Allies, and may we wish for the whole world an abiding peace, where Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth prevail. Let us remember those to whom the end of the war does not mean the end of suffering. Those who mourn for loved ones who will not return. And finally those who have made the supreme sacrifice, that peace may come again into the world. Brethren to order". One verse of the National Anthem was sung.

Before the business of the evening was commenced the W.Master welcomed all visitors to the lodge especially those who had returned from service with the forces. He also welcomed W.Bro. Vincent Thompson, the Mayor of Exeter. The W.Master also expressed his pleasure in welcoming W.Bro. Rabillward, Master of Channel Island Lodge and wished him a happy year of office.

At the October lodge meeting W.Bro. E.M.Foster outlined the proposals for the entertaining, by the lodge, of wounded soldiers. Fifty were to be taken to a matinee performance at the Theatre Royal on 8th. November and afterwards be given High Tea in the Theatre Cafe. Following this there would be entertainment provided at the United Services Club. At the November lodge meeting the W.Master reported that £39.00 had been raised by the Brethren for the entertainment of the wounded soldiers and he thanked the Brethren for their magnificent effort. £32.00 pounds had been expended and the balance would be used to provide a gift for bedridden wounded soldiers at Christmas. The W.Master then went on to inform the Brethren that special dispensation had been applied for to hold the December lodge meeting on Friday 21st. December, it being St.Thomas Day and the 25th. anniversary of the Consecration of the lodge. He added that a service of Re-Dedication had been organised at St. Michaels and All Angels Church, Alphington, to be held on Sunday, 23rd. December the W.Master then referred to the pleasure it gave him to be able to sit in the original Chair of the Lodge and instructed the Secretary to write to the Directors of Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd. thanking them for the care taken of them during the war and expressing pleasure at their restoration to their former place in the lodge. It can be assumed from this statement that the principle chairs in the lodge had been removed to a safe place during the war to guard against damage or loss due to enemy action. As these chairs are of considerable age, being well over one hundred years, as well as being of some high value in cash terms this safeguard was only to be expected. Later research revealed that the chairs were stored in the care of Lady Heathcoat Emery at Knighthayes Court, Tiverton. The minutes of this December lodge meeting show that the last remaining Brother to be absent due to service in the Armed Forces was Bro.M.H.Buller, the other Brethren having been demobilised and returned to their homes.

The year of 1945 ended with the Anniversary Lodge meeting held, as planned on Friday 21st. December, St. Thomas Day. The Provincial Grand Master, the Lord Bishop of Crediton, The V.Rev. Bishop Surtees was present together with the Asst. P.G.M. and other Provincial Grand Officers. The special dispensation to hold the meeting on this day instead of the normal date was read, the lodge was then opened with Antient Ceremony and Prayer. Following the reading of the minutes of the last regular stated lodge and their confirmation and signing, the minutes of the Consecration Meeting were read by W.Bro. L.Jones. P.P.G.W. a Founder Member of the lodge and also the first Secretary of the lodge. Following this reading the W.Master referred to the Divine Service of Thanksgiving and Re-Dedication which was to take place in St. Michaels and All Angels, Alphington on Sunday 23rd. December and said he hoped the Brethren would make a special effort to attend. After expressing great pleasure at seeing several Brothers present in the lodge after having been absent through sickness, notably two Founder Brothers, namely W.Bro. W.R.Brealy and W.Bro. W.B. Trick. The W.Master then read a short historical survey of the lodge. This survey appears in the Commemorative card printed to mark the occasion. This card also contains details such as; lodge attendances for the past seven years, charities to which the lodge subscribes, a list of Founder members of the lodge together with their Lodge Office and finally the list of lodge Officers for the year 1945-46. A specimen of this Commemorative card is attached to the minutes of the lodge meeting along with a copy of the Order of Service held on the 23rd. December. The W.Master reported that the quarterly communication had been received from Grand Lodge and drew the attention of the Brethren to the instruction that war time emergency measures had now been withdrawn. He also stated that the photographic copy of Grand Lodge warrant must be returned to the Provincial Grand Secretary. The W.Master then presented the three photostat copies that were in his possession to the Prov.G.Secretary. And so the year closed with the membership of the St. Thomas Lodge being a total of 101 Brethren.

The year 1946 started with the January lodge meeting conducting its normal business of electing the forthcoming Master of the lodge along with the other elected Officers. Two ballots for initiation into the lodge were taken at this lodge meeting, one unfortunately being unfavourable. This was the first time in the lodge's existence that a ballot had to be so declared. However it shows that the lodge was extremely careful whom it was prepared to admit to its membership. At this lodge meeting the W.Master expressed his thanks to the Brethren for their support at the Church Service held at Alphington church on the 23rd. of the previous month. A letter from W.Bro. Preb. B.C.Bennett, PPGC. apologising for his absence from the lodge also contained his thanks to the Brethren for their attendance. The collection at this service raised Five pounds which was donated to the Exeter Cathedral Restoation Fund.

The Installation lodge meeting was held on Wednesday 13th. February in the presence of the Assistant Prov. Grand Master. W.Bro. H.H.G.New, P.G.D. This lodge meeting was notable by the fact that no other business, other than that conducted on all other installation meetings in modern times took place. On some occasions in the past years ballots for initiation of new members and also ballots for joining members to the lodge had been known to have taken place prior to the Installation of the Master Elect. The W.Master W.Bro. J.E.Harvey presented the I.P.M. with a Past Masters Jewel adding that a present from the W.M., Officers and Brethren of the lodge would be given at a later date.

The early spring meetings of the lodge passed without outstanding events occurring but the June lodge meeting was notable that the W.Master was very pleased to be able to extend a very warm and sincere welcome to the last Brother of the lodge to return from service in the Armed Forces. This was Bro. M.H.Buller who had served throughout the duration of the war in the Royal Artillery with the rank ,on his demobilisation, of captain. The Secretary reported that he had received the quarterly communication from United Grand Lodge and went on to report that Grand Lodge had made comment upon the irregularities with regard to the admission of a candidate. This irregularity referrred to Rule 158 Book of Constitutions. This Rule was duly read by the Secretary to open lodge. Another paragraph from the quarterly communications was read referring to Brethren who had taken part in any form of National Service. The Secretary asked all Brthren to whom this notice applied to give him full details.

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 10th. July 1946, the lodge summons shows an item that appears to be yet another first for the St Thomas Lodge. That being the explanation of the Master Masons Apron. Although numerous references are made, in the minute books of explanations of the Grand Lodge Certificate this is the first mention of the Master Masons Apron. The explanation of the Apron was given by W.Bro.G.A.Jackson to Bro.G.W. Heywood immediately after W.Bro. Jackson had invested Bro. Heywood with his apron. At this lodge meeting W.Bro.E.M.Foster, Charity Steward read a report of the amounts subscribed and promised for the 1947 Festival, he also read the names of those Brethren who qualified as Stewards and reminded them that they needed to submit their names together with the necessary fee before the end of the month.

At the September lodge meeting the W.Master had the sad task of informing the Brethren of the loss to the Province of Devonshire in general and Exeter in particular, by the death of W.Bro.W.A.Rampton, P.P.A.G.D.C., Prov.G.Tyler. W.Bro Rampton had served the St. Thomas Lodge as Tyler since its Consecration and he would be greatly missed by the Brethren. To stand outside the door of the lodge protecting it from all dangers and admitting only those having a right to admission, for almost twenty six years is no mean feat. The Brethren showed their sympathy by standing to order in the usual manner among Masons. Following the initiation of a new Brother into the lodge, a Mr. Robert Dyer, the Secretary read a paragraph from the quarterly communication from United G.Lodge. This reported on the suspension of a Brother who had irregularly proposed a candidate for initiation. The Secretary then requested all Brethren to return the slips giving details of their National Service as soon as possible in order that a complete record could be compiled. This request it must be stressed was not a lodge or Provincial request but one that had been made by United Grand Lodge.

At the November lodge meeting the W.Master stated that the Brethren would no doubt be very pleased to be meeting again in the original Lodge Room and asked the Secretary to write to the Directors expressing the appreciation of the Brethren for the quick and thorough manner in which the restoration work had been performed. It can only be assumed from this announcement that the repair work necessary to restore the Temple following the damage sustained during the blitz had at last been completed.

The final lodge meeting of 1946 saw two joining members being successfully balloted for in addition to three candidates for initiation into the lodge, being approved. Also at this meeting the Charity Steward W.Bro. E.M.Foster reported that the total sum promised for the 1947 Festival was now £830, and proposed that a sum not exceeding £38 should be added from the Charity Stewards Fund to the total standing to the lodge to bring this total to the sum of 200 Guineas. This proposition was seconded by the Secretary Bro.J.J.L. Gore, this proposition was duly carried. The annual returns made to United G.Lodge showed a total membership of 103 subscribing Brethren, there having been three resignations and sadly the death of two Brothers during the year.

The January 1947 lodge meeting saw the start of the new year with the successful balloting of the three candidates approved at the previous lodge meeting. The usual business of a Domestic Night was duly conducted and the Senior Warden, Bro.J.J.Brewer was duly elected Master Elect. Following the other business of electing Treasurer, Tyler and other lodge Officers the Secretary Bro.J.J.L.Gore read a report to the lodge, the title of this report being "Freemasonry and the War". This report had been prepared by the Secretary from the information Brethren had supplied in answer to a request made by United G.Lodge. The Secretary stated that in complying with instructions received from United G.Lodge, one copy had been sent to U.G.L., one to Prov. G.Lodge and one had been retained by the lodge and inserted into the minutes of this lodge meeting. This report, in an unabridged form is as follows:

The St. Thomas Lodge No.4198.

Report on Freemasonry and the War.

1. LODGE MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCES.

Throughout the war only two Regular Stated Lodge Meetings were not held. Following the outbreak of war, the Regular Stated Lodge due to be held on the 13th. September, 1939, was cancelled. No Regular Stated Lodge was held in May 1942, as during the raid on Exeter on the morning of the 4th. May, the roof of the Temple was damaged by fire, and other parts of the Masonic Hall, Gandy St., Exeter, were damaged by water and falling debris. As a result of the raid many Brethren suffered material loss, but no one suffered personal injury.

By kind permission of the Very Rev. Dean of Exeter, and through the good offices of the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, the Regular Stated Lodge Meetings of the 10th. of

June and the 8th. July, 1942 were held in The Great Hall, The Deanery, Exeter. An Emergency Lodge meeting was also held in the Great Hall of the Deanery on the 7th. August 1942.

From September 1942 until November 1946 Regular Stated Lodge Meetings were held at the Freemasons Hall, Gandy St., the Refreshment Room being used as the Temple. The first Refreshment Board to be held by the lodge after the raid of 1942 was that held after the lodge meeting on the 13th. January 1943, the Reading Room having been converted into a Dining Room.

No air attack took place during lodge meetings. Sirens were sounded on several occasions but no raids followed.

The form attached shows the attendance at all lodges from September, 1938 to July 1945, and it can be seen that the attendance of the lodge Members was not greatly reduced by war. The lowest attendances were recorded in the second half of 1942 when, following the raid on Exeter in May, several Brethren were compelled to reside outside the city owing to damage to their residence, while others were engaged on Civil Defence duties.

2. PASSING and RAISING of an AMERICAN BROTHER

Emergency lodges were held on the 22nd. March and the 21st. April 1944, to pass and raise Brother William Henry Hill of the United States Navy. These ceremonies were performed at the request of Keystone Lodge, No. 778 (American Constitution), Montgomery, Alabama, Brother Hill had been initiated in Mother Kilwinning Lodge, No. 0 (Scottish Constitution). A letter dated the 26th. June 1944, was received from Brother Walter L. Harrison Secretary of the Keystone Lodge, in which he wrote:- We are grateful to you and the Brothers of your Lodge for the attitude and courtesies shown us in the conferring of the Fellowcraft and Master Mason degrees on, our Brother William Henry Hill, in the U.S. Navy. The process involved in this case seems quite unique to us, aside from the fact that he has received the degrees under very hazardous circumstances.

3. ARMISTICE WITH ITALY.

At the end of the Regular Stated Lodge held on the 8th, September, 1943, after the closing of the lodge, the W. Master,

W.Bro.F.L.Wilkins, remarked on the historical event of the day:- Italy had unconditionally surrendered and an Armistice had been granted.

4. END of the WAR in EUROPE.

The Regular stated Lodge held on the 9th. May 1945, was the first meeting to be held at Freemasons Hall after the celebration of the end of hostilities in Europe.

5. NATIONAL SERVICE RECORDS of BRETHREN of the LODGE.

The Armed Services.

W.Bro.B.R.Bulley.

Civil Intelligence Officer, R.A.F. Attached to the Air Ministry. 1939-45.

Bro. J.W.Killey.

H.M. Regular Reserve of Officers, Devon Regiment. Active service on North-West Frontier of India in 1939. Staff Captain G.H.Q. India. 1940. Staff appointments in India, 1941-44. Liason Officer Burgundy District H.Q. and Staff Captain A Control Section, Germany, 1945. Awarded M.B.E. for distinguished service in India.

Bro.M.H.Buller.

Captain (Adjutant) in Royal Artillery. Home service 1940-45. 623 Regiment in France and Belgium, 1945-46. 2227 P.O.W. Camp, Belgium, 1946, France and Germany Star. Defence Medal.

Bro. H. Gayton.

Lieutenant in Royal Engineers. 1939-41.

Bro. E. Restricks.

L.A.C. in Royal Air Force, 1941-45. Overseas service with 283 Sqdn. in Africa, Sicily, Corsica, Malta, Egypt and Italy. Defence Medal, Italy Star, General Service Medal.

Bro. W. Leaker.

L.A.C. in Royal Air Force. 1940-45. Armourer with
38 Sqdn. in North Africa, Greece, Italy.

Africa Star and Clasp, 1939-45 Star, Italy Star.

Bro. C.A.Reynolds.

Captain in Army Dental Corps. 1941-45.

Bro. G.W.Heywood

Royal Marines, Overseas Service in Malta,
North Africa and Sicily.

AIR RAID WARDENS SERVICE.

W.Bro. E. House. Senior Warden 1941 onwards.

W.Bro. F.L.Wilkins. Warden 1940 onwards.

W.Bro. G.J.Pensford. Warden 1941-44.

W.Bro. W.J.Shapland.Group Warden 1938-45.

W.Bro. J.A.Harvey. Warden 1938-45.

Bro. J.J.L.Gore Warden & A.R.P. Instructor. 1938-45.

Bro. A.E.Ash. Officer in Charge of Report and Central Centre,
Exeter. 1939-45. British Empire Medal.

Bro. L.D.Modley. Senior Warden. 1938-45.

Bro. J.W.H.Webb. Group Warden and Bomb Reconnaissance
Officer. 1938-45.

Bro. R.H.Punchard. Warden 1938-45.

Bro. L.G.Spicer. Warden and Chairman Civil Defence
Committee for three parishes 1938-45

Bro. H.V.Clifford. Warden. 1938-45.

Bro. F.S.Kirby. Senior Warden. 1938-45.

Bro. A.Lyner. Head Warden. 1938-45.

Bro. E.Restrict.Senior Warden. 1938-41.

Bro. A.Palfrey. Warden. 1940-45.

Bro. H.H.Edwards. Warden. 1940-45.

Bro. E.M.D.Sclater. Warden. 1941-45.

NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE.

Bro. C.Woodland. Commandant. A.F.S. 1939-41.

Bro. N.F.Richards. Regular Fire Service, 1939-41

Company Officer in N.F.S. from 1941 onwards.

ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS.

W.Bro. C.E.McGahey. Chief Teller. 1939-42.

Bro. M.C.Allard. Observer Officer. Duty Controller.

(Operations Room) No. 21 Group, 1941-45.

Defence Medal.

Bro. E.H. Sargent. Observer. 1940-45.

POLICE FORCE and SPECIAL CONSTABULARY.

Bro. A.E.Rowsell. Chief Constable of Exeter

Awarded O.B.E.

Bro. B.L.Greenslade. Special Constable. Defence and Long
Service Medal.

Bro. J.L. Greet. Superintendent, City of Exeter Police
Force.

Bro. E.H. Picken. Sergeant, Special Constabulary. 1937-45.
Defence and Long Service Medals.

Bro. A.C.Woolway. Special Constable. 1941 onwards.

HOME GUARD.

Bro. W.G. Heywood. Second Lieutenant. 1940-46

Bro. H. Martin. Private. Discharged medically unfit after
short period in service.

Bro. H.L. Jones. Private. 1940-43.

Bro. J. Pickering. Private. 1940-42.

Bro. L.J. Liddon. Corporal. 1943-44.

Bro. H.T. Howe 1940-45.

FIRE GUARD.

Bro. A.V. Angel.		1942-45
Bro. W.T. Symes.		1941-42
W.Bro. F.L.Wilkins.	Senior Officer	1940-45.
Bro. A.J. Foster.	Sector Captain	1940-45.
Bro. R.B. Farmer.		1942-45
Bro. A.G. Chanter		
Bro. F.C. Hill		
Bro. A.V. Hitchcock.		1941-45.
Bro. A. Duncan.	Street Captain.	1941-45.

AIR TRAINING CORPS.

Bro. A. Jewells. Flying Officer. R.A.F. V.R.(T).	1941 onwards.
Bro. R.P. Rowley. Flying Officer.	1941 onwards.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

W.Bro. L. Jones	Manufacture of Munitions	1939-45.
Bro. M. Dymond,	Returned to Civil Service from Retirement.	1940-43.
Bro. R.W. Clarke.	Fire Watcher	1939-45.
W.Bro.W.J.Shapland.	Hon. Secretary of National Savings Group.	
W.Bro. W. Sutton.	Voluntary Fire Watcher.	
Bro. F.C. Hill.	Physiotherapist, Exeter City Hospital	1939-45.
Bro.A.G.Dowell.	Master Coachbuilder. Engaged on Service Dept. Contracts.	
W.Bro. H.F. Johns.	Deputy Food Executive Officer for Exeter.	1939 onwards.
Bro. A.J. Dowell.	Aircraft Production.	1939-45.

A study of this report shows that a total of eight Brethren served in the Armed Forces at some time during the war and not five as has been suggested at other times by older Brethren in the lodge. With regard to the efforts of the lodge towards the war effort and wartime defence work a total of over fifty Brethren played their part in assisting the war effort. This must have been a great source of pride on their part as individuals and an outstanding achievement for a single lodge to have made.

The minutes of the installation meeting held on Wednesday, 12th. February 1947, in addition to recording the Installation of the Incoming W.Master together with the other business associated with an installation meeting, also contain a list of the contributions made by the Brethren to the 1947 Festival. The total contributed by the Brethren amounted to some £867..12s..0. plus £63..19s..0 Stewards Fees giving a grand total for the lodge of £931..11..0. Whilst this may not seem to be a large sum for a Provincial Festival by today's standards £1,759,000 was raised for the Provincial Festival of 1994, it is recorded by the P.G.M. as being the second highest grand total ever contributed to the Royal Masonic Benevolent Fund. The Provincial contribution being £67,027.

The June lodge meeting was marred by the announcement of the death of the Grand Master, The Most Worshipful Earl of Harewood. The Brethren stood to order in the usual way among Masons, following this sad announcement by the Immediate P.Master, W.Bro. J.A.Harvey. The I.P.M. then went on to report that the W.Master, W.Bro.J.J.Brewer was very ill and it would be some time before he was well enough to attend lodge meetings. The I.P.M. then offered the congratulations of the lodge to W.Bro.E.House on his being offered Prov.Office. W.Bro.House suitably replied. The I.P.M. then offered congratulations to Bro.J.J.L.Gore on his appointment as Headmaster of the John Stocker Senior Boys School, and he suitably replied. The Secretary reported that he had received a communication from United G. Lodge from which he read the following extract:- The Board draws the attention to Book of Constitutions Rule No. 239, which enacts that: No Brother shall be admitted into any meeting of Grand Lodge or of any Subordinate Lodge without the clothing appropriate to his rank under the Grand Lodge. For Brethren will not be admitted unless properly clothed. It can only be assumed that this directive was issued following upon one that was sent out earlier in the year, and read by the Secretary at the March 1947 lodge meeting which was as follows: The Board is of opinion that the time has now come to revert to, in all cases, to the rules in the Book of Constitutions, wherever these rules are applicable. It therefore recommends that as from 1st. January 1947 the Directions amplified in the circular of December 1945, be withdrawn, subject to the retention of the request that White gloves should not be worn. The Most Wor. Grand Master wishes it to be known, that he hopes that Masters of lodges, when indicating the dress to be

worn at lodge meetings, will bear in mind the difficulties which exist with regard to evening dress, and make sure that no Brother is put to inconvenience. From these two directives following one upon the other at such a short interval, it would appear that Grand Lodge was doing its utmost to restore the standards upheld pre-war. However it must be remembered that rationing of all descriptions, I.E. Basic Foods, Sweets, Bread, Soap and Clothing, was still very much the order of the day in 1947. In fact some items of food were still the subject of rationing as late as 1952, seven years after the end of the war.

The minutes of the September 1947 lodge meeting have an entry that is a little unusual in that this entry is a full and complete proposal for entry into the lodge made by a candidate for Initiation. A Mr. Thomas Edward Draper, a trade representative, of Exmouth. The entry continues with the declaration made by the Proposer and Seconder, W. Bro. H. Beare and Bro. A. G. Chanter respectively. Stating the time that they have known the Applicant, and vouching for his reputation. The Secretary and Treasurer then retired from the lodge in order that the candidate could sign the declaration and pay the required fees. On their return to the lodge and affirming that the signature and fees had been obtained, Mr. Thomas E. Draper was admitted to the lodge and duly Initiated into the First Degree, or that of an Entered Apprentice Freemason. Proposed, Balloted for and Initiated all in one night! Was this yet another first for the St. Thomas Lodge? Bro. Draper was subsequently passed and raised at the lodge meetings of Oct. and November respectively. At this Nov. meeting the Secretary read a report from United G. Lodge containing three items, these were;

1. The election of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, his Grace the Duke of Devonshire. K.G.
2. The appointment of the Deputy Grand Master, The Right Worshipful, The Earl of Scarborough.
3. That a ~~sum~~ of 500 Guineas was voted from Grand Lodge funds to purchase a suitable gift to H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth on the occasion of Her marriage.

And so 1947 drew to a close without any unusual activities taking place in the lodge

The January 1948 lodge meeting saw the usual domestic night business being conducted, the Master Elect being, as was now the recognised norm, the Senior Warden, Bro. J.W. Killey. M.B.E., two candidates for initiation were balloted for and approved at this lodge meeting, which ensured that the lodge was to have a full programme for the ensuing year.

The Installation lodge meeting took place on Wednesday 11th. February at which, following the Installation of the Master and the Investment of his Officers. The Secretary read from the quarterly communication of Grand Lodge that;_

1. To mark his Installation as Grand Master, The Most W.G.M. had conferred the rank of Past Grand Master upon His Majesty King Gustav V. K.G. the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Sweden.
2. The Special Committee of Benevolence had ceased to exist and the newly constituted Board would take over in December.

An interesting item at the April lodge meeting was that the Secretary read from a letter received from the Royal Masonic Hospital stating that the hospital would retain its independence following the introduction of the National Health Service Act. It may be of some interest to younger Brethren, that before the introduction of the N.H.S. unless an individual contributed to an Insurance scheme, hospital treatment had to be paid for. Dental and Optical Treatment and the services of an Ambulance also had to be paid by the user of these services. So! some may comment what's new? but in late 1948 free medicine was a dream come true for the lower paid section of the community and their dependants.

At the September lodge meeting two items of interest appear in the minutes for that meeting. The first being in the form of congratulations extended, by the W.Master W. Bro., J.W. Killey. M.B.E., to Brothers. B.L. Greenslade and A.G. Chanter upon their promotions to the Headship of Newtown Junior School and Ladysmith school respectively. The other item was a report from Grand Lodge which was read by the Secretary. It contained two items which are as follows:-

1. The Board rules that there should be no non-masonic guests at the refreshment immediately preceeding or following the lodge meeting, if Masonic toasts are to be given or Masonic speeches made, and that care should be taken to exclude all non-masonic waiters before such a Toast List is commenced.

2. The rank and future address of Brethren leaving for overseas should be sent to the Grand Secretary, Freemasons Hall, Great Queen St., London, in order that such Brethren may be welcomed in the Dominions. With regard to the first of these notices, first thoughts are that such an instruction would have appeared to be unnecessary. However some reason must have arisen for such a direction to be published.

At the November lodge meeting it was proposed, seconded and carried that Bye Law 13a, 13b, and 13c, be ammended to read 17 Guineas, 8 Guineas and 5 Guineas respectively. This would appear to be an increase in Annual Subscriptions Etc., though this is not mentioned in the minutes of that lodge meeting. Also at this lodge meeting the Secretary read from a quarterly communication from Grand Lodge the following items:-

1. The nomination of W.Bro. H.D. Still as Grand Treasurer.
2. The Silver Wedding present to their Majesties the King and Queen consisted of a French clock of the late 18th. century and a set of antique silver gilt dishes.
3. The thanks to those Grand Lodges, Lodges and Brethren overseas who have continued to send food parcels to Freemasons.

This last item bears out the earlier comment regarding the rationing of basic foods until the early 1950s.

The year of 1948 closed with the lodge membership standing at 112 subscribing members.

The year 1949 opened in the usual manner for St. Thomas Lodge by the January meeting being domestic night and therefore the Election of the Master for the forthcoming year. On this occasion, as usual, the Senior Warden Bro. J.J.L.Gore was elected Master Elect, along with the other Lodge Officers for the year 1949/50.

The Installation lodge meeting took place on Wednesday, 9th. February, and was attended by the Prov.G.Master, The Right Revd. The Lord Bishop of Crediton, accompanied by the Asst.P G.M. W.Bro. Sir Arthur C.Reed. P.Asst.G.D. Following the Installation of the W.Master and the Investiture of the Lodge Officers the Secretary reported that he had received a communication from Grand Lodge which drew the attention of the Brethren to the loyal message of sympathy to M.W. Bro. His Majesty the King. P.G.M. on his illness , and of congratulations to H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth on the birth of a Son. The W.Master presented a Past Masters Jewel to the Immediate Past Master, W.Bro. J.W.Killey, M.B.E. on behalf of the Officers and

The lodge meeting of Wednesday, 14th. December 1949 was notable in that at this meeting yet another first took place in the life of the St. Thomas Lodge. This was the working of the First, Second and Third sections of the First Masonic Lecture. The Brethren taking part in this work were: Bros. M.H.Buller, W.Leaker, L.J.Liddon, E.M.D.Sclater, H.T.Howe, F.H.G.Sedgwick, A.F.Deer-Shapland, G.W.Heywood, E.L.R.Allard, L.L.Baker, R.Bales and H.R.Smith. The work was carried out under the direction of W.Bro.W.W.Walters. To mark the start of what has now become an annual Christmass Lodge feature, the lodge was honoured by the Presence of the R.W. The Provincial Grand Master, The Right Revd. The Lord Bishop of Crediton, who following the congratulations of the W.Master to the Brethren taking part, added his tribute to the high standard achieved in this their first lecture. As is common knowledge, these lectures, introduced by the late W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, D.P.G.M., have been presented at every Christmass L meeting, without break, since that evening in December 1949. And so the year ended with the returns to United Grand Lodge recording a total membership of 118 of which 29 were Past Masters, but not necessarily of the lodge.

The year 1950 started with the usual lodge business of Electing the Incoming W.Master together with the other lodge Officers. The Treasurer, Charity steward and Tyler being re-elected. Why get rid of a successful Brother when he is doing a good job! At this lodge meeting ballots were taken for two initiates and were approved. Also three Grand Lodge Certificates were presented to the three new Brothers brought into the lodge during the previous year.

The Installation lodge meeting was held on the 8th. February with the Provincial G.Master being in attendance. Following the Installation ceremony and the Investiture of the lodge Officers the W.Master, W.Bro.E.Chanter presented the Immediate Past Master with a Past Masters Jewel and a token for the purchase of a record player, as a mark of appreciation by the Past Masters, Officers and Brethren, for his work on behalf of the lodge during his year of office. The year continued to progress quietly within the lodge, two Initiates being received into the lodge. One being brought in in March and one the following month. This enabled the customary practice of a double passing to take place at the May lodge meeting. The June lodge meeting saw a communication from United Grand Lodge read in open lodge by the Secretary relating to the mode of dress to be worn at lodge meetings.

This was to the effect that as clothes rationing had ceased dark suits, black shoes, black ties and white collars would become general wear with Masonic clothing. The W.Master asked Brethren to suitably note this recommendation and hoped they would comply with the same at the next lodge meeting. Consideration would also be given to the wearing of white gloves at lodge meetings. At the November lodge meeting following the raising of a Brother, the Secretary reported that he had received a communication from United Grand Lodge and drew the Brethrens attention to the fact that recognition had been withdrawn by the Grand Lodge from the Grand Lodge of Uruguay, in consequence of which no English Mason is allowed to visit a Uruguayan lodge , nor may a Uruguayan Mason be received as a visitor, or be considered eligible as a joining member. This serious step has been taken following the failure of the Grand Lodge of Uruguay to show that there is no foundation in allegations made against them of accepting Atheists and of not requiring the presence of the V.S.L. at their meetings. The December lodge meeting received the news of the sad loss of the M.W.Bro. The Grand Master, The Duke of Devonshire.K.G. The Brethren stood to order in the usual manner among Masons to show their sympathy at this sad news. The meeting continued with the Brethren of the lodge working the Fourth and Fifth sections of the First Masonic Lecture under the direction of W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. The W.Master congratulated and thanked W.Bro.Gore and those Brethren taking part for a very fine exposition, remarking that with such grand work being performed by the Junior members of the lodge the high standard of work in the St.Thomas Lodge was assured for the future. This was received with acclamation. W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore in reply stated it gave him great pleasure to do the lectures and remarked upon the enthusiasum and keenness of those taking part. Following this ceremony three candidates for initiation were proposed and seconded, and so the year ended with the promise of yet another full year ahead of the lodge in 1951.

Chapter Five

The opening lodge meeting of 1951 was of course the Domestic night and the usual business took place. Three candidates for initiation were balloted for and approved and the three 1950 inititates were presented with their Grand Lodge Certificates by the W.Master. Following these presentations , explanations of the G.L.Certificate and the Master Masons Apron were rendered by Bro.J.W.H.Webb, Senior Deacon and W.Bro.G.A.Jackson P.Pr.G.D. Past Master of the lodge, respectively. The summons for the Installation lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 14th. February contained a notice, the nature of which had appeared on the installation summons of the two previous years. This notice stated in red print that: As accommodation has to be limited to 100; seats can ONLY be reserved for those Brethren returning the enclosed card BEFORE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5th.1951. No seats will be reserved after this date, and only ONE Guest may be invited as there are 117 members in our Lodge: From this announcement it can be seen that the lodge numbers were still on the increase and also St. Thomas Lodge was as popular 40 years ago as it is today. Long may this continue. Also at this Installation meeting yet another first was accomplished, the W.Master, W.Bro. E.Chanter had the pleasant task of installing his true brother, Bro.A.G.Chanter into the Chair of King Solomon. W.Bro. E.Chanter being the Father of W.Bros. Gordon and Robin Chanter P.Pr.J.G.Ws. who both serve the lodge so ably today. Was this installation yet another first in the history of Freemasonry?

Following the investiture of the Officers of the lodge the W.Master presented the Immediate Past Master with a Past Masters Jewel and said that the gift to the I.P.M.as a mark of appreciation from the P.Masters, Officers and Brethren of the lodge was too large to be brought into the lodge as it took the form of a bookcase and desk combined.

The year of 1951 continued in a quiet manner for the lodge, and following two initiations in the early spring the annual double passing was able to take place at the May lodge meeting. The year progressed through the summer and the lodge returned from the summer holiday period and at the September lodge meeting the third initiation of the year took place. Following this ceremony an interesting item recorded in the minutes is a quarterly communication from Grand Lodge in which it is reported that a Brother had been expelled for accepting money

upon his promise to propose certain candidatees for initiation. A further report was of a W.Bro. being expelled from the Craft for immoral conduct.

The minutes of the October lodge meeting record the initiation of the third candidate of the year. Attached to the minutes is a letter of thanks from the Provincial Grand Master, The Very Revd. The Lord Bishop of Crediton, thanking all the Brethren in the Province for the gift that had been presented to him to mark his 80th. Birthday anniversary. Unfortunately the minutes do not record the nature of this gift.

The year ended with the December lodge meeting carrying out the working of the Sixth and Seventh sections of the First lecture under the direction of the Chaplain, W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore. The annual returns of the list of Brethren in the lodge showed that there were 118 members of whom 32 were Past Masters.

The domestic night lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 9th. January, 1952 was of its usual nature, three Grand Lodge Certificats being presented also three ballots for candidates for initiation taking place without fault. There then followed the usual Election of the Master Elect and the other lodge Officers. At the Installation meeting in February the W.Master referred to the death of Most W.Bro. his late Majesty King George VI saying that Freemasonry had lost a fine example in him. The Brethren stood to order as Masons as was usual to show their sympathy. The meeting then continued to Instal Bro. G.W. Heywood into the Chair of King Solomon for the ensuing year. The spring moved on and in early summer at the May lodge meeting the now customary annual ceremony of a double passing in the lodge took place. Also at this meeting the I.P.M. W.Bro. A.G. Chanter gave notice of motion that at the next regular stated lodge he would propose that the sum of Twenty Five Guineas be voted from the lodge funds as a donation to the Cathedral Restoration fund. This must have been in response to the appeal made in January 1952, by the Provincial Grand Master to all the members of Exeter lodges, as Citizens of Exeter to give generously to this fund. This proposal was duly made and carried at the June lodge meeting as also was the proposal, made by the Charity Steward, to donate 50 Guineas in response to an appeal made by the Royal Masonic Hospital.

On the return to masonic duties following the summer holiday, the September lodge was the occasion for the last initiation ceremony of the year, following the initiation an explanation of the First Tracing Board was given by Bro.G.W.Heywood, Steward, and the W.Master congratulated Bro. Heywood on the way it was done.W.Bro.McGahey said he felt that the Brethren would wish it to be recorded in the minutes that they were delighted that the Son of the W.Master had given this explanation in such an excellent manner, This suggestion was received with acclamation by the Brethren. To carry out a piece of floorwork of this magnitude in open lodge in front of the Brethren is daunting, but to do it in front of one's Father, and he being W.Master to boot, requires courage. Bro. G.W.Heywood is still a subscribing member of the lodge residing near Salisbury in Wiltshire. The Oct. and Nov. lodge meeting saw the Passing and Raising of the Sept. Initiate, Bro.S.Gilbert, a subscibing member of the lodge who, due to advanced years, is no longer able to attend the lodge. The year came to a successful conclusion with the Brethren working the first three sections of the Second lecture under the now usual direction of W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. The annual returns once again showing an increase in the lodge membership, it now stood at 121 members of whom 34 were Past Masters.

The year 1953 began as usual with the domestic night lodge meeting at which two candidates for initiation were proposed, both these applicants being of Lewis status. One of these candidates I am pleased to say is still a very active W.Bro. within the lodge who keeps us all very much up to "scratch". Who can it be?, you may ask! There then followed the usual ballots for the Master for the forthcoming year also the Offices of Treasurer, Charity Steward and Tyler.

The Installation lodge meeting was held on Wednesday, 11th. February and it was at this lodge meeting that for only the second time in the lifetime of the lodge that an Installation took place in the absence of Provincial Grand Lodge Officers of active rank. Due to these unusual circumstances the addresses to the W.Master, Wardens and Brethren of the lodge were given by;- W.Bro.W.W.Walters, P.P.G.D.C. W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore and W.Bro.W.W.Walters, P.P.G.D.C. respectively. At this lodge meeting the Secretary brought the attention of the lodge to a direction from United G.Lodge stating that all resolutions made in lodge should be seconded, but if only proposed and carried but not seconded they are not invalidated and that although lodge minutes should be accurate

the omission of an item from them does not invalidate that item. The W.Master presented on, behalf of the Past Masters, Officers and Brethren of the lodge, a Past Masters Jewel to the Immediate Past Master as a mark of appreciation for the way the I.P.M. had worked for the lodge during his year of office. The Secretary read a letter from the Prov.G.Master who expressed his regret at not being able to attend the Installation meeting. A letter was also read from the Tyler, W.Bro. W.H.A. Hingston, Prov. Grand Tyler, tendering his resignation as Tyler. The Secretary also read a letter from St. John the Baptist Lodge saying that the post of Tyler was now vacant but the position was being advertised.

The March and April lodge meetings of 1953 each had an initiation ceremony, which was the normal procedure for the St. Thomas Lodge. The April lodge was attended by the Prov.G.Master, the Rt. Rev., the Lord Bishop of Crediton. It was at this lodge meeting that the W.Master had the sad duty to inform the Brethren of the death of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Mary. The May lodge meeting was the occasion for a double Passing, this being a ceremony that had by this time become almost an annual feature. As far as is known the St. Thomas Lodge being the only lodge in the province to conduct such a ceremony. In the quarterly communication from Grand Lodge the secretary referred to the Initiation of the Duke of Edinburgh. The year proceeded quietly for the lodge and the year came to a close with the now well established working of a Masonic Lecture. This year the working of the Third, Fourth and fifth sections of the Second lecture being worked in the presence of the Pro. G.Master. This visit by the P.G.M. being the second visit made by him, to the lodge, in the year. From the frequency of the visits made by Senior Officers of Prov.G.Lodge it can only be assumed that the St. Thomas Lodge was a very, and still is for that matter, desirable lodge to visit. This can also be borne out by the fact that at our Installation Lodge meetings Members are restricted to inviting only one guest.

1954 started in the usual manner for the lodge in that the now customary three candidates for initiation were balloted for and approved in open lodge thus ensuring the lodge numbers would be maintained for the forthcoming year. The Installation meeting held on the 10th. February was attended by the Prov.G.Master, who gave the address to the W.Master following his Installation. The address to the Wardens was given by the Prov.Sen.G.Warden, The address to the Brethren was given by W.Bro.J.J.L. Gore. As a mark of appreciation for the way in which the Immediate Past

Master had worked for the lodge during his year of office, the W.Master, W.Bro. L.D.Modley presented the I.P.M. W.Bro. H.Martin with a cheque along with the usual Past Masters Jewel.

The March lodge meeting, held on the 10th.day of the month saw the Initiation of a Mr.Edgar Lawrence House, a Lewis. The summons and also minutes of the January lodge meeting show that Mr. House was the third candidate to be balloted for and duly approved. As he was the first candidate of the year to be Initiated it is immediately apparent that he was exercising his right as a Lewis, that of being Initiated before anyone else. The minutes of the meeting also show that his Father, W.Bro.R.H.House, P.P.A.G.D.C. assisted the W.Master to Initiate his Son. Yet again another first for the lodge was achieved. The lodge has now witnessed a Father instal his Son into the Masters chair, a Brother do likewise and now a Father assist at his Son's initiation. This lodge of ours certainly goes out for creating precedents! At the May lodge meeting the W.Master congratulated W.Bro.W.W.Walters, a Past Master of the lodge, upon his receiving Grand Lodge honours in the Chapter by being presented with the collar of Past Grand Standard Bearer of the Supreme Grand Chapter of England. There then followed a double passing ceremony at which yet again a Father assisted to pass his Son to the Second Degree or that of a Fellow Craft Freemason. I refer of course to W.Bro. House and Bro. House, whose initiation took place in March.

At the September lodge meeting another important milestone in the life of the St. Thomas Lodge was reached. The Secretary reported that he had received a letter from the Exeter Freemasons Co.Ltd. stating that the lodge was holders of shares, in the Company, in excess of 300 shares and was therefore qualified to nominate a Director of the Company to represent the lodge. On the motion of W.Bro.W.W.Killey, seconded by W.Bro.H.Martin it was decided to nominate W.Bro.W.J. Shapland to the Directorate. Also at this meeting two Brethren were proposed as joining members of the lodge. Both these Brethren were voted for, approved and admitted into the lodge at the subsequent meeting in October. The year of 1954 drew to a successful close as far as the St. Thomas Lodge was concerned. The December lodge took place with the Brethren working the third Lecture in the presence of the Asst.P.G.Master, W.Bro. Sir Arthur C.Reed, P.G.D. Yet again the working of the lecture being under the direction of W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore.

The year of 1955 opened on a sad note for the St. Thomas Lodge, at the Domestic night lodge meeting the W.Master had the sad duty to inform the Brethren of the passing to the Grand Lodge above of Bro.A.V.Hitchcock. Bro. Hitchcock had been a member of the lodge for twenty years and had acted as Charity Steward of the lodge for the past six years, having been appointed at the Domestic night meeting in December 1948. On a much happier note the W.Master congratulated Bro. C.Chesterfield on the award of the M.B.E. in the New Years Honours List. At this lodge meeting a ballot was taken for one joining member, a retired builder from Essex, and two candidates for initiation. All three ballots being in favour. The successful joining member, Bro.Edward T.Dolder, a subscribing member of the St. Chad Lodge No.3115, in the province of Essex. Following the ballot for the Master Elect and the Treasurer, a ballot was taken to elect a successor to the late Bro. Hitchcock, as Charity Steward. The W.Master, W.Bro.L.D.Modley proposed and W.Bro.W.W.Walters seconded that Bro.T.Hosegrove be elected, this proposition was carried. Bro. Hosegrove thanked the Brethren for their confidence.

The Installation lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 9th. February was notable by the absence of Senior Prov.G.Lodge Officers. Following the Installation of Bro.John W.W.Webb, Senior Warden as the W.Master of the St. Thomas Lodge for the coming year the address to the W.Master was given by W.Bro.W.W.Walters P.PG.W. The address to the Wardens was given by W.Bro.F.P.Cottey, P.J.G.W., and the address to the Brethren was given by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore.

The March lodge meeting saw the W.Master offering the congratulations of the lodge to Bro. N.F.Richards upon his appointment as Deputy Chief Fire Officer for the City of Wakefield. Following the usual announcements made by the W.M. and the reading and confirming of the minutes an Initiation took place, and so the balance of the membership was maintained within the lodge in spite of the loss of Bro.Richards. Approximately 250 miles is a long way to travel to lodge meetings and well beyond the length of a reasonable Cable Tow. The April lodge meeting was attended the Prov.G.Master the R.W.Bro., the Rt. Rev. Bishop Surtees, P.G.C. and he was able to observe the lodge conduct an Initiation ceremony, the candidate being a Mr.Edward L.Wishlade. Following this ceremony the W.Master read a letter from Bro. A.E.Ash who had left these shores to live in New Zealand. Bro. Ash in his letter offered his congratulations to the W.Master upon his installation and also sent his best wishes to

the Brethren of the lodge.

The May lodge meeting saw the customary double passing ceremony taking place and this was followed by two propositions, one for a joining member the other a, Lewis as a candidate for initiation. These two propositions being duly balloted for and approved at the lodge meeting in June. The joining member being a retired Postmaster from the St. Euny Lodge No. 6025, Cornwall. The Lewis being a present Country Member of the lodge of some Senior years but nonetheless still a very ardent W. Brother.

At the July lodge following a Raising ceremony the W. Master proposed as an Honary Member of the lodge W. Bro. William A. Kneel, A.G.D.C. P.P.G.G.W. In his notice of motion given at the previous lodge meeting the W. Master gave as his reason for this proposition that W. Bro. Kneel had given valuable assistance to many members of the St. Thomas Lodge in particular as well as to other lodges and also to mark W. Bro. Kneel's appointment as an Officer of Grand Lodge. This proposal was Seconded by Bro. B. L. Greenslade Senior Warden. the ballot taken proved to be in favour of W. Bro. Kneel. Following this labour listed on the summons was the ballot for a candidate for initiation into the lodge. a Mr. Peter B. L. Keate, a Lewis, aged 24 years, a Quantity Surveyor, serving in Her Majesty's Forces, home address being Topsham Rd., Exeter. The proposer of this motion being Bro. T. B. Keate and the Secunder, W. Bro. J. W. Killey. It is sad to have to record that the minutes show that the ballot was not in favour. No reason is given why this should be of course. This is the second time within the lifetime of the St. Thomas Lodge that a ballot has been unfavourable.

The September lodge meeting was to be remembered for several features, the minutes of that lodge meeting show that:-

The lodge was attended by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Surtees in the rank of Past Provincial Grand Master. This being the first intimation that he had relinquished his position as P.G.M.

The lodge was attended by the Asst. Prov. G. Master, W. Bro. Sir Arthur C. Reed, P.G.D., Provincial Grand Master Designate.

The W. Master referred to the loss suffered by the lodge in the death of one of its Founder Members in the person of W. Bro. Revd. Preb. B. C. Bennett A.G.C., and considered it a great credit to the lodge that such a worthy and distinguished Brother should be so proud of his long association with this lodge. There then followed an Initiation at which both the Proposer and Secunder of the candidate carried out part of the

floorwork associated with the ceremony. this was followed by an explanation of the First Tracing Board given by Bro.R.D.Edworthy.

The October meeting was held on the 12th. day of the month and the W.master welcomed to the lodge visiting Provincial Grand Lodge Officers and then welcomed to the lodge the Asst. Secretary Bro. N.F.Richards, who was now resident in Wakefield, Yorkshire following his taking up the Duties of a Senior Fire Officer in that city. The labours of the evening consisted of a Passing of a Brother followed by an explanation of the Second Tracing Board. The secretary reported that he had received a letter from the Deputy Prov.G.Master addressed to the W.Master concerning a presentation to the Past Prov.G.Master R.W.Bro.Bishop Surtees. This circular was to all Brethren in the lodge inviting them to subscribe not more than Five Shillings toward this presentation. The Charity Steward, Bro.T.W.B. Hosegrove reported on the arrangements for a film show of Masonic Charities which was held in conjunction with Old Helean Lodge No.6797 at Heles school, Exeter, on the 24th. October. An interesting entry in the minute book under the visiting Brethren list is a Bro. L.J.P.Rennie of the Naudi Border Lodge E.A. No.4756. It would appear that this was a Brother making an overseas visit but as no mention of his presence was made by the W.Master then it must remain assumption on my part. At the November lodge the same Brother attended again and also at this lodge meeting was a W.Brother J.E.Mallory of Jubilee Lodge No.5882 Rhodesia to whom the W.Master extended a hearty welcome. Having read this entry in the minute book I drew the conclusion that in the case of Bro.Rennie the entry E.A. refers to East Anglia and Not East Africa. Following a Raising of a Bro. to the Sublime degree of a Master Mason the Secretary read a letter from the Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd. which referred to ten One pound shares in the company which the Widow of Bro.R.C.W.Balsom was desirous of selling. The late Bro.Balsom having been a member of the lodge it was assumed that the lodge may be desirous of purchasing these shares. The Secretary also reported that the General Purposes and Finance Comm. had agreed that the eight tickets available for the installation of the Prov.G.Master would be distributed, at the discretion of the W.Master, to the Senior Past Masters of the lodge. This may seem a little strange to younger Brethren in the lodge, but it must be remembered that 40 years ago the Province did not have the availability of the Great Hall at Exeter University. And Provincial Grand Lodge Meetings were usually held in halls of a much smaller

It was at this lodge meeting that the Charity Steward reported upon the success of the film show of Masonic Charities held at Heles school had raised a profit of £8..2..0 to be shared between the Old Helean Lodge and St. Thomas Lodge. The Alms collected that evening would be added to the amount and allocated to the Royal Masonic Institute for Girls. The Alms collected totaled £3..10..6. and adding this to the lodges share of £4..1..0 it was able to allocate a total of £7..11..6. to the fund mentioned.

At the last lodge held in 1955 on the 14th. December an interesting entry in the lodge minutes shows that the lodge was visited by a W.Bro. L.L.Griffin of the St.Thomas Lodge No. 306, Kansas, U.S.A. Although the minutes record the W.Master's greetings to all visiting Brethren, no mention is made specifically of the presence of W.Bro.Griffin. This I feel is most unfortunate as such a visit from a Member of a lodge overseas having the same name was surely worthy of special mention. There then followed the ballot for a joining member to the lodge who is still today a subscribing member of the lodge. This ballot was for Bro. Harold C. Shakell, Chief Clerk to Exeter City Fire Brigade, a subscribing member of Gooch Lodge NO.1295 in the Province of Wiltshire. There then followed the usual Christmass lecture directed by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. In his annual report the Charity Steward, Bro. Hosegrove stated that the Province had, during the year subscribed to the R.M.I.for Girls, R.M.I. for Boys and the R.M.Benevolent Institution a total sum of £1593 and received benefits from those Institutions totaling £16,253. He further reported that the son of a deceased Brother of the lodge had been admitted to the R.Masonic School. Here then is an example of the charitable work the Order is able to grant to its dependants. The returns to Grand Lodge at year end showed that, sadly, four Brethren had passed to the Grand Lodge above, two had resigned for health reasons and one Brother was excluded for being three years in arrears. However, in spite of this the lodge still had 122 subscribing members of which 34 were Past Masters.

The domestic night lodge meeting on Wed. 11th. January, 1956 started off in fine style with no fewer than three ballots taking place for candidates for initiation into the lodge, all three being favourable. Prior to these ballots taking place the W.Master extended a warm welcome to the only visitor in the lodge that evening, Bro. Walter H.Cryer,

of King Solomon Lodge No. 260, San Francisco, U.S.A., who was making his first visit to a lodge in England. Following the initiation candidates ballots, three Grand Lodge Certificates were presented followed by an explanation of the certificates by a Bro.H.R.Smith who had deputised for Bro.A.F.Dee-Shapland who was unable to attend that evening. This absence 'broke' Bro.Dee-Shapland's run of carrying out this particular piece of floorwork, he having carried out this task for the previous three consecutive years.

The Installation lodge meeting in February was conducted in the usual efficient manner expected of the St. Thomas Lodge, the address given to the Master by W.Bro.W.W.Walters, P.P.G.D. a Past Master of the lodge. The address to the Wardens being given by W.Bro.W.A.Kneel, A.G.D.C., P.P.G.W. and the address to the Brethren was given by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, a Past Master of the lodge. This Installation meeting of the St. Thomas Lodge being yet another occasion when Senior Provincial G.Lodge Officers were not in attendance.

At the March lodge meeting the W.Master invested Bro.N.F.Richards with the collar of Asst. Director of Ceremonies, Bro. R.Dyer with the collar of Asst Secretary and Bro.T.W.Roebuck with the collar of steward. These Brethren being unavoidably absent at the Installation meeting. Following an Initiation of a new Brother, the Secretary reported that he had received a letter from the W.Master of King Solomon Lodge No.260, San Francisco, California, U.S.A. thanking the the brethren of the lodge for their many kindnesses and expressions of Brotherly love extended to W.Bro. Walter H. Cryer on his recent visit to the St. Thomas Lodge. The W.Master then commented on the departure of Bro.L.L.Baker for Uganda where he would be working for the next three years.

At the April lodge meeting the W.Master had to make the sad statement to the Brethren of the passing to the Grand Lodge above of the R.W.Bro. the Rt. Rev. Bishop F.W. Surtees, P.G Chaplain, P.P.G.M., an Honorary Member of the lodge. The Brethren showed their sympathy by standing to order in the usual manner among Masons. Before the lodge was closed following an initiation ceremony, the secretary read an extract from a letter sent by Brother A.E.Ash who now lived in New Zealand, wishing the W.Master and the Brethren of the lodge Sincere and fraternal greetings. It is noteworthy that Brother Ash, although living at the other side of the world still retained his membership of the lodge and maintained his subscriptions.

The year 1956 continued with the lodge carrying out its business in its usual manner, and the year ended with the usual Christmass lecture being given yet again to a 'packed house'. There being no fewer than fifty visiting Brethren in the lodge in addition to the Prov.G.Master and the Asst.P.G.Master. When one thinks of the size of the Temple at Gandy Street the question that springs to mind is; where did they put them all? This number of visitors being in addition to fifty eight Brethren of St. Thomas Lodge being present.

1957 started with the domestic night business as usual, being that of balloting candidates for Initiation for the coming year, electing a new Master, electing the Treasurer and on this occasion a change of personality as Charity Steward. The post was accepted by Bro. R. Dyer following the resignation of Bro. T.W.B. Hosegrove.

There followed in February the Installation of the Master Elect and all that that occasion entails and in March an initiation took place. The month of April saw the lodge continue with its association with St. Michaels and All Angels Church, Alphington in that the Rector who received the living following the death of W. Bro. Preb. B.C. Bennett, A.G.C., P.P.G. Chap., Bro. the Revd. William H. Croft, P.P.G.C. a subscribing member of The Davie Lodge No. 3721 was balloted for and accepted as a joining member of the lodge. The year continued uneventfully and ended with the returns to Grand Lodge showing a total membership of 121 Brethren of which 29 were Past Masters.

The year 1958 started with the domestic night in the lodge having two ballots for candidates for Initiation of which one is still an active member of the lodge holding Past Provincial Rank, the other being a subscribing member but because of advanced years is not able to attend lodge meetings. Following the Installation in February the year progressed through the spring and early summer with the lodge following its usual pattern of performing a double Passing ceremony at the May lodge meeting. Before the lodge closed for the summer holiday in July, the W. master had the pleasant task of congratulating W. Bro. F.L. Wilkins on receiving the collar of Prov. Junior Grand Deacon, and also congratulating W. Bro. J.J.L. Gore on receiving the collar of Past Pr. Grand Registrar. The W. Master also referred to W. Bro. W.B. Trick, P.P.G.R. who was the only surviving Founder Member of the lodge who would be celebrating his 90th. birthday on the 21st. September.

The autumn months of 1958 passed and at the December lodge meeting the W.Master welcomed back to the lodge a considerable number of Brethren who had been on the sick list. One of whom, W.Bro. J.Gore, who had the previous month had his leg in a plaster cast. The W.Master also referred to the Death of a Bro.A.V.Angel. Earlier in this history a reference is made to a Brother A.Angel who emmigrated to California in 1929. If this was indeed that Brother then this is indeed loyalty of the highest order to ones Mother lodge. Unfortunately the W.Master did not enlarge on the announcement of the death of this Brother, therefore it must remain an unsolved incident in the history of the lodge It must however rank as one of the furthest flung Country Memberships known.

The year of 1959 started with the domestic night meeting producing a number of items of interest, the first of these being the election of the Senior Warden, Bro.Marshall H. Buller being elected Master Elect for the year. The ascendance of Marshall to the chair draws the history of the lodge into its middle period as it were. Most of the present members of the lodge knew Marshall, and his knowledge of Freemasonry was often asked for and freely given. The second item was that of a Brother having his name removed from the books of both United Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge for being in arrears. This is the first record of this occurring in the history of the lodge, it is sad when such an action has to be made. The third item was that the Secretary asked permission for a notice of motion he had made to be withdrawn. The nature of this motion was to have been: That a hospitality fund be set up for the entertainment of Official visitors to the lodge and that such a subscription not exceeding £1.1..0 per annum. This would apply only to full members of the lodge and to exclude all Past Masters of the St. Thomas Lodge up to and including the current I.P.M. An alternative scheme had been drawn up and this was fully explained by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. It is unfortunate that this scheme is not minuted in detail. It was resolved to operate the scheme for the ensuing year and then review the situation, at the end of that period.

The installation of Bro.M.H.Buller took place on the 11th. February in the presence of the Asst. Prov.G.Master, W.Bro.W.A.Kneel, P.A.G.D.C. and other Grand Officers and Prov.G.Officers. The March and April lodge meetings saw the usual Initiations taking place and also at the latter lodge meeting the W.Master requested the Secretary to write to Bro.Charles Woodland, a subscribing member of the lodge, to congratulate him on being

made the Mayor Elect to the City of Exeter for the coming year. Here again is yet another instance of the ties between the City and Freemasonry. The June lodge meeting was marred by the announcement of the death, in office, of the Junior Deacon, Brother W.G. Burge. The W. Master said that Bro. Burge had been initiated into the lodge 8 years ago and would be sorely missed as he had proved himself a worthy mason in everything he been asked to undertake. The funeral was to take place the day following the lodge meeting and the W. Master requested that as many Brethren attend as possible. The Brethren then stood to order in the manner among masons. This is the first record of a Brother passing to the Grand Lodge above whilst holding office in the lodge and as events will eventually show it was not to be an isolated case. On a much happier note the W. Master reported on the receipt of a letter from Bro. A.E. Ash, in New Zealand, sending his good wishes to the lodge. At the July lodge meeting the W. Master had the pleasant duty of passing the congratulations of the lodge to W. Bro. E. Chanter on his appointment as Prov. Asst. G. Director of Ceremony. The late W. Bro. Chanter being the Father of the two W. Brothers at present in the lodge and who follow the footsteps of their Father by working as hard as they do in the lodge. One as our Treasurer whilst the other makes certain that we all have something to do when he directs the Christmass Lecture each year. Yet again at the September lodge, following the summer holiday, the W. Master had the sad task of reporting the death of a Brother, it being on this occasion Bro. J.E. Heaton. Bro. Heaton had been, earlier in the year admitted to the Royal Masonic Hospital and had written to thank the Brethren in the lodge for making his admission to the hospital possible. Following a raising ceremony the W. Master reported that the Bye-Laws had been revised, by the special committee appointed for that purpose, and that in due course the Brethren would receive notice of the Emergency Lodge meeting to be held in October to approve the revised Bye-Laws. This emergency lodge meeting was duly held on Thursday, 22nd. October 1959, with the revised Bye-Laws of the lodge being read to the Brethren by the W. Master. These new bye-Laws were duly agreed following their propoasal and seconding by W. Bros. Walters and Greenslade respectively.

For anyone who is involved in committee work without the masonic sphere, and is also a 'stickler' for correctness the minutes for the November lodge meeting would make interesting reading. These minutes state that at the last regular stated lodge held on Wednesday, 22nd. October 1959 were read and confirmed by the Brethren. This, of course was not so, the last

regular lodge having been held on Wednesday, 14th. October and the emergency lodge was held on Thursday, 22nd. October. So we are confronted with the question ; which minutes were actually read and confirmed and subsequently signed by the W.Master, and which were not and have not been signed to this day? It could be asked therefore; are the lodge Bye-Laws in present use valid? The answer being in the affirmative as they had, having, been approved in open lodge and subsequently passed to Provincial Grand Lodge and further onward to United Grand Lodge for approval and Registration they could be regarded to be 'Sealed, Signed and Delivered' so to speak. The W.Master reported to the Brethren that the Bye-Laws had been received and approved by United G.Lodge with the exception of rule 10 which they had deleted. It was resolved to accept the decision of U.G.L. in this matter and to carry on with having them printed and distributed to the Brethren. Also at this lodge meeting the petitions in respect of the children of a deceased Brother were signed in Open Lodge with the approval of the Brethren. The W.Master wished it to go on record, that, in connection with these petitions, the thanks of the lodge were due to Bro.H.C.Cashmore, Charity Steward and Bro.S.Venton for their work in getting these petitions through so quickly. And so the year had passed along its course and the St.Thomas Lodge found that the December work in the lodge again with them. Following the usual Christmass lecture the W.Master reported that the Asst. Secretary, Bro.R.C.Edworthy, who was unavoidably absent, was leaving for Uganda on the 3rd. January, 1960 to take up a new appointment. On behalf of the lodge the W.Master wished him every success. And so the year ended for the lodge with the returns to Grand Lodge showing a membership of 125 of which 32 were Past Masters.

The year 1960 started with all the indications that it was going to be yet another busy year in the lodge. There being no less than three names proposed for Initiation into the lodge. There then followed the normal business of the January lodge meeting in that the Master for the ensuing year, together with the Treasurer, Charity Steward and Tyler being elected. The Installation lodge meeting took place with the Prov.G. Master being present. On this occasion the address to the W.Master, the Wardens and the Brethren all being given by Past Masters of the St. Thomas Lodge. At this installation meeting there were present in the Temple 93 Brethren, of whom 37 Brethren were visitors. Among the list of visitors names is one Bro. A.Maunders, a subscribing member of a Cardiff lodge. Could it be, one wonders, that by making the journey from Wales

was this Brother related in some way to the second ever Initiate into the lodge and subsequently moved North to Leeds as a result of promotion? I refer to Brother Edwin James Maunder who was Initiated into the lodge on Wednesday, 9th. February 1921. Or is this too much of a coincidence?

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday 9th. March following an Initiation ceremony the W.Master, W.Bro.G.W.Heywood referred to a visit to made to the Lodge of Union No.38 at Chichester. This is the first reference, in the history of the lodge, of the St. Tomas Lodge making a visit, as a lodge, to another lodge in the Craft Register.

At the lodge meeting of April 1960 an interesting ceremony took place in that the Initiate, following his Obligation, was presented with the Working Tools of an Entered Apprentice by his Father who was a Brother in the lodge. A task I feel sure that Father and Son enjoyed immensely. Following this, the W.Master reported upon his visit to the Lodge of Union No. 38 in the Province of Sussex and stated that 8 Brethren in the lodge had accompanied him. He brought back greetings from the Assistant Grand Master of the Province and he also referred to the work of the W. Master of the lodge W.Bro. G.A.Sluggett who was also a subscribing member of the St. Thomas Lodge No.4198. Attached to the minute book page for the April meeting is a copy of the summons issued to the Brethren of Union Lodge No.38.

The May lodge meeting was held on Wednesday the 11th. of the month at which the W.Master regretfully announced the death of the last remaining Founder member of the lodge, W.Bro. W.B.Trick, P.P.G.Reg. The W.Master also reported the death of W.Bro.R.H.House, P.Pr.A.G.D.C. who had been a member of the lodge for 39 years. In his report of sick Brethren in, the lodge the W.Master appealed to the Brethren to inform the Secretary of any sick Brother in order that he could be visited. This appeal no doubt came as the result of a discussion that had taken place the previous week at the General Purposes and Finance Committee meeting. W.Bro.M.H.Buller had reported that he held a sum of money for the purpose of purchasing small gifts for sick Brethren, and the W.Master thanked Bro.R.Bales for providing a collecting box for this purpose. The W.Master then suggested the appointment of a Treasurer for this fund and the appointment of a sick visiting committee. W.Bro. M.H.Buller was proposed to act as the Treasurer of this committee and that W.Bro.Buller along with the W.Master should approach two Brethren of the lodge to act as the visiting committee. All this of course happened in those far off

days before the creation of the Office of Lodge Almoner. An office which is much appreciated by the Brethren and is more than ably carried out by the present holder of that Office. Following this appeal regarding sick Brethren there then followed the usual May ceremony of a Double Passing. The summer months passed by and the September lodge meeting was the occasion of a visit of the W.Master accompanied by four Brethren of the Lodge of Union No.38, Chichester, as mark of Brotherly Love and Friendship following the visit that the St. Thomas Lodge had made earlier in the year. At the October lodge meeting the W.Master reported that he had received a letter from W.Bro.Sluggett, W.Master of the Union Lodge No. 38 thanking him for a wonderful visit to St. Thomas Lodge in September. The W.Master, W.Bro.G.W.Heywood thanked those Brethren in the lodge who had provided accommodation for the visitors from Sussex. And so the final months of 1960 passed with lodge approaching its 40th. anniversary on the 21 st. December. The final lodge meeting of the year being held on Wednesday 14th, December with the lodge working the first four parts of the First Masonic Lecture in the presence of the Provincial Grand Master.

Chapter Six

The start of the New Year 1961 also saw the lodge enter the Fifth decade of its existence and at the Domestic night lodge meeting held on Wednesday 11th. January the balloting of no less than three candidates for Initiation gave every indication that the St Thomas Lodge was going to have a very busy year to look forward to. Following these ballots, Grand Lodge Certificates were presented to the three Brothers who had come into the lodge during the previous year. There then followed an explanation of the Grand Lodge Certificate to these Brothers by the Father of one of the Brethren receiving the explanation. An occasion which, I feel sure must have been of an emotional nature to them both. As the Son is still a subscribing Brother in the lodge I am sure that he will remember that particular evening if he should read this history.

At the Installation meeting held on the 8th. February the W.Master had the sad duty to report to the Brethren of the death of the Provincial Grand Master, the R.W. Bro. Sir Arthur C. Reed. Following this announcement the W.Master then went on to report the death of three Brethren in the lodge, these were W.Bro.J.J.Brewer, a Past Master of the lodge, W.Bro. C. Ashmore Baker and Bro.C.Woodland. After such a sad opening of the Installation Lodge meeting the Installation of the Master Elect, Bro.R. Bales took place in the presence of the R.W.the Assistant Pr.G.Master W.Bro.W.A.Kneel. Following the Installation the Festive Board was held at Gandy Street at a cost of 8s..6d. (42½p). The practice of holding the Installation Banquet at one of the City Hotels or Restaurants having been discontinued for some years.

The following two lodge meetings in March and April were the occasions when the first two candidates of the year were Initiated into the lodge. This then enabled the usual double Passing ceremony to take place at the May lodge meeting. This was a particularly eventful ceremony, if not unique, as the Brothers being Passed to the Second Degree or that of a Fellow Craft Freemason were true brothers and they were entrusted with the secrets of the Degree by their Uncle who was a Past Master of the lodge. Also the ceremony was witnessed by their Father, a truly family lodge meeting.

From reports made earlier in the year the July lodge meeting was the occasion for the calling of an Emergency lodge meeting to be held on Thursday, 13th. July and not Wednesday, 12th. as would be the normal practice. This was due to the fact that the W.Master had stated, two months previously, that he would not be in Exeter for the normal lodge night and therefore two Brothers in the lodge had proposed and seconded the Emergency lodge meeting. The other item of interest at this lodge was the announcement by the W.Master that W.Bro. W.G.Heywood, who had taken over the duties of Tyler following the retirement of W.Bro.Saunders, had received Provincial Grand Lodge honour by being invested as Acting Provincial Grand Standard Bearer. W.Bro.Heywood was asked to come into the lodge where he was congratulated by the W.Master on his promotion. The primary labour of this lodge meeting was the Raising of the second of the Brothers who had figured at the double passing ceremony held in May. I suppose not many Brothers in Freemasonry can make the claim that an Emergency Lodge meeting was called at which they were the principal participant!

The year continued following the summer break with September, October and November lodge meetings being the venue for the Initiation, Passing and Raising of the third candidate of the year. The December lodge meeting saw the usual working of a section of one of the Masonic Lectures directed by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. On this particular occasion in the presence of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master W.Bro.W.A.Kneel who was generous in congratulations when commenting upon the quality of the work carried out by the team. It was also at this lodge meeting that a motion was proposed, seconded and carried that amply illustrates the tenet of Brotherly Love in Freemasonry. A letter had been received from the Wife of a Brother in the lodge who was now living in London and who was seriously ill and in straitened financial circumstances. This Brother having joined the lodge in 1940. The outcome of the proposal placed before the lodge was that this Brother be sent a sum of Twenty Guineas from the Charity Bag to ensure that he could have a Happy Christmass. We often hear from our present Charity Steward that he receives letters from a Brother of a London lodge who 'keeps an eye on' a Widow of the lodge, could this possibly be the Widow of the Brother who was succoured by the lodge in December 1961? So the year of 1961 closed with the lodge membership showing a total of 123 brethren of whom 32 were Past Masters, of whom 24 were Past Masters of the lodge.

The year 1962 started in the usual manner with the lodge conducting its domestic business for the forthcoming year at the January lodge meeting. At the Finance and General Purposes committee meeting for February the Secretary reported that as the May lodge meeting coincided with the 1962 Festival for the R.M.I.G. in London, the Master Elect had requested him to write to the Secretary of the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. enquiring if the hall would be available on Thursday, May 10th. The Secretary said that as yet he had received no reply to his enquiry. Later minutes show that this lodge meeting did however take place on the revised date when a petition for an Emergency Lodge meeting was successful.

The Installation Lodge meeting was held on February 14th. in the presence of the Asst.Pr. G.M. W.Bro.F.W.A.Watt, who was deputising for the D.Pr.G.M.who was unable to attend. Following the Installation of Bro. David T. Wykes S.W. the address to the W.Master, Wardens and Brethren was given by, W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, W.Bro.M.H.Buller and W.Bro.A.G.Chanter respectively. The lodge was concluded by W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb calling upon the Brethren to volunteer as Stewards at the R.M.I.G.Festival and gave details of the travel arrangements to London for this purpose.

At the General Purposes and Finance committee meeting of April following a report by W.Bro. Webb of the progress of the lodge and also other lodges with respect to the R.M.I.G. Festival in May, it was proposed by W.Bro. Webb and seconded by Bro. Ashmore that a list, in alphabetical order, be drawn up and distributed to the Brethren, giving the names of the Brethren who had made contributions, but not the amount, and therefore had qualified for any awards available. This was carried.

The lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 11th. April was again an occasion when a family was bonded closer by the ties that Freemasonry offer. On this occasion it being the Initiation of Mr. Reginald Robert Sluggett being Initiated into the Order in the presence of his brother W.Bro. G.A. Slugett, a Past Master of the lodge, who also gave the Charge. This piece of Ritual being carried out upon the request by W.Bro. Slugett that he be allowed to take part in his brothers Initiation.

An item of interest that appears in the minutes of the G.P.& F. committee meeting for May is the report by the W.Master that he had received an interesting letter from Bro. Edworthy, who had returned to Uganda following a visit home to England, in which Bro. Edworthy said that he had been privileged to attend a lodge meeting held on board the liner "Warwick Castle" on the return voyage to Uganda.

The lodge meeting held on Thursday, 10th. May was held by special dispensation from Prov.G.Lodge, and was the occasion for the well established custom of a double Passing ceremony. Following this ceremony the W.Master thanked W.Bro.J.W.H. Webb profusely for his efforts in collecting from the Brethren the sum of £2,583 .. 14 .. 6. for the R.M.I.G. festival. In his reply W.Bro. Webb reported that the 1962 Festival for the R.M.I.G. which had been held the previous evening in London had raised the total sum of £310,723 .. 0 .. 0. and that the total from the province of Devonshire was £167,455 .. 0 .. 0. in each case the fourth highest recorded. The total from the St. Thomas Lodge was £2583 ..14 .. 6. this being the fourth highest in the province. Following a vote of thanks, proposed by W.Bro. M.H. Buller and seconded by W.Bro.W.W. Walters, W.Bro. Webb thanked the Brethren who had given generously and also the collectors and Bro. H.C. Cashmore, Charity Steward for his help and cooperation. Attached to the page of the minute book is a list of the Brethren of the lodge who made contributions also the total figure for the Festival and the amounts contributed from the lodge funds, totaling £631, allowing it to qualify as a Patron. Also attached to the minute page is the 'league table' for the province.

Following the acclamation to the lodge, made from several sources, for its efforts to the R.M.I.G. Festival the June and July lodge meetings were comparatively 'Tame' affairs. The lodge picked up its programme, following the summer holiday, by holding at its September lodge meeting the Initiation of a candidate who now holds high office within the Brotherhood and his service to Freemasonry is an example to us all.

At the G.P.& F. committee meeting of October the W.Master said that he was distressed to report the serious illness of a subscribing Brother in the lodge and that to relieve this Brother of financial stress, had requested the Charity steward, Bro. Cashmore to make an immediate grant of ten Guineas from the lodge charity funds. A request had also been made to the Fortescue fund for a grant to be made to this Brother. The committee approved this action and it was proposed and seconded and subsequently carried that a further Ten Guineas be granted from lodge funds, subject to the approval of the lodge. An interesting letter, read at this meeting, from Bro. Edworthy, a subscribing member of the lodge, living and working in Uganda in which he said that he was seeking membership of the Entebbe Lodge No. 7171 and that the W.Master of that lodge was known to the W.Master of St. Thomas Lodge. At the October lodge meeting the Brethren

readily approved the action taken by the G.P.&F. committee to relieve the Distressed brother and the Charity Steward was able to report that the appeal to the Fortescue Fund had been successful in that a sum of £25 had also been granted. Yet once again an example of the tenets of Freemasonry being so willingly and generously applied.

The year of 1962 came to its close with the lodge conducting its usual Christmass lecture, this being the first three sections of the second lecture, in the presence of the Deputy Prov. Grand Master, V.W.Bro.W.A.Kneel who had expressed his desire, as early as the previous May, to be present. Is it too facetious to remark that this is indeed advance booking for a seat at a highly desired and well attended function? There being no fewer than 101 Brethren in the lodge for this meeting. And so with the praises of the Deputy Prov. G.Master ringing in their ears for the excellence of the work carried out on the floor of the Temple the St. Thomas Lodge came to the end of yet another successful year.

The year of 1963 started in the same way that any other has done for the St. Thomas Lodge in that the January meeting was domestic night. It is noteworthy that at this meeting there was only one name balloted for as a candidate for Initiation. A most unusual circumstance in the life of the lodge as it was usually found that at least two names were submitted. Was the lodge becoming more selective with its candidates? There then followed the unusual elections for the Master Elect, Treasurer and Tyler. This was followed by the proposal of Bro.E.G.Ralph to succeed Bro.H.C. Cashmore as Charity Steward. This was carried. The W.Master then thanked Bro. Cashmore for the hard work he had put in during his years of office. In his reply Bro. Cashmore said that he had received a very touching letter from the Wife of the distressed Bro., who had received further assistance at Christmass, thanking the W.Master and the Brethren for their kindness and help which had arrived at such an opportune time.

The Installation lodge meeting was held on Wednesday, 13th. February in the presence of the Deputy Pr.G.Master, V.W.Bro.W.A.Kneel. After the Installation of the Master Elect the address to the W.Master was given by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore.

The Address to the Wardens and the Brethren was given by W.Bro. M.H.Buller and W.Bro. A.G.Chanter respectively.

The March lodge meeting saw the Initiation of the only candidate as yet balloted for in the current year, fortunately this matter was resolved before the lodge was closed by balloting a second candidate, which proved

to be favourable so enabling an Initiation ceremony to be undertaken at the April lodge meeting. This action allowing the usual continuity of the practice of the lodge to remain unbroken.

The meeting of the G.P. & F. committee in June and the lodge meeting the following week was marred by the W.Master informing the Brethren of the death of two of the Brethren within the lodge, one being W.Bro. B.L. Greenslade and the other was Bro. F.J. Moor. At the G.P. meeting W.Bro. Modley proposed that the regalia of W.Bro. Greenslade be purchased by the lodge for the sum of Ten Guineas, this proposal was immediately carried. It was also resolved at the meeting that a further sum of two guineas, in lieu of a wreath, be sent to Mrs. Greenslade for the cancer relief fund. Also at the G.P. meeting a full discussion took place concerning the setting up of a Hospitality Fund and it was resolved that a sub-committee to formulate such a fund should consist of the W.Master, W.Bro. M.H. Buller, W.Bro. W.G. Heywood and Bros. H.C. Cashmore and E.C.V. Summerfield. As already mentioned in a previous chapter, this hospitality fund is now a well established fund within the lodge and one source of income being that all lodge officers pay an annual fee into the fund, the amount of each individual subscription being based upon rank within the lodge.

Following the summer holiday the September lodge meeting was the occasion of the third Initiation of the year, in spite of the apparent slow start the lodge had caught up with its usual target of at least three new Brethren per annum. The candidate on this occasion is still a subscribing member of the lodge and has reached high office within the craft. It is a privilege to know him, and to see him at work on the floor of the Temple is an inspiration to all. A further labour at this lodge was the presentation of an application, for the signatures of the W.Master and the Wardens, to the Royal Masonic Benevolent Fund for a grant to a distressed brother of the lodge. Needless to say that these signatures were immediately made.

At the November lodge meeting the W.Master ~~ext~~ended warm greetings to Bro. Edworthy who was present in the lodge whilst on leave from his work in Uganda. Following the last raising ceremony of the year the Charity Steward reported that that he was pleased to inform the lodge that the Fortescue Annuity Fund had made a grant of £156 per annum to a very distressed Brother of the lodge.

The December lodge was of course the occasion for the usual working of one of the Masonic Lectures. The last three sections of the second lecture being the subject worked. On this particular occasion the team

working under the direction of W.Bro. G.W. Heywood owing to the absence of W.Bro.J.J.L. Gore. At the Nov. lodge meeting the W.Master had referred to the death of W.Bro. Gore's wife at which the Brethren had stood to order in the manner among Masons, and it can only be assumed that this tragic loss suffered by the W.Bro. had prevented him from rehearsing both himself and his team for the presentation of the lecture. When it is remembered that he was the instigator of this annual function and that it was the fourteenth time it had been carried out and his first absence, then it must have been a strain upon his emotions to say the least.

The year 1964 arrived and in the words of the Lodge Secretary at quite a number of lodge meetings there was nothing to report on the happenings within the St Thomas Lodge during the first months of the year. The year had commenced in the usual way and with the continuity of the lodge ensured by the initiation of two new Brothers during the spring. These two initiations allowing the customary double Passing ceremony, for which the St Thomas Lodge is now so well known and at which a full house is always present, to be held at the May lodge meeting. At the June meeting of the General Purposes and Finance committee, and subsequently at the lodge meeting the following week, the W.Master congratulated W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb upon his investiture of Past Provincial Grand Registrar. In his reply at the G.P. meeting W.Bro. Webb stated that the ceremony had been most gratifying especially as two of the officiating officers at the Pr.G.Lodge meeting were Past Masters of the St Thomas Lodge. At this meeting the Charity Steward reported that the application for assistance for a distressed Brother of the lodge to the Provincial Grand Masters fund, following the inability of the Fortescue Fund being unable to help due to shortage of funds, had been rapidly responded to and therefore the Brother had received financial help. The Charity Steward stated that at the next regular lodge he would appeal to the Brethren to donate as much as they could afford to the Fortescue Fund. This appeal was duly noted at that lodge meeting and met with great success. And so the year progressed into autumn and on to the lodge meeting held in December at which the usual Christmass lecture was presented, on this occasion it being the Third lecture under the direction of W.Bro.G.W. Heywood. Following upon this labour a presentation was then made to the lodge of the Founders Jewel that had belonged to W.Bro.W.R. Brealy, P.P.G.D. a founder member of the lodge and the first Senior Warden of the lodge. The presentation was made by W.Bro. G.B. Quintence,

P.P.G.W. a Past Master of Semper Fidelis Lodge No.1254 and Rolfe Lodge No. 2759., the Grandson of W.Bro. Brealy. In making this present to the lodge W.Bro. Quaintence said that whilst the Jewel had great sentimental value to him, he felt that the rightfull place for it was in the St. Thomas Lodge. Before making the presentation W.Bro. Quaintence had the Jewel mounted on a ribbon in order that it could be used as a bookmark. This wish has been complied with and it has been used in the Volume of the Sacred Law since its introduction to the lodge thirty one years ago. Here again is an example of a piece of the lodge's history that is of great value both sentimentally and monetary. In his reply the W.Master thanked W.Bro.Quaintence for the gift and remarked that not only was it of value because of its being a part of the foundation of the lodge but also it could be regarded also as a gift to mark the 44th. anniversary of the lodge which was consecrated on the 21st. December 1920. And so it was with this splendid gift that the lodge came to the end of its 44th. year.

The year of 1965 started with the lodge accepting a joining member into the lodge from the Scottish Constitution. This of course could not take place until approval had been confirmed from United Grand Lodge in London. As can be appreciated, this procedure took some time, the process having been in hand for some weeks. However all was well and Bro. Simon Mclean MacKenzie, a subscribing member of the Priory Lodge No.1235, of the Scottish Constitution was received into the St. Thomas Lodge. Needless to say that this was not the first time that a Brother from 'foreign parts' had been received into the lodge. Following this, the domestic night of 1965 took its usual course. At the March lodge meeting an Initiation took place in which the spirit of Brotherly Love was demonstrated by the W.Master, W.Bro.J.S.S.James vacating the chair and inviting W.Bro. R.Bales, a Past Master of the lodge to take the chair in order that he could carry out the Initiation of his son Mr. Keith Roderick Bales. This was by no means a unique occasion, but nevertheless one in which both Father and Son would appreciate and remember for the rest of their lives. At the G.P.&F. committee meeting the previous week the Secretary reported that he had received a letter from the Exeter Freemasons Hall Company informing him that the rent was to be doubled. This meant that to the lodge an increase of £99 .. 8 .. 6 for the current year and £132 ..11 .. 3 for a full year. Was the curse of inflation commencing?

In view of this increase it was agreed that subscriptions would have to be increased and also the possible increase in initiation fees. It was resolved that a sub committee consisting of the Treasurer, W.Bro.J.J.L. Gore and Bro. Cashmore be set up to consider these proposals and to report at the next G.P. meeting. Following the report of this sub committee the relevant Bye Law was amended at the May lodge meeting thus ensuring the lodge would remain solvent financially.

At the June G.P.&F. committee meeting the W.Master congratulated W.Bro. L.D.Modley on his promotion to P.P.S.G.D. and it was agreed by the committee that the lodge should purchase from W.Bro. Modley for the sum of Five pounds his P.G.Stewards regalia so that in the future any Brother of the lodge who might be promoted to the rank of P.G.Stwd. would be able to borrow the regalia. It had been agreed to adopt this course at the Jan. G.P. meeting but the amount to be paid had not been agreed. Also at this meeting the Secretary reported that he had received a letter from W.Bro. Morgan stating that the regalia belonging to the late Bro. C. Woodland, a deceased Bro. of the lodge and one time Mayor of Exeter, had been given by his widow to the lodge with the request that it be sold and the proceeds be donated to charity.

At the September meeting of the General Purposes & Finance committee a report was given by the Secretary of the son of a deceased Brother of the lodge. The Secretary stated that he had received a brief school report on the boys progress. He also reported that Bro. Ventor had learned that the boy had passed a number of subjects in his General Certificate at O level and was hoping to stay at school to take certain subjects at A level and then possibly go on to university. Here again is yet another example of the tenets of Freemasonry being applied to those in need.

The following month, October, at the G.P.& F. committee meeting a request by a Brother in the lodge, for consideration to be allowed to pay the reduced subscription of a Country Member due to family and business commitments preventing him from attending the lodge regularly was discussed. It was decided that the committee recommend to the lodge that this request be refused as the committee were of the opinion that the request was invalid within the Bye-Laws of the lodge. This advice was duly accepted by the Brethren at the lodge meeting the following week. Can this particular course of action, by the lodge, be termed to be tempering mercy with justice due to the Brother concerned in the request

where he was in a position, financially, to continue to be a fully subscribing member of the lodge should he wish to retain his membership. The granting of Country Membership status to a Brother is a question that requires careful thought and discussion before any decision can be reached. As was recently made clear to the members of the G.P. & F. committee, to grant a Brother country membership actually costs the lodge money in the respect that such fees as annual registration to United Grand Lodge, Prov. G. Lodge and rent to the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. Ltd. is based upon total membership and not Town Membership. However at the very next lodge meeting, on the recommendation of the G.P. & F. committee a Brother who petitioned for country membership due to ill-health preventing him from attending lodge was granted this privilege by the Brethren. This act of 'Charity' brought the lodge to the end of the year, the customary lecture being performed under the direction of W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore due to the absence, through illness of W.Bro. Heywood.

Following the usual business of a domestic night at the January lodge meeting of 1966, the Secretary read to the lodge members a letter which had been received from United Grand Lodge concerning the setting up of the 250th. Anniversary Fund and the quotas which had been suggested for each lodge. The W.Master then invited the Charity Steward to explain to the Brethren how this could be achieved. The charity steward, Bro. E.G. Ralph then informed the Brethren that the sum suggested by U.G.L. that each subscribing brother in a lodge toward the Anniversary Fund was a minimum of £1.0. 0. and that he, the charity steward would be in the building at Gandy St. half an hour before lodge meetings commenced to receive any contributions from the Brethren. He added that he hoped that this effort would not interfere with their usual donations to the other Masonic charities. Whilst by today's standards the sum of £1. 0.0. may appear to be minute it is worth mentioning that the alms bag at this lodge meeting thirty one years ago amounted to £4..4..6. (£4.22½p). Another further item of some interest is that the previous week, at the G.P. & F. committee meeting it was resolved to purchase the past masters jewel which belonged to the late W.Bro. J.B. Hannaford, Master of the lodge in 1936, for the sum of Ten Guineas in order that this jewel could be altered and presented to a Past Master of the future. By doing this the lodge was able to give a small degree of financial assistance to a

lodge widow and in addition retain regalia within the lodge which had historic and sentimental value to the lodge. Several of our active Past Masters within the lodge proudly wear jewels which bear the names of Past Masters of days past as well as their own name and year of office. Another instance of this kind was the retention of the Pr.G.Std. collar belonging to W.Bro.Modley that had been purchased by the lodge on the promotion of that W.Bro. to higher rank within the Province. This collar however was loaned to an Okehampton Lodge for a fee of One Guinea per year for an indefinite period on the understanding that it would be immediately returned in the event of a Brother in St. Thomas Lodge being promoted to that rank. As this loan took place toward the end of 1965 and the minutes do not record the name or number of the lodge to which the loan was made then I feel that this loan must be written off as being irrecoverable.

At the March meeting of the G.P. & F. committee the Secretary read a letter from the Freemasons Hall Co. Ltd. drawing attention to the financial difficulties of the company and appealing for lodges and brethren to invest in the company. W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore proposed and W.Bro.R.H.Punchard seconded that Two Hundred pounds be transferred from invested capital for the purchase of 200 £1 shares in the company, and that this course be recommended to the Brethren. This was agreed. In the minutes of the lodge meeting for the following week it is recorded that the Secretary read the letter concerning these shares but it is not recorded whether the Brethren accepted the recommendation of the G.P. & F. committee. However the Treasurer made an appeal to the Brethren to purchase shares. Also at the March G.P. & F. meeting the Secretary reported upon the congestion on the back of the summons. It was proposed by W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb and seconded by W.Bro.R.H.Punchard that certain names of Past Masters of the lodge be deleted. (Note the underline of). Fortunately this proposition was not carried out, but certain names of Past Masters in the lodge have been deleted. Thankfully, to this day a complete list of Past Masters of the lodge appears on the reverse of every summons printed.

At the April G.P. & F. committee meeting two items of interest appear in the minutes, the first being an explanation of the correct procedure for the return of the list of lodge members to the Clerk of the Peace. This annual return had to be made on a specific form supplied by United G. lodge which was filled in by the Secretary of the lodge and signed by the W.Master. This was a regulation imposed by central government that

all so called secret societies had to return a complete list of its members to the local Clerk of the Peace on an annual basis. This applied to Rotary Clubs, Round Table, Moose Etc. This practice was finally discontinued with the repeal of the Aliens Act in 1975. The second item was the question concerning the Prov. G. Stewards collar which had been purchased by the lodge from W.Bro. Modley. W.Bro J.W.H.Webb raised the question and it was proposed and seconded and then subsequently resolved that the collar be retained by the lodge and made available to any Brother within the lodge who might be promoted to the rank of P.G.Stwd. for a hiring fee of One Guinea throughout his term of office, the Brother being responsible for the condition of the collar. Could this mean then that the collar never made the journey to the foothills of Dartmoor?, as was reported in the G.P. minute book some two months previously.

At the may lodge meeting the W.Master had the very pleasant task of extending the congratulations of the lodge to W.Bro. W.W.Walters upon his promotion to Past Provincial Grand Standard Bearer which was awarded for his services to Freemasonry as an individual. The W.Master went on to say that whilst this honour had been conferred on an individual Brother it nevertheless reflected honour upon the lodge.

At the June G.P. & F. committee meeting the W.Master asked W.Bro.W.W. Walters to report on the comments made by the P.G.Master at the Prov.G. Lodge meeting. W.Bro. Walters said that the P.G.M. made reference to:-

1. The desirability of having a permanent Secretary. (St. Thomas Lodge cannot concur with this. Our Founders decreed all offices should be progressive).
2. At festive boards the Master should not hand over his gavel to the Director of Ceremonies.
3. The proper form of giving a Toast, which is "Brethren, you will rise and drink....."
4. In open lodge and at festive boards during speeches etc., no use shall be made of Christian names but strict adherence to proper titles eg. Bro. Senior Warden should be maintained.

I have deliberately listed this report in full in order that Brethren may appreciate that almost thirty years ago strict formality was the norm. Whether this is correct on the one hand or too stuffy on the other is for the individual Brother to address his conscience to.

It may however help some of our younger Brothers to conduct themselves and the lodge in what is accepted as a 'proper' manner when they reach that stage in their Masonic careers when they are 'in charge'.

Following this rather critical observation by the Grand Master reported by W.Bro. Walters, a discussion then took place by the members of the G. P. & F. committee on the attendance of the junior members of the committee, their irregularity, their failure to send written or even verbal apologies for absence for non-attendance took place. It was decided that the W.Master should personally speak to the Brethren concerned and point out their responsibility in this matter. Further the Secretary was instructed to prepare a form of register of attendance which would show at a glance the presence ~~or~~ absence of committee men, and the regularity of their attendance. This may smack of stern stuff indeed but when earlier senior officers of the lodge in days past have requested that lodge meetings and G.P. meetings should be held on different days and times to normal due to their inability to attend illustrates the importance and dedication they attached to their position.

At the September lodge meeting following an Initiation, the Secretary reported that there were three items to bring before the lodge following the G.P. meeting the previous week. These were:-

1. The Directorship of the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. Ltd. held by W.Bro.W.J.Shapland had to be filled due to him requesting to be relieved of this responsibility. It was proposed, seconded and carried that W.Bro.W.G.Heywood be appointed in W.Bro.Shapland's place.
2. The reports upon the progress of two children being educated by the R.M.I.G. and the R.M.I.B.were received and read.
3. An interesting letter from Bro.G.Davies on a visit to Bermuda and an interesting cutting from a newspaper with reference to the rent for the Masonic Temple there.

When thinking of the location of this Temple in the West Indies the mind boggles at the form the rent for this Temple could take! Some ideas being sugar, bannanas, tobacco, rum!

At the November meeting of the G.P. & F. committee meeting W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore reported that he had recently seen W.Bro. Cavendish Land, the W.Bro. of Provincial Grand Rank responsible for the Aged Widows Annuity Fund who had expressed concern at the lack of funds in this charity. It was probably with this report in mind that the committee resolved to donate to this fund the Ten Guineas that would have normally been paid to the Widow of the late W.Bro. J. Lake on the return to the lodge of W.Bro. Lake's Past Masters jewel. Mrs. Lake having stated to W.Bro. J.H. Webb that she wished the jewel to be returned to the lodge without any payment being made to herself.

At the December G.P. & F. committee meeting a discussion took place concerning the financial health of the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co.Ltd. the subject of this discussion was the possibility of introducing Fruit Machines into the club. W.Bro. Roebuck proposed and Bro. Roberts seconded that to test the feelings of the committee the introduction of machines would be welcomed. This proposition was lost by six votes to ten with five abstentions. It would appear from this result that gambling is frowned upon at Gandy Street. The lodge meeting held the following week on the 14th. December saw the end of the year being marked by the usual Christmass lecture, on this occasion it being the last four sections of the first lecture under the direction of W.Bro. Heywood.

At the January 1967 G.P. & F. committee meeting an interesting item appears in the minutes, this being the reading of a letter, by the Secretary, from Messrs. Toye, Kenning and Spencer re a Founder Members Jewel of the lodge which had come into their possession which they offered to the lodge for the sum of Three Pounds. Upon the proposition by W.Bro. Punchard and W.Bro. Buller seconding it was agreed that the jewel be purchased. It is unfortunate that the minutes do not record the name of the Founder Member of the lodge to whom this jewel was presented. The lodge meeting the following week was of course Domestic night at which the usual business was conducted that would ensure that the St. Thomas Lodge would enjoy another successful year. At the Installation lodge meeting the following month the Secretary reported that the Founders Jewel that had been offered to the lodge had now been delivered to the lodge, again it is with regret that the Brother to whom it was presented was not named. Also the Secretary reported that W.Bro. G. Sluggett had sent an invitation to the lodge to attend an Initiation at Lodge No.38 at Chichester, Sussex.

At the April lodge meeting ,following a discussion at the G.P.& F. committee meeting the previous week, the Brethren received a report in the form of a letter read by the Secretary which stated that the Exeter Masonic Charities Association had been wound up, it having acheived it's objective and that in the distribution of it's assets Ten Guineas was attributable to the St. Thomas Lodge. W.Bro.W.W.Walters proposed and W.Bro.T.R.Roebuck seconded that this sum together with an additional sum of Twenty Guineas be donated to the Aged Widows Annuity Fund. This motion was immediately carried by the Brethren. Also, the Secretary read a letter from Prov. G. Lodge stating that a Thanksgiving Service was to be held, at St. Andrews Church, Plymouth, commemerating the 250th. Anniversary of Grand Lodge. The letter also contained a request that each lodge contribute Two Guineas to the Anniversary fund.

At the G.P.& F. committee meeting held on the 8th. June the W.Master warmly congratulated W.Bros. A.G.Chanter and R.H.Punchard on the honours they had received at the Prov.G.Lodge meeting on the 20th. May. The Secretary also read a letter from P.G.L. asking for an estimation of the numbers likely to be attending the Thanksgiving service at St. Andrews Church, Plymouth on the 21st. June. This letter was to be read to the Brethren in the lodge the following week. The secretary reported that he had received a letter from Bro.Edworthy stating that owing to him moving to Canada he must with regret resign his office of Steward of the lodge. It is noteworthy that this letter did not contain any reference to resignation from the lodge, here again is another example of Masonic loyalty shown to a Mother Lodge. Mention was then made upon the desirability of compiling a list of Widows of past Brethren of the lodge and W.Bro.Gore undertook to organise this.

The G.P.& F. committee meeting held on Thursday 6th. July was memorable in the respect that at this meeting W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, spoke on behalf of himself and Bro.H.C.Cashmore and drew attention to the link through their Headmasterships of the John Stocker Schools with the Founder of the lodge. Due to retirement and promotion this link would shortly be severed, but W.Bro.Gore wished to present to the lodge the Bible given to John Stocker by his Mother on his 21st. birthday in 1869. The W.Master acknowledged the gift with considerable pleasure and decided that it should be presented formally at the next lodge meeting together with any proposals as to its use.

At the regular lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 12th. July 1967 the John Stocker Bible, as it now affectionately known, was formally presented to the lodge by W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore with the suggestion that it be used at the December, January and February lodge meetings. These being the Christmass, Domestic and Installation lodge meetings respectively. To anyone who has a love of copperplate handwriting then I recommend that they look at the inscription on the flyleaf written by John Stocker's Mother when she gave him his Bible. The W.Master acknowledged the gift as a fitting tribute to the memory of the Founder Worshipful Master and promised to fulfil the wishes expressed as to its use. Also at this lodge meeting part of a letter from United Grand Lodge was read referring to the Installation, as Grand Master, of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent. The W.Master reported that he had been present at the Royal Albert Hall for this occasion on the 27th. June and gave a vivid account of the proceedings which had been attended by 6,500 Masons from all over the world.

At the October meeting of the G.P. & F. committee W.Bro. Gore reported on the preparation of the list of widows of deceased Brethren and said it would be some 25 to 30 names. It was decided to make an annual appeal to the Brethren with the object of providing a small gift, such as biscuits. This was to be mentioned at the October lodge and a written appeal sent out with the November summons. The matter to be dealt with by the sub-committee. This proposal of a Christmass gift to our lodge widows is now a well established custom of the lodge which is ably and willingly organised each year by our Charity Steward and just as willingly distributed by our Almoner. Two Brethren to whom the lodge owes a tremendous debt of gratitude for the work they carry out on our behalf. At the October lodge meeting the W.Master advised the Brethren of the decision to present a Christmass gift to the widows of deceased brothers and details would be given with the November summons. The W.Master then congratulated W.Bro. W.W. Walters on his 86th. birthday that day, this was heartily endorsed by the Brethren. All this following the Passing to the Second degree or that of a Fellow Craft Freemason of a Brother who today is a very active Past Master of the lodge.

At the November G.P. & F. meeting it was reported that the letter concerning the widows Christmass gift had been sent out with the summons and a sample of the biscuits to be sent out was shown to the committee. It was resolved that Mrs. Restrick, the widow of a deceased brother, residing in London would receive the usual gift of Ten Guineas but not the biscuits. Also at this meeting W.Bro.M.H.Buller, who had for some time been looking after the financial and booking arrangements for the Festive Board, suggested that Brethren be limited to one guest for the December lodge. It was decided to print this accordingly on the summons and the card for the return of Brethren when booking for the Festive Board. The November lodge meeting was the occasion at which the Raising of the Brother referred to with respect to his Passing the previous month, thus maintaining the lodge's target of three candidates per year. Also at this lodge a successful ballot was taken for a joining member, Bro. J.D.W.Barnett, a subscribing member of Malling Abbey Lodge No.1063.

At the meeting of the G.P. & F. committee on the 7th. December the W.Master reported upon the splendid response to the Widows Christmass Appeal, it had exceeded all expectations. A sum of £27..13..0d had been subscribed and any monies left over should be placed in a fund and a sub-committee set up comprising W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, Bro.E.Bales and Bro. E.A.Rickard, Asst. Sec. W.Bro.Bales proposed that the appeal should be sent out with the September summons in future years and this was carried by the Brethren. W.Bro.Gore and Bro.Cashmore then presented to the lodge a set of gilded Square and Compasses, suitable for use with the Bible which had previously been presented to the lodge by them. This splendid gift was received by the Brethren with acclamation and it was resolved that the Square and Compasses be used for the first time at the December lodge, being laid on the Volume of the Sacred Law by Bro. Cashmore. These working tools having been made by a pupil of the John Stocker school. The presentation of the Square and Compasses was duly carried out the following week immediately after the lodge was opened in due and solemn form. There then followed the usual Christmass lecture, at which the First Three sections of the Second lecture under the direction of W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. The Treasurer reported that he had received a letter from Bro. Edworthy in Canada in which he gave an account of his Masonic activities in that country. This then brought to an end yet another successful year for the St. Thomas

The year of 1968 started as vigorously as any other year for the St. Thomas Lodge in that the usual number of candidates for Initiation were balloted for at the Domestic meeting of the lodge thus ensuring a full programme for the coming year. This lodge meeting being followed by the Installation meeting in February. The Installation lodge was attended by the Prov.D.G.Master, W.W.Bro.W.A.Kneel who gave the address to the Brethren following the ceremony. The address to the W.Master and the Wardens being given on this occasion by W.Bro.W.W.Walters and W.Bro.M.H.Buller respectively.

The lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 13th. March proved to be yet another occasion at which a family was drawn closer together by the ties that Freemasonry can achieve. On this particular evening the W.Master, W.Bro. G.F.Edwards vacated the Chair in order that W.Bro. R.Bales could carry out the initiation ceremony of his younger son. The ceremony was made more of a family occasion when the Working Tools were presented by the candidates elder brother. For a father to have two sons as Brothers in his lodge was by no means unique to St. Thomas Lodge, this being already an established fact in the presence of W.Bro. E.Chanter, P.P.D.G.Reg. and his two sons Bros. R. and G.Chanter. In later years we shall see that this family relationship was to occur yet again.

At the April G.P. & F. committee meeting the topic of the Prov.G.Steward's collar that belonged to the lodge was once again the subject of discussion. W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb requested that the P.G.Stwd. regalia be lent to W.Bro. W.H.Terry of St. Andrews Lodge, Cullompton for the appropriate fee, this was proposed and seconded by W.Bros. C.Chesterfield and R.Bales respectively and carried. Also at this meeting a letter was read from the P.G.Secretary regarding donations to the Bishop Surtees Memorial Fund. W.Bro.W.W.Walters proposed and W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb seconded that the sum of Twenty Guineas be donated to the fund. This was duly carried. At the lodge meeting the following week the letter giving details of the Bishop Surtees Memorial Fund was read to the Brethren, as requested by the P.G.Sec.

At the May G.P. & F. committee meeting the W.Master reported that arrangements had been completed for the loan of the P.G.Stwd's Regalia to W.Bro.Terry and he would be wearing it for the first time when he visited St. Thomas Lodge on Wed. 12th. June. With regard to the Bishop Surtees Fund

it was proposed by W.Bro.M.H.Buller and seconded by W.Bro.R.Bales that the minute relating to the donation of Twenty Guineas from the lodge to this fund should stand. This was carried. The W.Master then reported that he had received a letter from W.Bro.W.A.Kneel relating to the fund and the contents would be made known to the Brethren at the next regular lodge. Following the usual double Passing ceremony associated with the May lodge meeting the W.Master read the letter concerning the Bishop Surtees Fund. W.Bro. L.Modley then stated that at the next regular stated lodge he would propose that "the sum of Twenty Guineas be donated to the Bishop Surtees Memorial Fund from the lodge funds".

At the June G.P. & F. committee meeting the W.Master referred to his visit to Prov.G.Lodge at which the P.G.Master spoke about the Bishop Surtees Memorial Fund. After discussion it was resolved that the W.Master write to every Brother in the lodge, this letter to be sent with the July summons. A copy of this letter is attached to the minutes of the June G.P. meeting in which W.Bro.G.F.Edwards explained that the P.G.M. had stated that the memorial was to be in the form of new Choir Stalls in the Cathedral at Exeter. As this would cost in the region of Five Thousand pounds the P.G.M. asked every lodge in the province to contribute not less than Fifty Guineas. W.Bro. Edwards therefore appealed to the Brethren of the lodge to make a personal contribution in addition to the Twenty Guineas already donated from the lodge funds in order that the St. Thomas Lodge could subscribe this amount, if not even exceed it, in order that the memory of a highly regarded Freemason could be made in such a practical manner. At the lodge meeting the following week it was the pleasant duty of the W.Master, on behalf of the Brethren of the lodge, to offer congratulations to W.Bro.M.H.Buller on being appointed Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon, Bro.A. Jewells promotion to Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon and to W.Bro.G.W.Heywood as Provincial Grand Tyler. Also to W.Bro.L.Modley on attaining Grand Lodge rank in another degree. It must be agreed that this was an imposing list of honours for one lodge in a single year.

At the July G.P. & F.C. meeting an item brought up by the Treasurer was the cost of printing special Installation Festive Board cards. Since the consecration of the lodge it was the custom of the lodge to send out, with the lodge summons, a card upon which the Brethren gave the details of their guests as well as themselves when attending the Festive Board.

The Treasurer moved that the existing cards sent normally should be used to save the expense of printing the usual special cards, this motion was agreed. What is interesting, in the light of this information, is when was the practice of the perforated tear off slip on the bottom of the summons introduced? Previous to this item being discussed the committee had deliberated at length upon the assistance being made to several widows of deceased Brothers of the lodge. It had also been reported recently that the son of a deceased Brother had completed his education, paid for by the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys, by obtaining an Honours degree in French at Cardiff University. This item being reported to the Brethren in open lodge the following week by W.Bro.A.G.Chanter The young man in question being Mr.M.Leaker, the son of the late Bro.W.Leaker.

At the September meeting of the G.P.& F.C. the W.Master had the sad task of reporting the death of three Brethren during the summer holiday, these were W.Bro.E.House, W.Bro.S.J.Ashelford and Bro.E.A.Ash. The W. Master requested the Brethren to stand to order as is usual among Msaons. W.Bro.M.H.Buller reported on his recent visit to Mrs. Ashelford and her desire to leave any of the late W.Bro. Ashelford's regalia etc. to the lodge's discretion. It was proposed by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore and seconded by W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb that the Past Masters jewel be purchased and the money donated to the Aged Widows Fund.

At the October meeting of the G.P.& F. committee the relief of sick or distressed Brethren and their dependants was once again illustrated by the discussions which took place concerning the welfare of the widow of a deceased Brother of the lodge, the debate was ongoing in the situation that the Charity Steward had some weeks previously petitioned the P.G.Master's private fund for this widow. It was resolved that this lady be given a grant of Ten Guineas from the lodge charity bag, upon hearing that she had been granted Forty Pounds from the P.G.M. private fund it was resolved that this be paid in four monthly instalments of £10..0..0d. It was also decided at this meeting that Mrs. Restricks, living in London be sent the usual £10..0..0d. as her Christmass gift from the lodge. The Charity Steward reported that the Bishop Surtees Memorial Fund had raised the sum of £106..7..0d. in the lodge. The W.Master thanked the Charity Steward for his efforts in raising this amount for the fund.

At the regular stated lodge meeting the following week the deliberations of the G.P. committee meeting the previous week were made known to the brethren in open lodge re the charitable dispensations and also the total amount raised by the lodge for the Bishop Surtees Memorial Fund.

Following upon a discussion which had taken place some weeks previously concerning the procedure for the interviewing of candidates for initiation into the lodge and the deliberations of a sub-committee convened to draw up a procedural process; W. Bro. J. J. L. Gore read a submission to the November G.P. & F. committee. It was proposed by W. Bro. M. H. Buller and seconded by W. Bro. J. W. H. Webb that the proposed form be accepted, and a copy placed in the front of the minute book for reference when required. Unfortunately this reference is not evident in the minute book in question. However what is attached to the front page of the G.P. & F. minute book for the period between 1961 to 1976 is a copy of the procedure for conducting interviews of candidates issued by United Grand Lodge in 1960. Also at this meeting the W. Master suggested that the Brethren be contacted regarding the 1977 festival for the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys. He proposed that this be done by a special letter, composed jointly by himself and W. Bro. J. J. L. Gore and signed by the W. Master. This letter to be included with the December summons. This was carried. The regular lodge meeting the following week saw the Raising to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason of the final candidate of the year. The Chair of King Solomon being occupied on this occasion by the Acting W. Master W. Bro. T. E. Draper. This being one of the very rare occasions when the W. Master of the lodge was unavailable, though no reason for his absence is indicated in the minutes of the meeting.

At the G.P. & F.C. meeting held on Thurs., 5th. December the W. Master referred to interviews he had conducted with the candidates for the forthcoming year and stated his satisfaction with the candidates. He went on to remark upon the success of the Ladies night that had been held at the Imperial Hotel on the 29th. November and thanked everyone who had helped to make it such a successful evening. It was reported that the packing and distribution of the Christmas gifts to the lodge widows was in hand. The Secretary reported that he had received a report from the Royal Masonic School for Boys on the progress of Mr. D. J. Heaton and that it was excellent and a credit to the family. From this first indication in the minute book of this particular petition it would appear that the lodge was conscious of the needs of dependants of the lodge and was

in no way hesitant to act when the need arose.

The December lodge meeting was held on Wednesday the 11th. day of the month and the usual Christmass lecture was the Last Three Sections of the Second Degree. This being performed by the Brethren under the direction of W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. It is worth noting that one of the Brethren taking part in the lecture was the Brother who had been raised the previous month. No one was going to let the Masonic grass grow under his feet! On counting the number of Brethren in the lodge that night and arriving at a total of 104 Brothers it is evident that this Christmass function of the St. Thomas Lodge does not lose any of its attraction as the years pass by.

At the January 1969 meeting of the G.P.& F.C. the W.Master reported that he had received several letters of thanks, from the widows, for the Christmass presents and he thanked those Brethren who had assisted in the preparation of these. He then made referrence to the 1977 festival and stressed the importance of making an early start. With regard to the proposal made the previous November, by W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb and seconded by Bro.E.G.Ralph that Ten Guineas gross per year for a period of Ten years be covenanted from the lodge funds; it was pointed out by the W.Master that this proposal would need to be placed before the Brethren in open lodge. It was therefore proposed by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore and seconded by W.Bro.C.

Chesterfield that this motion be placed before the Brethren at the March lodge meeting. This was carried. W.Bro.T.E.Draper told the meeting of the unfortunate circumstances of Mrs. Harvey and the Secretary was asked to seek the help and guidance of Bro.E.G.Ralph, Charity Steward. At the regular lodge meeting the following week, it being domestic night for the lodge, the normal business was conducted. As was only to be expected of the St.Thomas Lodge three ballots for candidates for initiation took place, all being successful, thus ensuring yet another full years work. At this lodge meeting the outgoing W.Master, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards spoke yet again on the importance of the 1977 festival and set the Brethren a target of £5000.00 to raise as the effort of the lodge.

At the February G.P.&F.C. meeting the W.Master reported that he had given permission for Ten Guineas to be paid to Mrs. Picken. Bro.H.C. Cashmore proposed that this action be endorsed. This was seconded by Bro. R.B.Roberts and carried. It was then proposed by W.Bro.R.H.Punchard and seconded by W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb that Ten Guineas be paid to Mrs. Picken in February and that the Charity Steward then review her case and report to the next G.P. meeting. This was carried. It will be recalled that the

case of Mrs. Picken had been the subject of much discussion in recent months and that a petition had been submitted to the Provincial Office. The Charity Steward reported on the progress being made for the 1977 festival and was requested by the committee to investigate the best way in which the money could be invested in order to obtain the best tax free interest. The times for holding the G.P. meetings and rehearsals was discussed. It was decided to leave this matter in the hands of the Master Elect and W.Bro.W.G.Heywood. As these times are the same today as they were twenty nine or so years ago it can only be assumed that W.Bro. Heywood and Bro.H.C.Cashmore, Master Elect, could find no fault in them.

The Installation meeting was held on Wednesday, 12th. February in the presence of the Asst.P.G.Master, W.Bro.C.W.Brown, who following the Installation ceremony gave the address to the W.Master. The address to the Wardens was given by the Prov.G.J.Warden, W.Bro.J.W.Smyth and the address to the Brethren was given by the Prov.G.Tyler, W.Bro.G.W.Heywood.

At the G.P. & F.C. meeting held in March the Charity Steward, Bro.E. Ralph reported that the £40.00 allocation to Mrs. Picken had been absorbed. It was agreed that a further £10.00 a month would be allocated to the end of May 1969 when the Provincial Grand Masters fund would grant a sum of £52.00 per annum plus a bonus of approximately £30-40.00 at the end of the year and a possible present at Christmas. This would be reviewed at the end of the year when the Royal Masonic Benevolent Fund would consider a possible income. It was proposed by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore and seconded by W.Bro.R.H.Punchard that the sum of Four pounds per month be allocated to Mrs. Picken from the lodge funds. This was carried. The Charity Steward reported that there was no suitable accommodation in a Masonic home for Mrs. Harvey and it was resolved that W.Bro.T.E. Draper suggest to Mrs. Harvey that the lodge should endeavour to find suitable private accommodation. At the regular lodge meeting the following week the Charity Steward was able to report that the Royal Benvolent Institution had agreed to give financial assistance to the widow of a deceased brother of the lodge. Also at this meeting the motion made by W.Bro.L.Modley concerning the covenant, by the lodge, to the 1977 festival was put to the Brethren and carried. At the April meeting of the G.P. & F.C. the W.Master reported that he would like to visit Brent Lodge in June and as this was the evening the committee met it was agreed that the Secretary should write and seek permission to meet on the Friday. The Secretary was instructed

to make enquiries regarding a new case for the Lodge Charter and the Tyler, W.Bro. G.W.Heywood reported that he had purchased three new collars and two jewels as instructed. At the lodge meeting the following week the W.Master had the sad task of reporting the death of two Past Masters of the lodge namely W.Bro.M.W.Gilpin P.P.G.Org. who was Master of the St. Thomas Lodge in 1932 and W.Bro. W.H.A.Hingston P.P.G.T. Past Master of lodge No. 2595. The W.Master gave a short account of these two brothers masonic careers and request the Brethren to stand to order as Masons. There then followed the usual double passing ceremony associated with the May lodge meeting. Attached to the page of the minute book for this meeting is a complete list of the members of the lodge as at 31st. May 1969. This gives a total of 108 members of whom 22 are Past Masters. No reason is given in the minutes for the inclusion of this list and it can only be assumed that it was produced in order that the Brethren in the lodge should be 'brought up to date' with the full details of numbers. For several years the practice of placing a full list of members in the minutes of the December meeting had sadly been discontinued.

At the July G.P. meeting W.Bro.T.Roebuck had the pleasure of handing back to the lodge the Past Masters Jewel of the late W.Bro.M.Gilpin which was given to the lodge by his widow. It was proposed by W.Bro. J.J.L.Gore and seconded by W.Bro.R.N.Sampson that a sum of Ten Guineas be donated to the Royal Masonic Hospital and a letter of thanks be sent to Mrs. Gilpin thanking her for the gift. At the lodge meeting the following week the W.Master congratulated W.Bro.G.E.Sluggett on his promotion to Prov. Grand Treasurer of the province of Sussex. Here was another example of a commitment of the highest order. Here was a W.Brother who was a joining member of the lodge, a subscribing member of a lodge in Sussex which he regularly attended by commuting from Exeter and was now accepting the responsibilities of the finances of his Mother Province.

At the G.P. & F.C. meeting held in July the W.Master reported that he had been requested to look into the idea of a Dining Fee being introduced, but after a long discussion it was decided that no further action be taken at the present time. The Wardens and Senior Steward were asked to investigate and try to encourage more Brethren to subscribe to the Hospitality Fund. It would appear from this item of lodge news that the Hospitality Fund was in dire need of sustenance if the St.

Thomas Lodge was retain it's good name with regard to the hospitality it afforded it'S visitors.

At the October G.P.& F.C. meeting the W.Master reported that he had sent a congratulatory telegram to W.Bro.N.F.Richards on his Installation as W.Master of the Bidford Lodge and that the W.Bro. had replied expressing his thanks and extending his greetings to the lodge. It may be recalled that W.Bro.Richards was a Brother in the lodge during the war and had moved to Wakefield in West Yorkshire on gaining promotion in the Fire Brigade. He had retained his membership of St. Thomas Lodge as his name appears in the list of subscribing members given in the May lodge minutes. The minutes of the October lodge meeting contain an interesting letter from the Ladies Night Committee Secretary requesting an early booking of places at the Ladies Night to be held at the Imperial Hotel on the 29th. November. The Secretary informed the Brethren in his letter that bookings must be made before the 2nd. of the month as so many bookings had been experienced in previous years that it would be a case of first come first served. He, the Secretary, was not prepared to allocate the seats himself; all bookings would be confirmed by a committee decision. From this atatement it would appear that the St. Thomas Lodge Ladies Night was as popular in 1969 as it is today.

At the November G.P.& F.C. meeting a letter was read from the Charity Steward, Bro. E.Ralph requesting that owing to illness he should be replaced as soon as possible. It was agreed that the W.Master should ask Bro.H.Branton to accept the office of Charity Steward, if the Brethren approved this motion. A letter was also read, from the Secretary of Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. that the three prinipal chairs in the Temple were in need of renovating at a cost of £95.. 10..0 and was asking the Ten Craft Lodges to give £10..0..0 each to enable this work to be carried out. W.Bro.Punchard proposed and Bro. Roberts seconded that subject to the approval of the Brethren in open lodge this sum should be sent to the Secretary of the Hall Co. Needless to say, these two proposals were approved by the Lodge the following week. Also at the committee meeting the W.Master showed the committee the sample of the tin of biscuits that was to be sent to the Widows of deceased Brethren also to aged and infirm Brethren. It was also proposed by W.Bro.Webb and seconded by W.Bro. Buller that £10..0..0 be sent to Mrs. Resterick for Christmass,

The November lodge meeting passed with a Raising ceremony taking place followed by the reference to the Brethren of the two letters concerning first the resignation, due to ill health, of the Charity Steward and his replacement in the person of Bro.H.Branton and second the question of the donation toward the cost of refurbishing the principal chairs in the Temple. Both these items being approved by the Brethren in open lodge.

At both the G.P.& F.C. and lodge meetings for December the W.Master had the sad task of referring to the death of two Brethren of the lodge. One was W.Bro.C.Chesterfield M.B.E. who had been Master of the lodge in 1964 and a member of the lodge for over 18 years. The other was Bro.A.J. Record who had been a member of the lodge for over 40 years. The W.Master, at both the G.P. meeting and the lodge meeting requested the Brethren to stand to order as is usual among Masons. At the G.P. meeting W.Bro. Roebuck stated that Mrs. Chesterfield had given the Past Masters jewel belonging to the late W.Bro. Chesterfield to the lodge. It was agreed that the Treasurer send Mrs. Chesterfield a cheque for the sum of fifteen Guineas. This was agreed.

Owing to the rising costs of Past Masters jewels it was proposed by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore and seconded by W.Bro.R.M.Sampson that in future a sum not exceeding 25 Guineas be allocated for the purchase of these jewels. This was carried. It was proposed by W.Bro.Buller and seconded by W.Bro. Punchard that Three Guineas be given to Mrs.Harold (Stewardess) as a Christmass gift. This was agreed. The question of charges for the festive board was raised by W.Bro.James and after a lengthy discussion it was decided that the W.Master should investigate this matter and report back to the G.P.& F. C. As this was almost at the end of the year 1969 was this one early indication that inflation was beginning to spiral? The year closed for the lodge with the Brethren working the Third Lecture under the direction of W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore.

The G.P.& F. committee meeting held on Thursday 8th. January 1970 got the year off to a rousing start as far as the St. Thomas Lodge was concerned. The W.Master reported upon the charges for the festive board as requested at the previous G.P. meeting and stated that he was satisfied in the way that this was carried out by W.Bro.Buller. After W.Bro.Buller had replied a vote was taken and all were in favour that he carry on as before. Letters of thanks were read for Christmass gifts, all being very happy at being remembered. W.Bro. Modley reported that seven members had

not paid their subscriptions. It was proposed by W.Bro.Gore and seconded by W.Bro.Webb that W.Bro.Modley, Treasurer, report to the committee on all lodge fees so that they could be reviewed on a decimal basis in March. This was most probably an early start to a readiness for the introduction of Decimal Currency. Another item worth noting at this G.P. meeting was the proposal by Bro. Goddard, seconded by W.Bro.Edwards, that the additional cost of the extra printing for the Installation meeting be equally shared between the W.Master and the lodge! This is something that no longer takes place, does that take the worried look from the faces of future Masters of the lodge? It was proposed at this meeting by Bro. H. Branton, seconded by W.Bro.W.G.Heywood that W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore should undertake, with the help of a sub-committee the arrangements for the 50th. Anniversary celebrations. This was carried. At the lodge meeting the following week the usual business of a domestic night was undertaken smoothly so ensuring a full years work leading up to the lodge's Fiftieth Year.

The Installation meeting was conducted on the 11th. February in the presence of the Deputy Prov. Grand Master, V.W.Bro.W.A.Kneel, and the Senior Warden Bro.H.D.Tolliday was installed as the W.Master, he being the Fiftieth Master to hold office. His was to be the honour of Presiding at the celebrations which were to take place at the end of the year.

At the G.P.& F.C. meeting for March the newly installed W.Master had the responsibility of conveying to the meeting the news of the death, on March 3rd, of the Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro.C.H.Crews. The meeting stood to order in memory. At this meeting W.Bro.Buller proposed, W.Bro. Gore seconded that the Charity Steward be presented with his collar annually at the January lodge meeting preceeding the installation lodge. This particular item of business throws some light onto what had been something of a mystery throughout the preparation of this history. Even though the lodge had a Charity Steward there is no mention of the investiture of a Charity Steward at installation meeting nor does the office and it's incumbent appear on the reverse of the lodge summons. In fact the office of Charity Steward was not to be officially created for several years hence.

W.Bro.L.Modley commented on the forthcoming decimalisation figures and to amend the Bye-Law No.9 to read as follows:-

Initiation Fee £21.00. Joining Fee £6.30. Annual Subscriptions £5.25. Country Members £2.50. It was agreed to circularise the members on this matter with a note included in the September summons.

At the Lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 11th. March, following an Initiation ceremony, the W.Master of St. Peter in Exeter Lodge No.5806 W.Bro.A.W.Hicks stated that it was the unanimous decision of his committee and the Brethren, for the St.Thomas Lodge to use the lodge room on St. Thomas day, 21st. December 1970. This then indicated that the first preparations for the celebrations to take place at the end of the year were underway.

At the G.P.& F.C. meeting held in April a vote of thanks, proposed by Bro.E.C.V. Summerfield and seconded by Bro.A.R.Goddard, to W.Bro.M.H. Buller for the efficient way in which he kept the accounts of the Hospitality Fund should be recorded. This proposition was carried. At the lodge meeting the following week these accounts were presented to the lodge and a copy attached to the page of the minute book. For some years this hospitality fund had been in operation by the lodge, the finances being forthcoming from subscriptions being made by the Brethren, these subs. being in the order of £1.00 or even Fifteen shillings (75p), per Brother per year. By this way the burden upon the W.Master and his Wardens to bear the cost of all official guests at lodge meetings could be eased. Attached to the page in the G.P. minute book of April is an interesting letter from the Secretary of the Torridge Lodge NO. 1885. This letter states that the recently installed Master of the lodge was very keen to initiate his son into the lodge whilst he was in the Chair. As his son lived in Pinhoe the letter enquired ; had the St. Thomas Lodge any objection to this action as it was appreciated that the candidate lived in the St. Thomas Lodge area. The name of the W.Master of the Torrington lodge being W.Bro. H. Parnell. The younger members of the St. Thomas Lodge will be unaware of Harry Parnell but he was the lodge Almoner for many years until his passing to the Grand Lodge Above in 1991. The late W.Bro. H. Parnell, P.Pr.G.Reg. was admitted into the St. Thomas Lodge as a joining member in 1976 when he came to live in Exeter. At the April lodge meeting the W.Master announced the details of the Memorial Service of the late Prov. G. Master to be held in the Cathedral church of St. Peter in Exeter and hoped that as many Brethren together with their ladys could be present.

At the May G.P. meeting the Secretary was instructed to write a letter of congratulations to the Very W.Bro. W.A.Kneel on his appointment as Provincial Grand Master for Devonshire. Also at this meeting W.Bro.J.J.L. Gore gave an explanation of the sub-committee's views and thoughts as to

the form the 50th. Anniversary meeting to be held on Monday 21st. December would take, and also stated that the cost of the meal for that very special occasion would be Thirty Two shillings and Sixpence (£1.62½p). After discussion, W.Bro.G.W.Heywood proposed and W.Bro. T.Draper seconded that a letter be enclosed with the June summons informing the the Brethren of this extra lodge meeting and also repeat this letter with the September summons. This was carried. It was also agreed to pay the St. Peter Lodge the cost of the dispensation they would need for allowing the St.Thom Lodge the use of the Temple on that evening. This was carried. It was also agreed at this G.P. meeting to discuss the hospitality fund in detail at the next G.P. meeting in June. An application was then made by W.Bro.G.W. Heywood, on behalf of W.Bro.Radford of the Brent Lodge No.1284 requesting that he be allowed to borrow the the Prov. Grand Lodge Stewards Regalia. This was agreed, and a fee of £1..1..0 per annum would be required. This offer would be withdrawn after twelve months should any W.Brother of the St. Thomas Lodge be so honoured and wished to use the regalia. After the close of this G.P. meeting an ammendment was made to the minutes in that a vote of thanks was passed to the Sub-committee who had worked so hard on the 50th. Anniversary meeting to be held on Monday , 21st. December 1970 and W.Bro. M.H.Buller stated that it should be put on record the names of the members of that committee, and named the following Wor. Brethren J.J.L.Gore, M.H.Buller, H.Webb, L.D.Modley and R.Punchard.

The May lodge meeting the following week saw a double Passing as was only to be expected at the May lodge. This was then followed by several items of business which needed to be brought to the attention of the Brethren. the First of these being the announcement of the appointment of V.W.Bro.W.A.Kneel as the Prov. Grand Master and the date of his Installation. This was to be on 13th. June immediately prior to the Annual General Meeting of P.G.Lodge. This was to take place at Torquay Town Hall and as accomodation would be limited lodge Secretarys were to submit lists of applicants and their ranks early. A letter was then read to the Brethren, from Prov. G. Lodge drawing attention to the festivities which were to take place in Plymouth to mark the 350th. Anniversary of the departure of the Pilgrim Fathers on their voyage to the New Lands in America. The letter went on to say that it was anticipated that visitors from the United States and also from Holland would no doubt include a large number of Freemasons who would be desirous of visiting lodges in the

country. Provincial Grand Lodge drew attention to the fact that any visitors to lodges must belong to lodges recognised as being regular within the English constitution, and before admission to a lodge meeting be proved and also produce approved vouchers of their having been initiated into an approved lodge. To assist lodges and Brethren with this problem a list of approved constitutions had been deposited with the Tourist Office in the Guildhall at Plymouth.

At the June G.P. meeting there was little work of any consequence worthy of mention in this record, however one amusing little item is worthy of inclusion. That is a report by the Charity Steward to the effect that owing to the superb golfing skills of two Brethren of the lodge, who had managed to place their little white balls into the "Middle Chamber", the ancient widows fund was £18.00 better off. Yes, the wording in the minutes is ancient but I rather think it should read aged. One wonders what that particular group of ladies would have to say if they had been privy to the minutes of that meeting. At the lodge meeting the following week reference was made to the success of the golfing Brethren and again it was stated that the winnings had been donated to the Ancient Widows fund. This lodge meeting was the occasion of the Raising of a Brother who has since left the Exeter district and now resides in Wales but still retains country membership of the lodge. And so with nothing to report for the July meeting other than the W.Masters congratulations to W.Bro. R.Bales upon his appointment as Prov. Asst. Organist the lodge went off to it's summer holidays.

The lodge returned from the summer break in September to an Initiation of a candidate who today is a very active Past Master of the lodge whenever his frequent travels abroad permit. It was at this lodge meeting that the W.Master reported that the secretary, Bro Roberts had been taken to hospital and that his duties would be carried out by the Asst. Secretary.

At the October G.P. & F. C. meeting W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore reported that the lodge had about 29 widows and that the Christmass gift list would number about 34. W.Bro. Webb was again going to acquire the biscuits and W.Bro. R.Bales was going to wrap them. W. Bro. Cashmore enquired about Bro. Roberts and the W.Master said that Bro. Roberts had returned to work part time but the W.M. felt that he was overdoing it and had returned to work too early.

The October and November lodge meetings passed quietly, and the preparations for the celebrations of the lodge 50th. anniversary were proceeding according to plan reported W.Bro. Gore at the November G.P. meeting. At the November lodge meeting the treasurer reminded Brethren that several of them were behind with the payment of their subscriptions. The Charity Steward made an appeal to the Brethren for the 1977 Festival and urged them to "Get on with it". The donations to the festival being deposited in a Building Society in order to obtain the best tax free interest.

At the December G.P. & F.C. meeting W.Bro. Gore gave a further explanation of the procedure for the 50th. anniversary on St. Thomas day 21st December and stated that the sum of Fifty Guineas would be presented to the Provincial Grand Master for his emergency fund. This proposition was made by the W.Master, W.Bro. H.D. Tolliday and seconded by W.Bro. R. Bales. This was carried. W.Bro. R. Bales reported that the Christmass gifts for the widows and aged Brethren had arrived and had been delivered to the W.Bros. and Brethren for delivery. The W.Master thanked those Brethren involved in this work especially W.Bro. Bales. The regular stated lodge meeting held the following week saw the usual practice of a lecture being worked by the Brethren of the lodge under the direction of W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore, the lecture on this occasion being The Old Charges.

And so it was that the St. Thomas Lodge No. 4198 in the Register of the United Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of England came to the 50th. Anniversary of its consecration on the 21st. December 1920, St. Thomas Day. This emergency lodge meeting was attended by the Provincial Grand Master accompanied by Senior Provincial Grand lodge Officers. The Emergency Lodge was opened with Solemn Prayer and the dispensation giving permission for the lodge meeting to be held was read by Bro. D. Saunders, the Assistant Secretary. Following the salutations due to the P.G. Master and other senior P.G. Lodge Officers the Senior Past Master of the St Thomas Lodge, W.Bro. W.W. Walters, Past Grand Standard Bearer, then read the Warrant of the Lodge. There then followed the

reading of the Consecration minutes by the Lodge Secretary, Bro.R.B.Roberts. The Past Masters in seniority then occupied the following chairs:

W.Bro. G.J.Ponsford.	Senior Warden's chair..
W.Bro. W.J.Shapland.	Junior Warden's chair.
W.Bro.J.J.L. Gore.	Secretary's chair.
W.Bro. E. Chanter.	Director of Ceremonies chair.
W.Bro. A.G.Chanter.	Senior Deacons chair.
W.Bro.G.W.Heywood.	Junior Deacons chair.
W.Bro. L. Modley	Treasurers chair.
W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb.	Asst. Dir. Ceremonies chair.
W.Bro.R.H.Punchard.	Asst. Secretarys chair.
W.Bro.M.H.Buller.	Inner Guards chair.

The W.Master then proceeded to question each of these W.Brothers in turn, and each replied and gave an interesting, historical and vivid picture of the work of the lodge during the past 50 years to the present time. These questions and answers, which had been written and arranged by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, took approximately 40 minutes to complete.

The Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother W.A. Kneel then thanked the W.Master and Brethren for inviting him to the lodge. He stated that he had many dear and near friends now, and many others had passed on, and stated he was sure that the wonderful foundations laid at the consecration of the lodge had been carried on, and he was sure it would be for many more years. St. Thomas Lodge was a very fine lodge indeed and John Stocker our first Master a very great Mason. He also congratulated W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore on his research of the ancient minutes and the enormous effort and time it must have taken.

W.Bro.W.W.Walters then presented to the lodge, on behalf of the Past Masters of the lodge, a beautiful set of Working Tools for the Three Degrees.

W.Bro.L.Modley, the Treasurer of the lodge then presented a set of Tracing Boards to the lodge in memory of his father in Law, Brother Sidney Chard. The box containing these boards was made and presented to the lodge by the Charity Steward, Bro.H.C.Branton.

All these presentations were greeted with much applause, as was the ancient photograph of the first fourteen Masters of the lodge, which was presented by W.Bro.W.J.Shapland.

The W.Master then presented, as a mark of esteem, a cheque for Fifty Guineas to the Provincial Grand Master for his personal fund. After thanking the W.Master the Prov.G.Master retired from the lodge with his officers. The labours of this special evening being ended the lodge was closed in due form with solemn prayer, in peace, order and harmony.

The celebration dinner which followed was held in the refectory adjoining the the lodge room at which 91 Brothers were present, and which completed a very pleasant and memorable evening. The seating plan being arranged by the W.Master and W.Bro.M.H.Buller and the printing of the menu cards being in the capable hands of W.Bro.R.H.Punchard.

This marvellous lodge of ours was now half a century of age, the question being what would the next fifty years hold for it?

Chapter Seven

The lodge entered the sixth decade of its life with the Domestic night lodge meeting being held on Wednesday, 13th. January. At this meeting the first labour was to ballot for as a joining member a Brother from a lodge in the province of Shropshire. This Brother is now a very active Past Master of the lodge who can be relied upon to contribute willingly to the work on the "Floor of the Lodge". This work, he invariably carries out with a sincerity that has to be admired by anyone fortunate to witness his working. Following this ballot the usual domestic night business was undertaken and this was then followed by the report of the success of the arrangements for the 50th. anniversary celebrations. W.Bro. M.H.Buller was pleased to report that the profit from the celebration dinner amounted to £16..4..0. W.Bro.R.H.Punchard stated that he would not make any charge for the printing of the Menu Cards, this would normally have been a cost of £8..4..0. Therefore the overall profit from the dinner was £24..8..0. W.Bro.J.S.S.James proposed and Bro.H.E.Branton seconded that this sum be equally divided between the 1977 Festival Fund and the Royal Masonic Hospital Extension Fund. This was carried.

At the G.P. & F.C. meeting for February copies of the Treasurer's report, also the report of the Charity Steward were handed round to the committee members, this unusual procedure being due to the postal strike being conducted at the present time. For the same reason the Brethren of the lodge would receive their copies in the same manner at the lodge meeting the following Wednesday. W.Bro.Puchard stated at this meeting that he would prepare the summons for the next months lodge meeting and have them ready for collection by the Brethren, from the Secretary's table at the lodge meeting the following week. W.Bro.G.F.Edwards stated that he would contact the son of the late W.Bro.E.House with reference to the Masonic clothing and jewel found in his locker at the Masonic Club. The Installation meeting was held the following week at which the Senior Warden, Bro.E.C.V.Summerfield was installed as the 51st. W.Master of the St. Thomas Lodge.

At the G.P. & F. C. meeting for the month of March W.Bro.L.Modley reported that owing to the estate of the late W.Bro.H.House not yet being settled it was not yet possible to determine whether his P.M. jewel and regalia would be available for purchase by the lodge. The secretary reported that

owing to the continuation of the postal strike, W.Bro.E.Chanter and himself had delivered by hand the summons for the March Lodge to all the Brethren in Exeter and District who were not present at the Installation meeting, and the only summons undelivered were those to Brethren living outside the province of Devon. W.Bro. Gore proposed and W.Bro. Cashmore seconded that due to the increased postal charges, the Brethren should in future be asked to collect their summons for the following month from the Secretary's table and that the Asst. Secretary post the residue by second class post as soon as possible afterwards. This was carried. The W.Master stated that as there were only two candidates for Initiation this year he was in contact with W.Bro.R.W.Lavers with a view to the showing of a film about the activities of the Masonic charities at either the June or July lodge. Needless to say, one of these two initiations took place at the lodge meeting the following week.

At the April G.P. & F.C. meeting the W.Master was able to report that W.Bro.R.W.Lavers had confirmed that he would attend the July lodge meeting and show the film about the activities of the Masonic charities. A question and answer session about Freemasonry would now take place at the June lodge meeting. A sub-committee consisting of:- The W.Master, W.Bro.Gore, W.Bro.Webb.W.Bro.Buller, W.Bro.Heywood and Bro.Goddard, would deal with the format of this session. The Secretary read two letters which had been received from Prov.Grand Lodge. The first was concerning the resignation of the Asst. Prov Grand Master W.Bro.F.W.A.Watt, P.G.D. Second was a letter stating that a scheme was being devised for the purchase of second hand regalia and jewels. Both these letters were to read at the lodge meeting the following week. W.Bro.Gore queried the non-receipt of Grand Lodge certificates for the Initiates of the previous year and the W.Master promised to contact the Prov. Grand Secretary concerning this matter. At the lodge meeting the following week the Passing of the new Brother Initiated the previous month was carried out and then the two letters referred to in the G.P. meeting the week before were read to the Brethren in open lodge. With regard to the resignation of the P.G.Secretary W.Bro.Buller proposed and W.Bro. Bales seconded that the sum of £2.00 be donated from the lodge funds towards the presentation to be made to W.Bro.Watt. This was carried.

At the May meeting of the G.P. & F.C. The W.Master was pleased to offer the committee's congratulations to W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore on his promotion to Past Provincial Grand Warden, likewise to W.Bro. D.T. Wykes on his promotion to Past Provincial Grand Deacon. The Secretary then read a letter which had been received from United Grand Lodge regretting that owing to unforeseen circumstances the issue of Grand Lodge Certificates was subject to some delay. This was in answer to the query regarding this matter that had been raised the previous month W.Bro. Gore. A suggestion was then made by Bro. Saunders that as visiting Brethren signed the visitors book there was no need for their names to be recorded in the minute book, as some signatures were difficult to decipher. After much discussion for and against this motion the W.Master ruled that a decision should be deferred until it appeared likely that a unanimous decision one way or the other could be obtained. It was proposed by Bro. Branton and seconded by W.Bro. Gore that the amount donated at the January lodge meeting to the Royal Masonic Hospital Extension Fund be made up to Fifty Pounds from the lodge funds. This was carried. A discussion then followed on the Provincial Charities and the Charity Steward was asked to report on the amounts sent to each charity at the next meeting. At the lodge meeting the following week the W.Master again offered the lodge's congratulations on their promotion to W.Bros. Gore and Wykes. There then followed the Raising of the first candidate to be introduced into the lodge for the year 1971.

The June lodge meeting was the occasion for the questions and answers session. The W.Master read out questions regarding Freemasonry that had been sent in by the Brethren, and then requested a certain Brother to supply the answer. The Brethren on the floor of the lodge were then invited to ask any further supplementary question or give an alternative answer. The fullest explanations were given by W.Bro. Gore, W.Bro. Webb, W.Bro. Buller and Bro. Goddard. The W.Master thanked all those Brethren who had sent in questions, those who had carried out research into the answers and the members of the sub-committee. This session of questions and answers it must be noted was undertaken with the lodge being open in the Third Degree.

The July 1971 G.P. & F.C. meeting the W.Master referred to the 50th. Masonic Anniversary of W.Bro.W.W.Walters and instructed the Secretary to write a congratulatory letter to him. Also at this meeting the Secretary was pleased to report that Grand Lodge certificates for Bros. Densley, George and Gater had at last arrived. The Treasurer stated that he had received a letter from Mrs. Harvey, widow of the late W.Bro.Harvey, asking whether the lodge wished to purchase her late husbands Past Masters jewel. It was proposed by W.Bro.Gore and seconded by W.Bro. Webb that the jewel be purchased for the sum of fifteen Guineas. This was passed.

At the lodge meeting the following week the W.Master had pleasure in congratulating Bro. Densley on his appointment as a Justice of the Peace. The W.Master then congratulated W.Bro.Walters on completing fifty years in Freemasonry. The Brethren were then shown a film dealing with the activities of the Royal Masonic School for Boys and this was followed by an address on the school by the Asst. Prov. G.Master, W.Bro.R.W. Lavers. The long awaited Grand Lodge certificates were then presented to the three Brothers concerned.

Following the summer holiday period at the September G.P. & F.C. meeting the Secretary reported that he had received a letter from W.Bro. Walters thanking the committee for their letter of congratulations marking his fifty years in Freemasonry. Bro. Branton, Charity Steward proposed and Bro. Roberts seconded that the sum of Ten Guineas be donated, from the lodge special funds, to W.Bro. Walters to mark his Ninetieth birthday in the coming October. At the lodge meeting the week following the G.P. meeting the W.Master, before continuing with labours of the evening, congratulated W.Bro. J.J.L.Gore on his promotion in another degree.

October and November passed without incident. The most important Masonic business being the Grand Masters Committee of Enquiry set up to consider the terms of reference of the four Masonic Charities. The terms of reference were read out to the Brethren in open lodge by the Secretary and the W.Master informed the Brethren that they had until April 30th. 1972 to submit their views on this matter.

And so the festive season of Christmass tide was with the lodge once again. The G.P. & F.C. were informed at the December meeting that the Christmass gifts for the widows and aged Brethren had arrived and were ready for distribution. The December lodge meeting the following week

the usual Christmass lecture was worked by the Brethren under the direction of four question masters. These being W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, W.Bro.M.H.Buller, W.Bro.R.Bales and W.Bro. T.E.Draper. The lecture worked being Sections 1 & 2 of the "First Lecture of Freemasonry" by William Preston.

The year of 1972 commenced with the lodge once more carrying out it's charity work among distressed Brethren and their dependants by discussing at the Jan. G.P.& F. C. meeting the request for assistance from the widow of the late Bro. Hingston, in the respect of her current financial difficulties. W.Bro. Webb proposed and W.Bro.Gore seconded that the sum of £10.00 be sent from the charity fund and that the Aged Widows Fund be approached on her behalf. This motion was carried. Also at this meeting, it was stated that W.Bro. W.J. Shapland would shortly be celebrating his 90th. birthday, and it was proposed by W.Bro. Cashmore and seconded by Bro.Branton that the W.Master should visit him on that day with a gift from the lodge, and also send him a greetings telegram. This proposal was carried. The lodge meeting the following week was held on Wednesday 12th. January and it being domestic night the usual lodge business was undertaken. On this occasion three candidates for initiation being successfully balloted for, one of whom is today a very much respected lodge officer whose work for the lodge is very much appreciated by the Brethren. At the Feb. G.P.& F.C. meeting prior to the Installation meeting the Charity Steward, Bro. Branton reported that he had visited Mrs, Hingston and assisted her to complete the application form requesting assistance from the Aged Widows Fund. The completed form would be moved in open lodge the following week prior to the Installation ceremony. the W.Master reported that he and the Charity Steward had visited W.Bro. Shapland on his 90th. birthday and presented a gift on behalf of the lodge and sent him a greetings telegram, had been approved at the previous G.P. meeting. In return W.Bro. Shapland had presented the W.Master with a cheque towards Masonic Charities. The following week the Master Elect Bro.A.E.Rickard was installed as the 52nd. Master of the St. Thomas Ldge in the presence of the Provincial Grand Master, the Right Worshipful W.A. Kneel, who following the installation gave the address to the W.Master. The address to the Wardens and the Brethren being given by W.Bro. Buller and W.Bro.G.W.Heywood respectively.

At the March lodge meeting the first of the successful candidates for Initiation was duly obligated and Initiated into the First Degree, or that of an Entered Apprentice Freemason and at the April lodge meeting a Brother from a lodge outside the Devonshire Province was admitted as a joining member of the lodge. Both these Brothers now hold office within the lodge and their work is very much appreciated.

At the May G.P. & F.C. meeting the W.Master referred to two W.Brethren of the lodge who had been honoured, W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, who had been honoured with Grand Lodge rank and W.Bro.T.W.Roebuck who had been made Provincial Grand Steward. Bro.H.Branton proposed that in honour of W.Bro Gore receiving the rank of Grand Lodge the Brethren of St. Thomas Lodge be invited to subscribe to a donation to the Fortescue Annuity Fund, as W.Bro.Gore was the Secretary of this fund, as a mark of appreciation from the lodge for the honour bestowed upon W.Bro.Gore. He proposed the donation be made up to £50.00, if necessary and that a suitable letter accompany the donation. This proposal was seconded by W.Bro.R.N.Sampson. After much discussion it was agreed to discuss this with W.Bro. Gore and seek his advice in drafting a suitable letter. An interesting item at this meeting was the statement made by W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb that only the W.Master should use the Gavel at the Festive Board, everyone present agreed that this rule must be observed. The question can therefore be asked; when did this rule become defunct, or is the Knock-up by the three Senior Officers at the Festive Board out of order? At the lodge meeting the following week the W.Master congratulated W.Bro.Gore and W.Bro. Roebuck upon their appointments and this was received with acclamation by the Brethren. There then followed a lecture, given by W.Bro.Gore, entitled "The Lodge- Duly formed- Just-Perfect and Regular." The W.Master thanked W.Bro.Gore for a very interesting lecture and remarked upon the amount of work that W.Bro.Gore must have undertaken to produce such an inspired piece of work. The Charity Steward then made the statement to the Brethren that a collection was to be made in order that the lodge could send a donation to the Fortescue Annuity Fund to mark the appreciation of the lodge for the honour bestowed by the Grand Lodge rank awarded to W.Bro.Gore. In response to the appeal, made by the Charity Steward, for a donation to the Fortescue Annuity fund to mark W.Bro.Gore's appointment to Grand Rank. at the July lodge meeting the W.Master was able to present to W.Bro.Gore a cheque to the value of £113.00. W.Bro.Gore expressed his thanks, both

personally and on behalf of the Fortescue Annuity Fund for the wonderful reponse the Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge had made to the appeal made by the Charity Steward.

At the September lodge meeting, following an explanation of the Second Tracing Board by one of the Stewards in the lodge, a lecture was given on the Aged Widows Annuity Fund by W.Bro. W.J.Griffiths, P.A.G.D.C.,P.P.D.G. Reg. There then followed two announcements by the Secretary concerning meetings which were to be held at the Lower Guild Hall, Plymouth. It is intriguing to note that as late as 1972 the Provincial Grand Lodge was using the Plymouth venue instead of the much larger and more geographically central Great Hall at the University of Exeter.

The October G.P.&F.C.meeting was notable by the concern expressed by some of the Brethren upon the reluctance of some of the Stewards to attend the G.P. meetings, rehearsals and the festive Boards. Several ideas for improving this situation were put forward, one being that future W.Masters conduct interviews before appointing Brethren to Stewards in the lodge. At the lodge meeting the following week W. Bro.T.E.Draper stated that he had only just discovered that evening that W.Bro.W.W.Walters was celebrating his 91st, birthday that day. The W.Master offered the congratulations of the lodge to W.Bro.Walters and at the same time thanked him for standing in at short notice as acting Immediate Past Master.

At the November G.P. & F.C. meeting W.Bro.J.Webb reported with regret that he was unable to obtain the tins of chocolate biscuits for the lodge widows and aged Brethren's Christmass gifts. He could however obtain tins of assorted biscuits which contained some chocolate biscuits at a cost of 65p. per box. It does not state what weight these boxes contained but it serves as a reminder that inflation had not reached the heights in 1972 that we experienced a few years later, if a box of biscuits could be offered as a suitable gift at a cost of 65p. It was proposed by W.Bro.R.Bales that something a little better could be given the following Christmass this proposal was seconded by Bro.Branton and carried. Was this then the motivation to send a cash gift along with a seasonal card which we now do?

The December G.P.&F.C.meeting was held at which a sign of the times was brought to the fore by the Secretary reading a letter concerning Value Added Tax and it's effect on lodges. After discussion on this matter it was resolved that no action need to be taken it being unnecessary for lodges to register. And so yet another Christmass lodge

was with the Brethren, and the usual Lecture was rendered by the Brethren under the direction of four question masters. On this occasion the subject of the lecture being the Third and Fourth sections of the First Lecture in Freemasonry by William Preston. Following the thanks of the W.Master to the question masters and their team for the excellence of their work, the Charity steward remarked that the lecture contained references to charity and hoped that it would have an effect upon the Brethrens response in the future. With the wishes for a happy Christmastide from the W.Master the Brethren departed at the conclusion of yet another successful year for the St. Thomas lodge.

The year 1973 started in a quiet manner with the domestic night being held on Thursday, 4th. January. The Treasurer's and Charity Steward's accounts make interesting reading when used as a comparison for those Officers accounts for the present time. In 1972/3 the annual rent for the use of the Gandy Street premises was £265.13, a far cry from the rent charged today, some 22 years later. Annual Subscriptions were set at £5.25, as mentioned earlier, inflation had yet to get into top gear!

The lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 14th. March was notable for the letter from Provincial Grand Lodge that the forthcoming meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge on 3rd. May 1973 the P.G.M. would be appointing W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore as Assistant Provincial Grand Master. A truly great honour for the Worshipful Brother and an honour for the lodge. Following the W.Master's congratulations to W.Bro.Gore, an Initiation ceremony took place of a Brother in the lodge who now holds Provincial Rank himself.

An interesting item of the April lodge meeting is the reading, by the secretary, of a letter giving details of the consecration of a new lodge within the province to be known as the Bishop Surtees Lodge No. 8497. The consecration ceremony was to take place at the University Great Hall, Exeter on Saturday, 21st. July 1973. A Festive Board was to follow the ceremony. The secretary stated that he had application forms should any Brother wish to apply to attend this function.

At the G.P. & F.C. meeting for the month of May a report was minuted that the Treasurer, W.Bro.D.L.Modley stated that due to the early and prompt payment of annual subscriptions by the Brethren in 1972 had realised the sum of £31.00 interest and that he proposed that the sum of £30.00 from this interest be donated to the Aged Widows Fund. This proposition was seconded by W.Bro.R.B.Roberts and carried.

The months of May and June passed and at the July lodge meeting a talk on the subject of the Masonic Charities was given by W.Bro.W.J.Griffiths, P.A.G.D.C., P.P.Dep.G.Reg. The W.Master thanked W.Bro.Griffiths for a very interesting talk and presented him with a cheque for £30.00 pounds from the lodge funds also a cheque for £60.45 this being half the total proceeds of the J.J.L.Gore appeal fund, both to be donated to the Aged Widows Annuity Fund. The W.Master then presented a cheque for £60.45 to W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, A.P.G.M., requesting him to pass it on to the P.G.M. for his "Personal Fund". At the G.P. & F.C. meeting held the previous week the W.Master reminded the committee members of the annual Fraternal visit to the Miles Coverdale Lodge, Paignton which was to take place on the third Thursday in the coming September. These annual Fraternal visits, which are a well established part of the lodge callendar, were started many years ago. Some doubt exists as to exact date but it is certainly in excess of Twenty Five years.

At the September G.P. & F.C. meeting the subject of the Christmass gifts to the lodge widows and aged Brethren was discussed. It was resolved that as some difficulty was experienced obtaining the biscuits that had always been given, After some discussion it was suggested by the Charity Steward that the gift be in the form of cash, say £2.00 together with a suitable card and where possible be delivered personally. W.Bro.Summerfield proposed and W.Bro.Heywood seconded that a suitable letter be sent out with the next summons informing the Brethren of this policy and that no upper limit be set for the amount donated. This policy of course is the one in use today. At the lodge meeting the following week an explanation of the Second Tracing board, given by a Brother T.W.B.Hosegrove and this was followed by a talk on "Early Freemasonry in Exeter" by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, Asst.P.G.M., P.A.G.D.C. The W.Master thanking W.Bro.Gore for his usual excellent manner in presenting his subject.

At the October G.P. & F.C. meeting the Secretary reported that sixteen copies of a lecture by J.J.L.Gore had been sold and the remittance of Four pounds had been handed to the Secretary of the L.G.R. Area Fraternal.

Attached to the minute book page for the G.P. & F.C. meeting and also again in the page of the lodge minute book for the month of December is a very interesting circular letter from the Devon & Cornwall Masonic Study circle. This letter gives details of a meeting to be held at the Lower Guildhall, Plymouth. The principal item at that meeting was to be a demonstration by the Brethren of the Lodge of St. George No. 2025

entitled "1765 Lodge Night". This reconstruction of an Initiation Ceremony of that year, in full period costume, incorporating the ritual of both the Antients and Moderns of that period. This must have been a truly interesting event to witness. And so the end of 1973 rapidly approached with the lodge conducting the usual Christmass Lecture, on this occasion it being the Fifth and Sixth sections of the first lecture.

The year 1974 commenced with the usual business of domestic night taking place in January and that being followed by the Installation of the Master Elect at the February lodge meeting. This particular Installation being notable in that the Installing Master was the Uncle of the Master Elect. I refer to W.Bro. W.E.R. Chanter, P.Pr.J.G.W. who was Installed into the Chair of King Solomon by his Uncle, W.Bro.A.G.Chanter, P.Pr.D.G.Reg. The ceremony being witnessed by the Master Elect's Father, W.Bro.E.Chanter, P.Pr.D.G.Reg. Was this yet again another piece of history being made by the St. Thomas Lodge, in that an Uncle holding Provincial Rank, installs his Nephew whilst the Nephew's Father, also of Provincial Rank, looks on? This rather unique occasion was not yet completed however as the newly Installed W.Master went on to Invest his Brother, W.Bro.A.W.G.Chanter as his Senior Warden. Obviously he was only a Master Mason at that time. This ceremony being witnessed by two Assistant Provincial Grand Masters. One, W.Bro. J.J.L.Gore P.A.G.D.C. being a member of the lodge, the other being W.Bro. R.Howarth, P.J.G.D.

An interesting letter is attached to the page of the G.P. & F.C. minute book for the April meeting in that the East Wickham Lodge No.7308 writes to request if possible, for the St. Thomas Lodge to present a Grand Lodge Certificate to one of their Brethren who had moved to Longdown. A letter dated 20th. May 1974 enclosing the Grand Lodge Certificate for Bro.B.F.C. Charles was received by the Secretary and this letter appears in the minutes book for the June G.P. meeting. The Certificate was ultimately presented to Bro. Charles at the September lodge meeting. The minute book showing that Bro. Charles was named as a visiting Brother.

At the December G.P. & F.C. meeting the W.master read a letter that had been received from the W.Master of St. John the Baptist Lodge regarding the portrait of the Provincial Grand Master. This life size oil painting had been commissioned and the cost had been raised by donations from the lodges within the Province. The St. Thomas Lodge having donated £50.00 following the proposal and seconding of this figure in open lodge

earlier in the year. This portrait, the letter from St. John the Baptist, stated, was to be presented some time in January 1975, and St. Thomas Lodge were invited to send four representatives in addition to the W.Master to this presentation. It was proposed that W.Bro.E.Chanter, as the oldest Past Master together with the Wardens and the Charity Steward should attend. This was carried. This portrait now hangs on the East wall of the Temple, above the Masters chair, at Gandy Street, Exeter. The lodge meeting the following week saw the usual Christmass Lecture presented by the Brethren under the direction of W. Bros. M.H.Buller, W.G.Heywood and G.F.Edwards. So another year was over for the lodge and the promise of yet another full year of Masonic work awaiting it in 1975.

The new year of 1975 started with the domestic night lodge meeting producing two items of note. The first being the election of the Master Elect, who on this occasion was Bro.A.W.G.Chanter, Brother of the W. Master, W.Bro.W.E.R.Chanter. This was to be a case of history repeating itself in the lodge as twenty four years previously, in 1951 their Father, W.Bro.E.Chanter, P.Pr.D.G.Reg. had Installed his Brother, W.Bro.A.G.Chanter, P.Pr.D.G.Reg. as Master of the lodge. Could it be that this set of circumstances is unique in the history of Freemasonry within the Province, or for that matter within the Country? The other item that was notable is that the Treasurer proposed the motion that due to rising costs, the annual subscriptions should be raised to £10.00 for full members and £4.50 for country members. The difference in these figures to those of today serve to illustrate how inflation "reved up" during the late seventies.

The Installation Lodge meeting on Wednesday, 12th. February was almost a repeat of the ceremony the previous year in that the Master Elect was presented to the lodge by his Father, W.Brother E.Chanter, P.Pr.D.G.Reg. Following the Installation ceremony the address to the W.Master was given by the Provincial Grand Master, RT.W.Brother. W.A.Kneel, the address to the Wardens was given by the Provincial Junior Grand Warden W.Bro.L.F.Pinny and the address to the Brethren was given by the Assistant Provincial Grand Master W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. A thought occurs that the lodge may see similar circumstances, with regard to succession to the Master's Chair, of a Brother Installing his brother into the Chair just after the turn of the century.

Returning to the topic of rising costs and the effect of inflation, at the March G.P. & F.C. meeting W.Bro. M.H. Buller referred to the reserve held in the Hospitality Fund and proposed that the subscriptions to the fund by the members should be reviewed. He went on to say that whilst the fund would remain solvent for the current year he could not make any promises for the future. A sub-committee formed to discuss this problem suggested that all the lodge Officers raise the amount they paid into the hospitality fund upon their investiture. A further indication of the effects of inflation was the decision by the Board of Management of the Royal Masonic Hospital to permit a limited number of full fee paying non-masonic patients to be admitted for treatment. This was the gist of a letter read in open lodge at the May lodge meeting.

At the May G.P. & F.C. meeting the sub-committee set up to review the Hospitality Fund delivered their findings and recommendations, which were;

1. The W.Master and the rest of the lodge Officers should finance the hospitality fund on the following basis:?

W.Master to contribute 20% of the cost.

The Wardens 12% each.

Secretary & D.C. 10% each.

Junior & Senior Deacons 5% each.

Inner Guard, Asst. Sec. and A.D.C. 2% each.

Stewards 1½% each.

2. Other members of the lodge could contribute on a voluntary basis.

3. The average number of visiting Masters to be entertained from the hospitality fund to be 50 per annum (5 per lodge meeting).

These figures were calculated when the cost of a meal at the Festive Board was £1.30p. Of course a vastly different set of circumstances exist today, whilst the fund is still initially raised by the lodge Officers paying a "Fee of Honour" upon their Investiture, a rounding up of the cost of a meal at the Festive Board takes place to the nearest 10p, which I am sure no Brother has the least objection to. Also at this G.P. meeting a letter was read by the Secretary which illustrates the Brotherly love which is always present within the Order. This letter was from W.Bro. W. J. Shapland donating his Masonic Regalia to the lodge after his death and requesting that his Past Master's jewel be retained for presentation to Bro. H. Branton at the appropriate time, in thanks for his kindness to him over the years. As we are all aware, Past Masters jewels are recycled but to have one specially donated is indeed a privilege beyond question.

At the May lodge meeting the Secretary read a letter from the Prov. Grand Master stating that the Province had handsomely exceeded it's target for the appeal for the Royal Masonic Hospital Development Fund. It was also reported by the charity Steward that the St. Thomas Lodge had almost doubled it's target of £530.00 by donating a total of £932.46 for which the lodge could be justifiably proud.

At the September lodge meeting the Charity Steward, Bro.H.Branton stated that he was pleased that the Office of Charity Steward was to be made an official Lodge Office. Allthough this office had been in existence many, many years it had never been officially recognised, it actually did not appear in the list of lodge officers until the March 1976 summons.

The November G.P.& F.C. meeting was the occasion when the findings of the sub-committee that had been set up to consider the lodge charity contributions. This committee had considered why the donations had fallen since the end of the appeal for the R.M.Hospital Dev. Fund. Acting upon a suggestion by Bro.B.Ferris that an envelope scheme similar to those used by a number of churches for their giving. The committee decided that these envelopes should be sent with summons each month for the Brethren to place their contributions in a box to be placed in a suitable place in the lodge. This scheme was to commence on the 1st. January 1976. This, of course is the method that is still in use today. Also at this G.P. meeting reference was made by the W.Master to a letter that had been received from the Miles Coverdale Lodge at Paignton confirming the date of their annual Fraternal visit the the St. Thomas Lodge and apologising for not organising a visit by the St. Thomas Lodge to Paignton during the year. As this is the first reference noted of these Fraternal visits to Miles Coverdale no date can be determined as to when they first commenced, but these visits have **most certainly** been taking place in excess of twenty years.

At the December G.P.& F.C. meeting reference was made to the establishment of the Office of Charity Steward in the lodge, the committee considered that a collar and jewel for the Charity Steward should be ordered. Bro. H. Branton requested that a collar presented by W.Bro.L.D.Modley and Bro.T.Hosegrove be used and that Bro.Branton would like to present the jewel (a trowel). W.Bro.H.C.Cashmore proposed that this should be accepted and W.Bro.Heywood be approached to order the jewel.

The following week the Christmass lodge meeting was held and as usual the main labour of the evening was the working of the Christmass lecture. Under the direction of W.Bro.M.H.Buller assisted by W.Bro.G.F.Edwards, Sections Four to Seven of the First Lecture were worked. So yet another year in the life of the St. Thomas Lodge was completed with the efficient manner to which the Brethren had come to accept as the norm for the Lodge.

The year of 1976 started in the usual way with the domestic night lodge meeting following the G.P.& F. C.meeting the week previously. It was at this lodge meeting that a ballot took place,favourably, for a joining member who was in the future years to serve the lodge admirably as the Lodge Almoner. I refer to W.Bro.H.R.Parnell,P.Pr.G.Reg. Harry Parnell was a Past Master of the Torridge Lodge and joined the St. Thomas Lodge on moving from North Devon as a result of his employment. Sadly he died in the spring of 1991 after a short illness.

The Installation meeting was held successfully on the 11th. February and the ceremony was witnessed by two Asst.Prov.Grand Masters, W.Bros. J.J.L.Gore, a member and Past Master of the lodge and F.Prout.

The G.P.& F.C. meeting for the month of March contained an interesting item. At the January G.P.meeting it had been agreed that a Brother who was three years in arrears with his subscriptions should be excluded from the lodge. Having been informed of the committee's decision the errant Brother had replied by letter,enclosing his total arrears subscriptions, and pleaded not to be expelled. This matter was deferred until the opinion and guidance could be obtained from the Asst.Prov.Grand Master, W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. At the G.P. meeting the following month, April, the Asst. P.G.M. informed the committee that the Brother in question was obliged to pay all his arrears before any consideration could be made with regard to his reinstatement in the lodge and that this would possibly require a ballot of the membership. It was resolved that the Secretary write to the Brother informing him of these conditions and to await his response. The month ending was marred by the death of one of the lodge's senior members, W.Bro.A.G.Chanter,P.Pr.D.G.Reg., a member of the lodge for forty three years.

At the May G.P.& F.C.meeting the W.Master (Acting) tendered the congratulations of the committee to W.Bro.J.Gore on his promotion to P.S.G.D. and also to W.Bros. R.H.Punchard and W.R.Bales on their promotions within the Province and to W.Bro.T.E.Draper for the receipt of a Provincial Grand Collar.

The June meeting of the G.P. & F.C. saw the Charity steward, Bro. Branton reporting that the envelope scheme started in January had proved successful and that the donations had increased within the lodge. He also reported that the Provincial Grand Master was interested in the scheme and had asked for details. Bro. Branton proposed and W. Bro. J. W. H. Webb seconded that the lodge should be willing to loan the collecting box to other lodges as, in Bro. Branton's words we were pioneers of this scheme. The loan of the collecting box became so much of a common sight in the foyer of Gandy St. on the lodge nights of the lodges using the premises that as recently as 1993 remarks were passed in the hearing of W. Brother F. A. Cox as to; "Where has our collecting box got to?" This being uttered by Brethren of a lodge he was visiting in his capacity as W. Master of St. Thomas.

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 14th. July following an explanation of the First Tracing board by Bro. J. G. Savage the W. Master introduced a further Labour which did not appear on the lodge summons. This was a short discourse, given by W. Bro. M. H. Buller, on "Music in Masonry" referring especially to the Entered Apprentices songs of 1699 and 1722, the Fellow Crafts song and the Masters song of 1866. This was followed by a short Organ Recital. It goes without saying that this was received with acclamation by the Brethren. Would it, could it be that this be repeated today?

The lodge meeting following the summer break was yet again an occasion to be remembered. W. Bro. H. C. Cashmore gave an explanation of the Second Tracing board at 24hrs. notice. No explanation is given why the Bro. listed on the lodge summons failed to give the explanation. After the W. Master had thanked W. Bro. Cashmore for his excellent work, the lodge was "Treated" to a lecture by W. Bro. J. J. L. Gore, P. S. G. D., Asst. P. G. M., entitled "Grand Lodge 1717 to 1813". He spoke briefly about the background to freemasonry before the formation of the first governing body, 'Premier Grand Lodge' in 1717 and then described the differences between the rival Grand Lodges until the creation of United Grand Lodge in 1813. In thanking W. Bro. Gore the W. Master expressed the wonderment of the lodge at the depth of this very learned discourse which, nevertheless had been delivered in such a way as to maintain everyones interest. Following upon this, the Charity Steward reported that the envelope scheme had amply justified his confidence in it. The results had been "outstandingly good". He thought that this showed what a good omen the future might hold.

The October lodge meeting was an eventful evening for the lodge for several reasons, the first being that it was on this occasion that the Tyler, W.Bro. W.G.Heywood, P.P.G.Reg. Prov. G.Tyler, performed his last duties as Tyler for his Mother lodge before retiring from the post. He sought permission to enter the lodge in order to prepare the room for a Third Degree ceremony. Before his retirement from the lodge, having completed these duties, the W.Master made a short speech paying tribute to W.Bro.Heywood's many years of service as Tyler of the St. Thomas Lodge. It is unfortunate that the W.Master did not make any reference to the total number of years that W.Bro.Heywood had acted as Tyler for the lodge but he was appointed Provincial Grand Tyler in 1968. Following the raising ceremony and the restoration of the lodge to the First degree two other interesting items were brought before the lodge. The first of these was a proposal by the Treasurer, W.Bro.L.D. Modley, seconded by W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb, that the annual subscriptions for Full Members of the lodge be raised from £10.00 to £12.50 and those for Country Members from £4.50 to £5.50, inflation was rearing its head once more. The second item was a report by W.Bro. Modley that Bro.R.B. Edworthy had been installed as Junior Warden of a lodge in Turtleford, Saskatchewan, Canada. Bro. Edworthy was first initiated into the St. Thomas Lodge in 1952 and after working as a teacher in Uganda for some years emigrated to Canada in May 1967. During his career in Uganda he retained full membership of the lodge, attending lodge meetings when on leave from his position in that country. On taking up a teaching position in Canada he wrote to the W.Master tendering his resignation as Steward of the lodge as he was unable to attend lodge meetings regularly, he did however retain Country Membership of the lodge and is still a subscribing member of the lodge in this capacity today some Forty Three years after his initiation in 1952. He must surely be one of the most distant Country Member that any lodge has on its books.

The November lodge meeting minutes record that the lodge approved the action of the W.Master in granting £20.00 from the lodge funds, to the presentation to be made to the retiring Tyler, W.Bro.W.G.Heywood. It must be remembered that W.Bro.Heywood acted as the Tyler for all the lodge meetings at Gandy Street. The year ended with the usual Christmas Lecture being given at the December lodge meeting, on this occasion it being the first three sections of the Second Lecture.

The year of 1977 commenced in the usual manner with the lodge domestic night being held on Wednesday, 12th. January. I claim it to be significant for me because it was at this lodge meeting that my Proposer was himself balloted for as an Initiate. Otherwise it was a normal domestic night in the lodge. Wednesday, 9th. February was of course the occasion of the Installation Lodge meeting at which the Master Elect, Bro. E.K.Tucker, SW. was raised to the chair of King Solomon in the presence of the Provincial Grand Master, Rt. W.Bro. W.A.Kneel who also gave the address to the W.Master after the Installation Ceremony. The address to the Brethren was given by the Prov.G. Junior Warden, W.Bro.S.A.West and the address to the Brethren was given by W.Bro.M.H.Buller. A notable feature at the investiture of the lodge officers was that of the Senior Warden, Bro. H.E.Branton who was also continuing the office of Charity Steward. This for the second year as he had served as Charity Steward in addition to that of Junior Warden the previous year. All credit must be accorded this worthy Brother for the dedication to Freemasonry that he displayed by carrying out two lodge offices simultaneously. Also at this Installation meeting a further diversion from usual practice took place in that at the especial request of the newly Installed Master, the Immediate Past Master was presented with a P.M. jewel and gift by the Asst. P.G.Master, W.Bro. J.J.L.Gore who thanked W.Bro.W.D.Plummer for his excellent leadership of the lodge throughout his year of office.

The spring passed with the usual initiation ceremonies of two candidates taking place at the March and April lodge meetings, these being followed in the early summer by these two Brothers being passed to the second degree or that of a Fellowcraft Freemason. At the May lodge meeting the Charity Steward, Bro.H.E.Branton reported that the total amount raised by the Lodge and the Brethren for the 1977 Festival was £12,822..16..0. This total having been raised over a period of seven years. Bro.Branton thanked the Brethren for this magnificent effort and in turn the W.Master thanked Bro. Branton for the hard work he had put in for the Festival. Attached to the page of the minute book for the June lodge meeting is the list of lodges and the sum contributed for the Devon Province with respect to the 1977 Festival, this list shows that the St. Thomas Lodge was second highest contributor. At the July lodge meeting an explanation of the First Tracing Board was given a Brother whose work on the floor of the lodge is always to be admired was followed by a lecture given by W.Bro.M.H.Buller. This lecture being entitled, "The Origins of Freemasonry", during which he was able to tell the Brethren of Masonic symbols evident

in the fabric of York Minster built in the Fourteenth century. This lecture was followed by an organ recital given by the lodge organist, Bro. J. Wase. Also at this lodge meeting the Dir. of Cer., W. Bro. J. D. W. Barnett, extended an invitation to the Brethren to join him in a visit to his Mother lodge, The Berry Mead Lodge No. 5717, in London, for the November lodge, when a First Degree ceremony would take place. It is unfortunate that the outcome of the invitation is not recorded in future minutes of the lodge.

During the summer holiday it was the sad task of the Secretary, Bro. R. D. Studley, to inform the Brethren of the death of the senior member of the lodge, W. Bro. G. J. Ponsford P. P. G. D. who was initiated into the lodge in May 1924 and was in the chair in 1939. At the September lodge meeting the W. Master referred to W. Bro. Ponsford's passing and called the Brethren to order as a mark of respect for departed merit. This lodge meeting was held in the presence of the Prov. G. Master, R. W. Bro. W. A. Kneel, and following an explanation of the Second Tracing Board by W. Bro. M. H. Buller, a lecture of some forty minutes duration given by the Asst. P. G. Master, W. Bro. J. J. L. Gore. This lecture being entitled "The First Book of Constitutions and it's author".

The autumn months saw the raising of the two new Brothers introduced into the lodge during the year. At the second of these ceremonies an unusual occurrence took place in that one of the officers working on the floor of the lodge required assistance with the physical part of the work due to him having suffered a broken arm and was therefore working with a degree of incapacity. So the year of 1977 drew to a close with the lodge carrying out the usual Christmass lecture by working sections three to five of the second lecture.

The year 1978 started with the domestic night meeting held on Wednesday, 11th. January. this meeting was of the usual structure inasmuch that in addition to the balloting of candidates for Initiation there was also the balloting for the Master Elect. This ballot, which went the usual way for the St. Thomas Lodge, in that the Senior Warden was elected as Master for the forthcoming year, was on this occasion the W. Master of another lodge; namely the Bishop Surtees Lodge No. 8497, meeting at Topsham. This situation therefore required that a petition be made to the M. W. Grand Master for dispensation to Install W. Bro. H. E. Branton, Senior Warden, into the chair of Master of the St. Thomas Lodge. This dispensation was granted and the dispensation document, as required, is attached to the page of

the minute book which records the Installation ceremony. So it was therefore that for a few short months W.Bro.H.E.Branton was not only Master of two Craft lodges but was Charity Steward of the St. Thomas Lodge as well. Some workload! The Installation of W.Bro.Branton into the chair of St. Thomas Lodge was carried out in the presence of the P.G.Master, R.W.Bro. W.A.Kneel, who gave the address to the W.Master following the Investing of the lodge officers. The address to the Wardens was given by the Prov.J.G. Warden, W.Bro.L.F.Hill and the address to the Brethren was delivered by the Asst.P.G.Master, W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. The Prov.G.Master also, on behalf of the lodge, presented a Past Masters jewel and present to the I.P.M. W.Bro. E.K.Tucker and thanked him for his excellent leadership during his year of office. In addition to an Initiation ceremony, the minutes of the March lodge meeting record the 50th. anniversary of W.Bro.W.J.Shapland being accepted as a joining member of the lodge in March 1928, having been Initiated into the Conciliation Lodge No.3483 in January 1927 and raised in that lodge in April the same year. The W.Master reported that he had sent a telegram congratulating W.Bro.Shapland, also W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore had written a letter of congratulations and that W.Bros. J.W.H.Webb and L.D. Modley had taken a lodge gift of sherry and fruit along to W.Bro.Shapland and that owing to health reasons W.Bro.Shapland was unable to attend his anniversary lodge meeting he would however raise a glass to absent friends in his home at 9pm. on lodge night. The spring progressed with another Initiation taking place at the April lodge meeting and the following month saw the ballots taking place successfully for two joining members to the lodge. At this lodge meeting the Asst. Secretary read a letter from W.Bro.R.Ross, Prov.D.G.Swd.Br. giving details of a Masonic ball to be held at Plymouth Polytechnical College in aid of a Masonic Retirement home in the Southwest. Here then is the first mention of the setting up of Cadogan Court here in Exeter.

At the June lodge meeting the W.Master greeted visiting Brethren and Masters from sister lodges and also made special reference of the visit to the lodge of W.Bro.R.W.Hoult of the Chaeawai Lodge No.101 New Zealand. It is unfortunate that the minutes for this lodge meeting do not include any further information with regard to this visit by a W.Brother from "down under". Also at this lodge meeting the Secretary read a letter giving details of a Demonstration Lodge Night of 1759. This demonstration was to be given by the Bromley and West Kent Study Circle demonstration team at Saltash School later in the year. Admission to Master Masons

and above. Activities of this nature gives rise to the question; why do such Masonic Functions appear to be non-existent in these present times?

At the July lodge meeting following an explanation of the First Tracing Board given to the two Brothers Initiated earlier in the year, a lecture entitled "The Volmue of the Sacred Law in Freemasonry" was given by W.Bro.M.H.Buller, P.P.G.W., in which he gave an account of the origins of Masonic teaching found in the Bible both in the Old and New Testament and the historical happenings in the development of Freemasonry over the past 250 years with the Bible as the centre of Masonic Faith. W.Bro.Buller then gave an organ recital including works by Mozart and Bach. The W.Master expressed congratulations on behalf of the lodge for his excellent lecture and recital and the Brethren expressed their appreciation. So the Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge departed for the summer holiday and to return in September to a lodge agenda that included an explanation of the Second Tracing Board, on this occasion the explanation being given to a visiting Fellowcraft Freemason, a Bro.A.Davie of the Davie Lodge No. 3721, in addition to a Brother of the St. Thomas Lodge. There then followed a lecture delivered by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, Asst.P.G.M. entitled "The Masonic Landmarks". This in turn was followed by an organ recital given by the lodge Organist, Bro.J.Wase which included works by Bach, Mozart, Schubert and Handel. All these labours being conducted in the presence of the Prov.G.Master, R.W.Bro.W.A.Kneel, the Deputy P.G.M. V.W.Bro.R.W.Lavis and of course the Asst.P.G.M., W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore. Such then was the return to lodge activities on the return of the Brethren following the summer break. The autumn approached with the lodge raising the two Brothers Initiated into the lodge during the spring and so the lodge approached the end of yet another successful year by rendering the Third Lecture, at the customary December lodge meeting, under the direction of W.Bro.M.H.Buller.

The domestic night lodge meeting on Wednesday, 10th. January, 1979 was notable for several reasons. The first of these being the explanation of Grand Lodge Certificate and the Master Masons Apron being conducted by the team of Son and Father, in the persons of M.J.G.Dee-Shapland and A.F.Dee-Shapland respectively. This being what could be described in a facetious manner as their "Party Piece" they having carried out this function for many years. The second was the declaration of the Senior Warden, Bro.B. Ferris that he did not wish to be considered for election as Master of the lodge for the forthcoming year. This decision was made

entirely due to his recent serious illness and major neurological operation at Freedomfields Hospital, Plymouth. As a result of this circumstance, for the first time in the history of the St. Thomas Lodge the Master Elect was declared to be the Junior Warden, Brother R.D.Studley. Following this the Treasurer, W.Bro.L.D.Modley, P.P.G.W. declared that he did not wish to continue to act as the Treasurer of the lodge having undertaken this task for the last seventeen years. The W.Master thanked W.Bro. Modley for the work he had carried out for the lodge in the time he had served as Treasurer. In his reply W.Bro.Modley thanked the W.Master for his remarks and also the Brethren of the lodge for the support they had given him during his years of Office and that he hoped they would give his successor the same degree of support. W.Bro. Modley then went on to report that he received a letter from W.Bro. Edworthy in which he informed the lodge of his Installation as the W.Master of a lodge in Saskatchewan, Canada. The Charity Steward, W.Bro.H.E.Branton made a request to the Brethren that priority should be given for future donations to be allocated for the establishment of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution Home for the Elderly in the Southwest.

The Installation lodge meeting was held on Wednesday, 14th. February in the presence of the Asst.P.G.Master, W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore who delivered the address to the W.Master following the Installation ceremony, the address to the Wardens being delivered by the Prov.S.G.Warden, W.Bro. F.W.J.Hodgson and the address to the Brethren was delivered by W.Bro. M.H.Buller. So the Masonic year for the St. Thomas Lodge commenced, there was however one noticable feature that being the absence of any candidates for Initiation during the spring; a rather unusual circumstance for the lodge. The principal labour at the March lodge meeting was a lecture entitled "The Nature and Practice of a Freemason's Charity" was given by W.Bro.G.F.Edwards, P.P.G.D. and following the W.Master's thanks and congratulations a very pleasant task was undertaken by the Asst. P.G.M., W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore; this was the presentation of a Silver cigar case to W.Bro.L.D.Modley to mark his service as Lodge Treasurer from Feb. 1962 to Feb. 1979. The A.P.G.M. referred to this excellent work and W.Bro.Modley thanked the Brethren and suitably replied. The April lodge meeting was the date for a visit by W.Bro.R.Harrison, P.A.G.D.C. Appeals Secretary, Royal Masonic Hospital, for the purpose of showing a film of the hospital and it's work. Following this film W.Bro.Harrison gave a descriptive talk including methods of admission

and answered questions made by the Brethren on hospital topics. At the conclusion, the W.Master on behalf of the lodge thanked W.Bro.Harrison and presented him with a cheque for £100.00 from the lodge and a further cheque for £23.15 from W.Bro.Modley. It is sad to record that the Royal Masonic Hospital is no longer a part of the organisation controlled by the United Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of England. However sick Brethren can still petition the new Samaritan Fund for treatment in hospital, and in most cases this will be given in a hospital near to the Brother's home instead of having to make the journey to London.

The lodge meeting in May was to be the 'recruitment' period for the year, there being three ballots at that lodge. One was for a joining member to the lodge whilst the other two were for candidates for Initiation. These ballots were followed by a lecture, delivered by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, A.P.G.M. entitled "A Famous Masonic Exposure". The delivery, on a somewhat regular basis, prompts the question; As the late W.Bro.Gore bequeathed all his Masonic books and papers to the St. Thomas lodge, why cannot the younger Brethren, masonically speaking, be allowed the privilege of hearing these works delivered by senior Brethren of the lodge therefore expanding their Masonic education?

The June and July lodge meetings were the occasions for the Initiation of one of the candidates entering the lodge in the current year. The lodge then took its summer break, resuming its meetings in September, when the raising of the Brother who was Passed in July, took place. However before this ceremony was enacted a very pleasant and memorable honour was made. The W.Master tendered the Gavel to the Asst. P.G.M. W.Bro. J.J.L. Gore, P.S.G.D. accepted the Gavel to preside over the lodge for the ceremony celebrating the 50th. Masonic anniversary of W.Bro.F.J.Penny P.P.G.W. Cornwall.

The Asst. P.G.M. requested the Asst. Secretary, Bro.C.F.Jacknello to read extracts from the minute book of the lodge for 1929 when W.Bro. Penny was proposed for initiation on 10th. July; Initiated on the 11th. September; Passed on the 9th. October and raised on the 13th. November 1929. W.Bro. Gore then gave an address highlighting the Masonic career of W.Bro.Penny during which W.Bro.Penny left Devonshire to reside in Yorkshire before returning to live in Cornwall becoming Master of Phoenix Lodge No.331 in 1968 and appointed Past Provincial Grand Warden Cornwall in 1979. W.Bro.Gore then read a letter of congratulation from

the Provincial Grand Master Cornwall R.W.Bro.Robert Eliot. In reply W.Bro.Penny thanked W.Bro.Gore for his address and the Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge and recalling that his Father was a Past Master of the Brent Lodge No.1284. There then followed the Raising already referred too.

The lodge meeting of Wednesday, 10th. October was memorable also but for quite a different reason. The St. Thomas lodge had been approached by the Manor of Swanburn Lodge No. 8647 with the request that St.

Thomas Lodge raise one of their Brothers. However, following repeated efforts by the Officers of the St. Thomas Lodge to contact this Brother both by letter and telephone no reply or response was forthcoming with regard to arranging a date for the Raising ceremony to take place and the Manor of Swanburn Lodge was informed accordingly. The summons for the October lodge meeting was printed with this Raising on the Agenda but the copy attached to the page of the minute book shows this item ruled out and an emergency listed agenda attached. This showed the alternative agenda to be an Oration by W.Bro.G.F.Milford of the Semper Fidelis Lodge No.1254 who was to repeat the Chaplains Oration given at the Centenary of the Semper Fidelis Lodge. Having had the privelidge of hearing W.Bro.Milford give a lecture on Masonic regalia and Jewels, this must have been some performance. This Oration was then followed by a talk by W.Bro.Branton I.P.M. on Msaonic charities.

The November lodge meeting was the occasion for a lecture entitled; "The Place of Ritual in Freemasonry" was delivered by W.Bro.A.R.Goddard. This again would be something to hear knowing this W.Brother's mode of delivery when carrying out any form of Masonic working. So yet again the Christmass season was with the lodge and this was marked in the time honoured fashion by the lodge working the first Four Sections of the First Lecture at the December lodge meeting, again this working being under the direction of W.Bro.M.H.Buller. So the Brethren departed for the festive season and with this the St. Thomas Lodge ended another decade of it's life.

CHAPTER 8

The year 1980 started as usual with the domestic night lodge meeting and all that this entailed, I.E. the election of the master for the forthcoming year and the other Lodge Officers. An interesting item in the minutes following this business was the report from United Grand Lodge that the Most W. Grand Master had voiced some objection to the penalties clause in the Obligation. The W. Master stated that this had been discussed at a recent meeting of the G.P. & F. committee. The Asst. Prov. G. Master, W. Bro. J. J. L. Gore then gave an explanation of the wording of the Penalty clause that the Grand Master had expressed his objection and in which he advocated that the Bishop Herbert version be adopted by all lodges. W. Bro. Gore stated that alteration of the Ritual by the St. Thomas Lodge had been considered in 1965 and had been rejected. A recent meeting of the G.P. & F. committee had again dismissed this subject and again recommended that no alteration to the Ritual be made by the St. Thomas Lodge. He therefore proposed that no change in the Ritual should be made by the St. Thomas Lodge, this was seconded by W. Bro. Cashmore and carried by the Brethren. Some years later a change did take place to the wording of the Obligation as we are all now well aware. I refer to the wording; "the symbolic Penalty of the Degree etc."

The following month saw the Installation of the 60th. W. Master of the St. Thomas Lodge, in the person of Bro. R. J. Jacobs, taking place in the presence of the Prov. Grand Master, Rt. W. Bro. W. A. Kneel, who following the Installation ceremony gave the address to the W. Master. The P. G. M. also, on behalf of the lodge, presented a Past Masters jewel and present to the Immediate Past Master, W. Bro. R. D. Studley and thanked and congratulated him upon the excellent way he had conducted the lodge during his year of office.

The spring progressed with the March and April lodge meetings both being occasions for the Initiation of new Brethren. The lodge meeting of Wednesday, 14th. May was notable that the W. Master offered the congratulations of the lodge to no less than three Brethren who had received Provincial Grand Lodge honours. These were, Bro. J. Wase, Prov. Grand Organist. W. Bro. E. C. V. Summerfield, Past Prov. Sen. G. Deacon. and W. Bro. H. R. Parnell, Past Prov. Junior G. Deacon. to have three Brethren within the lodge honoured in the same year is something of an achievement.

At the same lodge meeting the Secretary read a summary of a letter from the Quator Coronati Lodge which was holding a meeting in the great Hall of Exeter University on Saturday, 26th. July 1980 at 5.30pm. The W.Master said that he hoped as many members of the St. Thomas lodge as possible would take advantage of this rare opportunity to attend the Premier Lodge of research in the country.

The year progressed with the lodge conducting two Passing ceremonies during the early summer and subsequently Raising the two Brethren concerned when the lodge returned after the summer holiday period. The November lodge meeting was notable in that the Asst. Prov. G.Master, W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore delivered to the lodge another of his excellent lectures, this one entitled "Masonic Mixture". And so the end of the year approached with the lodge conducting the usual Christmass lecture, on this occasion it being sections Four to Seven of the First Lecture. The Brethren taking part in this working under the direction of W.Bro.M.H.Buller.

The year 1981 started with the domestic night being held on Wednesday, 14th. January with the usual business of a domestic night being conducted including the ballots for two candidates for Initiation into the lodge. Both these candidates are still subscribing members of the lodge, one being a Past Master of the lodge whilst the other Brother is a Past Master of a Sister lodge in the city. The following month was of course Installation Lodge night at which the Brother installed into the chair of King Solomon was admitted to the lodge as a joining member from a Southwest Midlands province. This W.Brother now holds Past Provincial Grand rank and is still a very active member of the lodge who can be relied upon to carry out work on the floor of the lodge to a very high standard. The Installation meeting was attended by two Asst. Prov. Grand Masters, W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, P.S.G.D., and W.Bro.F.B.Prout, P.S.G.D. Following the ceremony the address to the W.Master was given by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, the address to the Wardens by W.Bro.D.H.L.Searle, Prov. Junior Grand Wrden and the address to the Brethren was delivered by W.Bro.F.B.Prout.

The spring and early summer progressed with the Initiation and Passing ceremonies of the balloted candidates taking place, whilst the social side of the life of the lodge being followed in the form of a coach trip followed by dinner being undertaken on the 25th. June.

The lodge meeting of Wednesday, 8th. July was a sad occasion, it being the sad task of the W.Master to inform the Brethren of the passing to the Grand Lodge Above of a well respected member of the lodge, W.Brother L.D.Modley, P.P.G.W., who had been a member of the St. Thomas Lodge over 47 years. The W.Master paid tribute to the work that W.Bro.Modley had carried out on behalf of the lodge, for many years he had acted as the lodge Treasurer as well as other Offices. The Brethren then stood to order as a tribute to departed merit.

The return of the lodge in September, following the summer holiday season, was of a much more joyous nature. The lodge meeting on Wednesday, 9th. September was the 50th. anniversary of the Initiation into the St. Thomas Lodge of W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, P.S.G.D., Asst. Prov. Grand Master. This occasion was suitably marked by the W.Bro. rendering yet another of his now very well known lectures. On this occasion being entitled; "The Lodges in the Province of Devonshire". This was then followed by a celebration of W.Bro.Gore's fifty years in Freemasonry in the form of extracts being read from the minutes of the lodge meetings of his Initiation, Passing Raising together with the recording of his work in the lodge in respect of the lectures he had delivered from time to time and of course his introduction of the Christmass Lectures in 1949 and his participation as question master at these lectures until 1972 when his work as Asst. Prov. Grand Master prevented him continuing in this capacity. All of these activities of the W.Brother are recorded in a separate resume together with a photocopy of a suitable greetings card are attached to the page of the minute book. The lodge meeting was attended by the Provincial Grand Master, Rt.W.Bro.R.W.Kneel who presented a cheque to W.Bro.Gore for the purpose of charity in connection with his position as M.E. Grand Superintendent of the Holy Royal Arch in Freemasonry. The P.G.M. went on to say that he owed a great deal to W.Bro.Gore for the assistance he gave to the P.G.M. personally and for all the work he undertook for the province in particular and Freemasonry in general. Following this momentous evening the lodge moved toward the close of the year by completing the normal practice of Raising the new entrants to the lodge during the autumn months and bringing the year to a close by working the first three sections of the second Masonic lecture at the Christmass lodge meeting.

The year of 1982 started in a somewhat unusual manner in that there were no candidates applying for initiation into the lodge, something that had never happened before in the history of the lodge. There were however two ballots taken, at the domestic night lodge meeting for two joining members into the lodge. It was also at this lodge meeting that another first occasion, if that can be considered to be the correct phrase, took place. This was the re-introduction into the progression to office sequence of a Brother who had previously requested not to be considered for election to the "Chair" due to health reasons several years previous. This was Bro.B.Ferris who had asked to be excluded in 1979 owing to a serious operation impairing his ability to carry out the duties of Master of the lodge to his personal satisfaction. Bro.Ferris was duly elected to serve as the W.Master of the lodge for the year 1982/83, having served as Senior Warden in 1978/79. And so it was that the following month Bro.B.Ferris was Installed as the Master of the St. Thomas Lodge for the year 1982/83 in the presence of the Prov.Grand Master, Rt.W.Bro.W.A.Kneel who was accompanied by the Asst.P.G.M., W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore and the Prov.G.W. W.Bro.R.Discombe. These three W.Brethren delivering the address to the W.Master, Wardens and Brethren following the Installation ceremony. The P.G.M. then went on to present a Past Masters Jewel and gift to the Immediate Past Master, W.Bro.J.G.Savage and thanked him for the successful manner in which he had conducted the lodge during his year of office. The following month, owing to the lack of a candidate for initiation the lodge was privileged to receive a lecture by W.Bro.H.C.Cashmore, P.P.D.G.Reg. entitled; "English Royal Freemasons". The following month a ballot for a candidate for initiation did take place. This was for a Mr.W.Kellaway which was found to be in favour. This ballot was then followed by a lecture entitled; "The English Provincial Grand Lodge", delivered by W.Bro.M.H.Buller, P.P.G.W. And so on Wednesday, 12th.May the only Initiation of the year took place when Mr. Kenneth W.Kellaway was Initiated into the St. Thomas lodge. The programme for the rest of the year was filled very satisfactorily by, at the June lodge meeting an explanation of the First Tracing Board followed by an organ recital by Bro.J.Wase, Pr.G.Organist, a member of the lodge. The July lodge meeting was the occasion of the Passing of the Initiate and just before the lodge was closed the greetings to the W.Master and the lodge included greetings given by W.Bro.M.H.Buller, P.P.G.W. from the W.Masters, of the St. Olafs

and the St. Johannes Lodges in the province of Trondheim, Norway and from the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the province V.W. Bro. Hidding Dillner to the Prov. G. Master, the D.P.G.M, the Asst. P.G. Masters and the Provincial Officers of Devon and particularly those of the St. Thomas lodge.

The September lodge meeting was again an occasion when the lodge saw a variation in the normal working practice of the lodge. This was an explanation of the Second Tracing Board carried out by a team of three Brothers instead of the usual solo explanation. The Brethren in question being Bros. R.D. Hudson, G.W. Long and D. Plumer. This was then followed by an organ recital given by W. Bro. W.E.R. Chanter. There then followed a talk given by W. Bro. M.H. Buller titled; "Fremasons Lodges in Norway". It can only be assumed that the W. Bro. and his Lady had holidayed in the Northern latitudes of Europe and had brought back happy memories of their visit. The October lodge meeting saw the successful Raising of the lonely candidate of 1982. The November meeting was the occasion for yet another lecture, this time it being a lecture given by W. Bro. J.J.L. Gore, P.G.S.D., Asst. P.G.M., entitled; "Pillars, Columns and Candlesticks". The year finally drawing to a close by the rendition of sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Second lecture for the Christmass lodge meeting. A truly unusual year in some respects for the working in the lodge but nevertheless a very interesting and satisfactory year.

The year of 1983 commenced as usual with the Domestic night lodge meeting with all it's normal business to attend to. On this occasion however, it was a little out of the ordinary, so to speak, as the Master Elect was not present at the election owing to him being at sea. This Brother of course was Bro. M. Gater, a Master Mariner whose profession obviously necessitated his absence at sea for prolonged periods at times, but this does not prevent him from being a very active Past Master of the lodge who now holds Past Provincial Rank. At the Installation meeting the following month, prior to the actual Installation ceremony, a report was given to the assembled Brethren of the celebrations made to mark the 101st. birthday of the oldest member of the lodge, W. Bro. W.J. Shapland. There then followed the Installation of Bro. M. Gater as the Worshipful Master of the St. Thomas Lodge for 1983/4, this ceremony being carried out in the presence of two Asst. Prov. G. Masters in the persons of W. Bro. J.J.L. Gore and W. Bro. A.J. Huxtable.

The lodge meeting held in March was notable in that the W.Master, in his welcoming remarks to visiting Brethren, referred to the fact that it was that night exactly fifty years since W.Bro.G.W.Heywood, P.P.G.W. had been Initiated into Freemasonry. The W.Master expressed regret that W.Bro.Heywood was not able to attend the lodge on this conspicuous occasion. It was at this lodge meeting that the Initiation took place of a Brother who was to subsequently become W.Master of the lodge in 1992 and during his year of office travelled from his home near Reading for G.P.& F.committee meetings and lodge meetings. A truly marathon task as this involved a round trip of approximately 280 miles on each visit. I refer of course to W.Brother J.R.Simmons who now, because of his home and work being in Berkshire, has been obliged to seek Country Membership status in the lodge. At the May lodge meeting an Initiation took place of a candidate who was to subsequently serve the lodge faithfully and efficiently as the Senior Steward until continued ill health forced his resignation from this post and subsequently his resignation from the lodge at the close of 1994. This was Brother George Jones, a Brother who was held in great esteem by the Brethren of the lodge and will be remembered for the way in which he managed our catering arrangements and Festive Board seating plans. As a token of appreciation for his hard work Brother George was presented with a Crystal Goblet, suitably engraved, upon his retirement from his Lodge Office of Senior Steward.

The spring passed on to early and then mid summer with the July lodge meeting being the occasion for an explanation of the Second Tracing Board given by one of the Stewards of the lodge. This was followed by a lecture entitled, "The Oldest Continuous Provincial Lodge in England". This lecture being given by W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, Dep.P.G.M. Unfortunately the minutes do not state the name and number of this lodge and it can only be assumed that it is the St. John the Baptist Lodge No.39 operating here in Exeter.

At the September G.P.& F.C.meeting an item of interest was discussed with regard to the lodge Regalia. W.Bro.Cashmore reported that the donations to the regalia fund, which had been closed on the evening of the July lodge meeting had realised a total of £374.50 and that a complete set of new regalia had now been purchased and the total cost including the transfer of the Master's Chain to a new collar totalled some £300.00 a figure less than expected, also that the Master's Chain of Office had been valued at £1,000.00 and that it was recommended that it be insured for this figure.

W.Bro.Cashmore said that the reason for the lower than expected cost of the new regalia was due to the efforts of W.Bro.Gunn of the Davie Lodge No.3721. At which information the W.Master proposed and W.Bro.Punchard seconded that the Secretary write a sincere letter of thanks to W.Bro.Gunn for his effort and kindness to the lodge. Also at this meeting the Charity Steward, W.Bro. Branton reported that he had received the bequest of £100.00 left to the lodge in the will of the late W.Bro.Shapland. W.Bro.Branton also gave a summary of the last Directors meeting at which the proposed move to new premises, namely the Old Unitarian Church in South Street, had been discussed and that the building was Grade Two Listed and therefore it was felt that some opposition to it's adoption as a Masonic Building may be encountered.

At the September lodge meeting W.Bro.Cashmore received a public vote of thanks for the work he had put in to administer the regalia fund and the Brethren were informed that the surplus from the fund had been placed in a special fund named the St.Thomas Lodge Regalia fund.

At the October G.P.& F.C. meeting the W.Master, W.Bro.M.A.Gater informed the committee that in response to observations made by members of the committee with regard to attendances of junior members and officers at rehearsals, he had called a meeting of these Brethren earlier in the week. Past Masters were not present as the W.Master felt that the Brethren would speak more freely. The following reasons were given for non-attendance;

1. Too much attention and emphasis on quality of Ritual within the Temple, and not enough Genuine Friendship practised among the lodge members.
2. The G.P.committee proceedings exceeding the time specified on the lodge summons. This resulting in Junior members having been kept waiting downstairs for long periods had returned to their homes without waiting for the rehearsal.

Naturally this accusation caused great concern among the members present. Therefore, it was proposee by W.Bro.H.E.Branton and seconded by W.Bro.W.D. Plumer that the Senior member of the lodge, the Deputy P.G.M. W.Bro.J.J. L.Gore should be asked to address the lodge on Domestic night on this very important matter. It was proposed that a letter be included with the lodge summons inviting ! (my exclamation mark) the Brethren to be in attendance. This proposition was carried unanimously. At the risk of bringing down criticism upon myself I feel that I must make the observation that strict adherence to Ritual is of the utmost importance, at the risk of a little inconvenience to Brethren, if we are to uphold the honour,

reputation and the good name that the St. Thomas Lodge holds within the province for the presentation of its ceremonies. One has only to think of the attendance, at our Christmass Lectures, of visitors to witness our work. Let us all take pride in what we give to Masonry in general and our lodge in particular. At the regular lodge meeting the following week W. Bro. M. H. Buller, P. P. G. W. read the sermon preached by the W. Bro. Revd. W. F. Surtees, M. A. P. G. Chap. in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter in Exeter at a service of Thanksgiving to Commemorate the Centenary of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Devonshire on the 30th. June 1921. Following this address the Immediate Past Master, W. Bro. B. Ferris gave a lecture entitled "The Beginning of Architecture". During the Charity Steward's report, W. Bro. Branton reported upon the details concerning the petitions and application for admission to the new retirement home upon its completion. He stated that it was hoped that building work would commence in April 1984 and until then the St. Thomas Lodge had undertaken to maintain the condition of the site i.e. hedge trimming and keeping the grass down. This was following a complaint to United Grand Lodge from Exeter City Council regarding the overgrown state of the hedgerows around the property.

So the year began to draw towards its close with the November lodge meeting being uneventful except for a raising ceremony. The December lodge being of course the rendition of the usual Christmass lecture, on the occasion it being the Third Lecture that was worked. At the G. P. & F. C. meeting held in January 1984 the Charity Steward, W. Bro. Branton reported that the United Grand Lodge Charity had distributed a grand total of £265,000 of which a substantial percentage had been given to non-Masonic causes. At this point W. Bro. J. J. L. Gore advised the committee that United Grand Lodge now felt that Freemasons could speak more openly of the charitable work carried out by the Masonic movement and in particular of distribution of funds to non-masonic organisations. It must be made clear, however, to all members that all lodge working was sacred and that no Brother should enter into any argument with regard to Masonic working. W. Bro. Gore then said could the St. Thomas lodge give an example by giving a sum of money to Hospice care. The Charity Steward, W. Bro. Branton proposed that a sum of £50.00 from the lodge charity fund be presented and it was agreed to put this proposition to the Brethren at the January lodge meeting the following week.

At the regular lodge meeting the following week, on completion of the domestic night business, W.Bro.Gore,D.P.G.M. gave a talk to the lodge and called for the regular attendance at lodge meetings of all the Brethren from the Senior Past Masters down to the newest Member of the lodge. He also went on to stress the importance of attending the G.P.& F. committee meetings and rehearsals particularly Officers of the lodge. He asked that all Brethren should encourage those who did not attend the lodge meetings regularly to make every effort to attend. In his report the Charity Steward, W.Bro.Branton stated that the G.P.& F.C.had recommended the donation of £50.00 to Hospicecare and this was approved by the Brethren.

At the February G.P.& F.C. meeting among other items of business was a letter received from W.Bro.C.R.Chudley advising Brethren that a book entitled "Our Brother the Enemy" which was an account of the activities of Freemasons among the French and American prisoners during the time of the Napoleonic wars was available from him at the cost of £1.00 plus 17p for postage. To any Brother interested in the history of Freemasonry this book gives an account of lodges formed in this country by Freemasons held prisoner during the early nineteenth century. Installation lodge followed the following week at which the Senior Warden, Bro.C.F.Jacknelle was installed as the W.Master in the presence of the Dep.P.G.M, W.Bro. J.J.L.Gore,P.S.G.D., who after the ceremony gave the address to the W.Master. The address to the Wardens was given by W.Bro.F.A.Mathews, Prov. J.G.W. and the address to the Brethren was given by W.Bro.M.H.Buller,P.P.G.W.

The March 1984 G.P.& F.C. meeting produced quite an interesting number of items of business. First the Charity Steward, W.Bro.Branton reported that one of the lodge Widows had applied for residence in the new retirement home, of which the contractors were now "On site" and work had commenced. Second was the report from the Directors that the planning application to convert the Georges Chapel/Unitarian Church in South Street into a Masonic centre on the grounds that the Planning Authority considered the building to be one of the architectural gems of the city and that the City Council should take it over. This particular building is now in commercial use and is no doubt known to the Brethren as the "Global Village", a small complex of Craft shops and restaurant. Adjacent to this building is the old Holy Trinity Church which is now more familiar as the "White Ensign Club", the meeting place of ex-members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. Third and by no means least was the remarks made by W.Bro.Gore,following the statement by the lodge Secretary that

owing to him living some considerable distance from Exeter the Asst. Secretary was to undertake the minuting of the G.P. & F.C. meetings. W.Bro. Gore said that it was important that the Secretary's office was progressive with the intention that it provided a means of preparation for the Office of the Chair, therefore it was important that the secretary wrote the lodge minutes. The lodge meeting held the following week was to be a very full agenda. Ballots were taken for two candidates for Initiation, one of whom is now a Past Master of the lodge. Next item was a lecture given by the Charity Steward, W.Bro. H.E. Branton, entitled "The Trowel". From the title of the work and the position, in the lodge of the speaker, I have no doubt that this rendition would be about the work of the Masonic Charities. There then followed an organ recital given by the lodge organist, Bro. J. Wase, P.Pr.G.Org. There then followed yet another lecture "Mozart and the Masonic Light", given by W.Bro. M.H. Buller, P.Pr.G.W. This must truly have been an evening to remember for the Brethren fortunate to present. When giving his report to the Brethren the Charity Steward, W.Bro. Branton commented upon the amounts donated by the Grand Charity to non-masonic charities, this amounted to a total of £75,000.00 for 1983. He also reported to the Brethren that work was proceeding on the site for Cadogan Court.

At the April G.P. & F.C. meeting it was announced by the Secretary that he had received a letter from Prov. G.Lodge informing the province of the retirement from office, at the Annual General Meeting of the Prov. G.Lodge, of the Provincial Grand Master R.W. Bro. W.A. Kneel. W.Bro. M.H. Buller proposed a donation of £10.00 from the lodge funds, towards a presentation of a piece of silver to the P.G.M. from the province, this was seconded by Bro. R.D. Hudson. This proposition was approved by the Brethren in open lodge the following week at the regular lodge meeting, following upon the Secretary reading, in open lodge, the letter announcing the P.G. Master's retirement.

The May lodge meeting was the occasion at which the W. Master informed the lodge of the promotion, in Grand lodge, of V.W. Bro. J.J.L. Gore to the rank of Past Grand Sword Bearer. This, remarked the W. Master was a tremendous honour for V.W. Bro. Gore and also for the lodge. The Secretary was instructed to write a letter of congratulations to V.W. Bro. Gore on behalf of the St. Thomas lodge. V.W. Bro. Gore was unable to receive the congratulations of the lodge in person due to his absence on Masonic duties elsewhere.

The demands of his high office would mean that he could no longer attend his Mother Lodge as regularly as he would most probably wish. The W.Master continued with his opening remarks to the Brethren by announcing and congratulating the following Brethren upon their appointments to, or promotions in Provincial Grand Lodge;

W.Bro.R.N.Sampson, P.P.A.G.D.C. to P.P.G.Supd. Wks.

W.Bro.A.W.G.Chanter app. P.P.G.D.

W.Bro.A.R.Goddard app. P.P.G.R.

Following the Initiation of a Candidate and also the successful ballot for a joining Member, the labours of the evening were concluded by the presentation of a Past Master's jewel to W.Bro.M.A.Gater who was unavoidably absent at the Installation Lodge meeting due to his seafaring duties.

The G.P. & F.C. meeting of the 7th. June 1984 was notable by the Secretary reading a letter of resignation received from the Brother who had been Initiated into the Craft the previous month. This announcement must have been a "bombshell" to the committee to say the least. This was something that had never occurred in the lodge before during the sixty four years of its existence. It seems almost beyond belief that such a thing could happen. It can only be stated that it is fortunate for the individual concerned that he realised the magnitude of the step that he had taken and that he was incapable of fulfilling the promises and oath he had initially given. It also serves as a grave reminder to those Brethren, who wish to introduce candidates into the craft, to thoroughly vet applicants and to ensure that these candidates fully understand what is to be expected of them before they are allowed to commit themselves to the expectations of our Order. This startling piece of news of course meant that the Agenda for the June lodge meeting had to be changed hurriedly and this resulted in a W.Brother from another lodge in the city stepping in at short notice to fill the "gap" in the lodge summons. This W.Brother was none other than W.Bro. G.F.Milford, P.P.J.G.W. a Past Master of the Semper Fidelis Lodge No.1254, who repeated the Oration he gave in 1970 at the Centenary Meeting of his Mother Lodge, Semper Fidelis Lodge. Having heard this Worthy Brother, some time ago, give a lecture on the Masonic Collar Jewels and their significance without once referring to any note whatsoever, this Oration must have been something worth listening to. Following this lecture the Secretary gave his usual report in which he included the announcement of the appointment of W.Bro.A.J.Huxtable as the Provincial Grand Master (Designate) for Devonshire.

W.Bro.N.Sampson, P.P.A.G.D.C. to P.P.G.Supd. Wks.

W.Bro.A.W.G.Chanter, to P.P.G.D.

W.Bro.A.R.Goddard to P.P.G.Reg.

The W.Master then welcomed back to the lodge, after a long absence at sea, W.Bro.M.A.Gater, I.P.M. and after the business of the lodge was completed the W.Master presented to the I.P.M. W.Bro.Gater a Past Master's Jewel. W.Bro. Gater being unavoidably absent at the Installation meeting due to his seafaring commitments.

The summer of 1984 passed without any notable event taking place in the life of the lodge, but on returning from the summer holiday the September lodge meeting was the occasion at which a senior member of the lodge celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a Freemason. This was W.Bro.J.W. H.Webb, P.P.G.W. and this was marked in a suitable manner. The Assistant Secretary, Bro.D.R.Cornish read an extract of the lodge minutes for Wednesday, 12th. September 1934, this being the date of W.Bro.Webb's initiation. This was followed by a resume of W.Bro.Webb's Masonic career given by V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, D.P.G.M. who concluded by welcoming W.Bro. Webb into the select band of "elder" Brethren. V.W.Bro.Gore then presented to W.Bro.Webb a scroll, commemorating his Fifty Years in Freemasonry. This scroll having been prepared by Bro.P.K.Tolman. There then followed a lecture delivered by V.W.Bro.Gore entitled, "Masonic Bits and Pieces" which proved to be of great interest and humour to the Brethren.

The year progressed and at the November lodge meeting following an explanation of the first Tracing Board by Bro.K.W.Kellaway, Steward, sadly no longer a member of the lodge, a lecture entitled; "Freemasonry and King Solomon's Temple" was delivered by W.Bro.G.F.Edwards, P.P.G.D. Following the W.Master's thanks and the Brethrens acclamation for this piece of work, some interesting comments were made by W.Bro.Tucker who had visited Jerusalem and the quarries earlier in the year.

And so the year drew to a close with the December lodge meeting being held on Wednesday, 12th. December, at which the W.Master announced with great sadness the death of W.Bro.W.G.Heywood, P.P.G.W. who was initiated into the lodge in 1932 and was Master of the lodge in 1952 and had acted as Provincial Grand Tyler for many years. The W.Master referred to his distinguished career as a Freemason and called upon the Brethren to stand to order as a mark of respect to departed merit. The lodge then continued with the usual Christmass lodge meeting by rendering the first three sections of the First Lecture.

The year 1985 commenced with the January lodge meeting being confined, as normal, to the domestic matters of the lodge at this time of the year. The election of the Master elect being the most important among the election of the Senior lodge offices for the ensuing year. A notable feature at this lodge meeting was the absence of any ballots of candidates for initiation into the lodge. This, however, was offset by the ballots, for Honorary Membership of the lodge, of the Prov.G.Master, R.W.Bro.A.J.Huxtable also two Asst.Pr.G.Masters in the persons of; W.Bro.M.C.T.Reilly and W.Bro.

February saw the Installation meeting of the lodge taking place on Wednesday 13th. February when the Senior Warden, Bro.R.D.Hudson was installed as the 65th. Master of the lodge. The Installation meeting was attended by the Dep. Pr. G.Master, V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore along with other Prov.G.Lodge Officers. The address to the W.Master upon his installation was given by the Dep.Pr. G.Master and the address to the Wardens and Brethren being given by W.Bro. R.T.Discombe and W.Bro.K.J.Alford respectively. There then followed what may not be a unique but at the same time an unusual feature. This was the newly installed W.Master rising to propose a candidate for initiation into the lodge. This proposition being balloted for at the March lodge meeting. There then followed a lecture entitled;"Origins of Freemasonry",delivered by W.Bro.M.H.Buller, P.Pr,S.G.W. which was then followed by a short organ recital given by W.Bro.W.E.R.Chanter,P.Pr.G.D.

The spring and early summer proceeded, but somewhat darkened by the deaths of two Past Masters of the lodge in the persons of W.Bro.J.W.H.Webb,P.Pr.G.W. who was Master of the lodge in 1955 also W.Bro.R.B.Roberts who was master in 1973. On a lighter note the lodge Initiated and Passed two candidates before the lodge recessed for the summer break at the conclusion of the July lodge meeting.

On returning from the summer holiday the Brethren attending the September lodge meeting were privileged to receive an explanation of the Second Tracing board followed by a lecture given by V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore P.G.Swd.B. Dep. Prov. G.Master, this lecture covering six topics of Freemasonry. It is unfortunate that the minutes do not give details of the topics covered. Also at this lodge meeting the Charity Steward,W.Bro.H.E.Branton reported that the work on the new Westcountry Home at Dunsford Hill,Exeter was well in hand and that it was hoped to be able to accommodate approximately 70 persons. Some staff had already been appointed,these being the Matron,Deputy Matron and the Maintenance engineer.

At the October lodge meeting there was to have been a Raising ceremony but the minutes of that meeting this Raising is not recorded in any manner. No reason is recorded but reference is made to a lecture given by W.Bro. M.H.Buller,P.Pr.G.W.,entitled;"The Sermon Preached by the V.Revd.W.S.Surtees, Lord Bishop of Crediton, P.Pr.G.Master of Devonshire, in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter,Exeter on the occasion of the Centenary of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Devonshire on the 21st.June 1921". The W.Master thanked W.Bro.Buller for undertaking this work at extreme short notice. It is evident that some form of 'hiccup' had occurred in the arrangements for this particular lodge meeting. It does however show that Brethren in the lodge

were able to, and also quite prepared to step into the breach without any hesitation should the need arise. This shows that the Brethren of the lodge were well on top of their Ritual and word perfect, something that the Christmass lectures were noted for throughout the province. And so it was that the year came to it's close with the lodge rendering the last four sections of the First Lecture at the December lodge meeting on Wednesday, 11th. December.

The first lodge meeting held in the New Year being the domestic night lodge meeting a large number of items had to be considered in addition to the usual domestic night agenda. The first of these tasks being the election of a new Charity Steward. W.Bro.H.E.Branton who had carried out this office for a great number of years had asked to be relieved of this duty owing to ill health in addition to advancing years. Therefore a new Charity Steward, in the person of W.Bro.G.F.Edwards was to commence in office and would be invested at the Installation lodge meeting in February. The W.Master paid tribute to W.Bro.Branton for the way in which he had carried out the duties of Charity Steward ever the years and that he felt that it was only failing health that had forced him to relinquish the office. The next change in the life of the lodge was the position of Tyler. Although W.Bro.L.H.Harrold, Prov.G.Tyler. was re-elected for the forthcoming year he and his wife were to vacate the position of Steward and Stewardess at Gandy Street in the coming March. A report had been received from the Freemasons Hall Co. stating that tentative arrangements had been made for catering but the letter also informed all the lodges using Gandy St. may have to make their own arrangements with regard to the position of Tyler. This we all know is now the case, as in the St. Thomas Lodge the post of Tyler has become progressive like all the other offices and the outgoing Chaplain of the lodge is "invited" to stand outside the door of the lodge and undertake a years 'sabbatical'.

The Installation lodge meeting the following month was tinged with sadness as the first task of the W.Master was to inform the Brethren of the passing to the Grand Lodge above of W.Bro.H.E.Branton, P.Pr.J.G.W. also the passing to G.L.above of Bro. E.G.Rolph. the Brethren stood to order as a mark of departed merit. On a happier note the Installation of Brother M.Saffin took place in the presence of the Dep. P.G.Master, V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, P.G.Swd.B. who, after the installlation ceremony, delivered the address to the W.Master, the address to the Wardens and Brethren being given by W.Bro.R.E.Olding, Pr.J.G.W. and W.Bro.F.B.Prout, Dep.Pr.G.Master respectively.

Among the various reports given by lodge officers, at each lodge meeting, the charity Steward reported that during the recent weeks he had received a number of donations for Masonic charities, in lieu of flowers, with respect of the late W.Bro.H.E.Branton, P.Pr.J.G.W. Following this report by the Charity Steward with regard to any donations to the memory of the late W.Bro.Branton, the minutes of the G.P. & F.C. meeting held on Thursday, April 3rd. shows that the Brethren were still donating to the memorial fund and also he had received the sum of £65.00 which was the result of a collection made in the St. John Baptist lodge also further donations had been promised from the Brent and St. Margarets Lodges in Topsham. W.Bro. J.J.L.Gore said that Mrs. Branton had been approached and had requested that the money donated to the memory of her late Husband be used to purchase garden furniture for the new Masonic home at Cadogan Court. The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution had already been approached and had agreed to this request. At the regular lodge meeting the following week the W.Master, having opened the lodge in the Second Degree tendered the Gavel to V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore in order that he could assume the seat of King Solomon in order to deliver a lecture entitled; "A Collection of Masonic Items". This lecture covered such items as:-

William Tucker on Christianity.

The Sign of Fidelity.

The term "Operative Freemasonry".

Details of the old Bye-Laws and Minutes of
St. Georges Lodge.

Dues and Lodge Summons.

Old lodges in Tiverton.

Relief to Distressed Brethren in Plymouth.

On returning the Gavel to the W.Master the lodge closed to the first degree and there then followed the Secretary's report part of which was the reading, in full, to the Brethren of a letter from the Association of Methodist Freemasons. This letter called for the support of Methodist Freemasons who were distressed by the decision of the Methodist Conference to declare that Masonry was incompatible with the Methodist Church. Once again the enmity of the Church and its attitude to Freemasonry had been brought to the surface. As it is the rule of our order that the discussion of Religion is not permitted "Nuff Said"!

The spring and early summer of 1986 passed uneventful in the life of the St. Thomas Lodge, there being two nominations for Initiates to the lodge in the forthcoming year of 1987. One notable feature did however appear in the minutes of the September meeting of the G.P. & F. committee. This was the discussion which took place concerning the office of Tyler. The W.Master explained the situation now that W.Bro.Harrold had retired. Bro. De Vos, the Masonic Hall Steward had agreed to take on the duty of setting up the Lodge Furniture for each meeting under the care of the Tylers Trust. Bro.G.Smith had agreed to fill the post of Tyler for the rest of the year. The W.Master suggested that the post of Tyler should become a progressive Office, so that when a Brother finished his year as Senior Steward he then progressed to the office of Tyler before returning to the lodge as Inner Guard. As this plan was accepted after being proposed and seconded by W.Bro.Buller and W.Bro.Cashmore respectively it remains to be seen when this proposition was discontinued. This policy was however amended the following month when W.Bro.M.H.Buller said that he had given the matter serious thought and was now of the opinion that the post of Tyler should be held by a more senior Brother. Hence the retiring Chaplain taking a year "off"? The December G.P. & F. committee meeting discussed the suggestion made by W.Bro.Buller with regard to the post of Tyler becoming a progressive Office and the motion was carried following the Proposition being made and seconded by Bro.D.R.Lowman and Bro.G.Kay respectively. This being the situation with which we are all familiar with today. The year of 1986 drew to a close in the usual manner with the Lodge Members working first three sections of the Second Lecture under the direction of the following question masters, W.Bro.A.W.G.Chanter, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards and W.Bro.W.D.Plumer.

At the G.P. & F.C. meeting for January 1986 the Secretary reported that he had received the names of forty Brethren and their Wives who wished to accompany the W.Master and his Wife on the visit to Cadogan Court on Saturday, 31st. January. This was following the arrangement with the Matron of the home offering this date to enable visits to be made in order that Brethren within the Province could visit Cadogan Court to observe the result of the appeal for the formation of a retirement home in the West Country. The domestic night Lodge meeting was held as usual the week following the G.P. meeting and the minutes record the thanks of the W.Master to the Brethren attending the lodge on what he termed an appalling night. The weather conditions being deep snow which

had caused chaos on the roads and the withdrawal of all Public Transport. Most of the Brethren in attendance in the lodge had made their way there on foot. Some of those Brothers can be heard from time to time recalling this incident and remarking upon the excellence of the Festive Board on that occasion due to the small numbers dining. The reduced attendance did however distract the quantity of work undertaken that evening, there being the balloting for two joining members in addition to two ballots for candidates for Initiation taking place in addition to the normal business of electing the Master for the forthcoming year also the presentation and explanation of Grand Lodge Certificates and the Master Masons apron.

At the February G.P.&F.C. meeting the W.Master reported on the recent visit to Cadogan Court. The Matron, staff and Residents extending a warm welcome to the 38 Brethren, together with their Wives who made the visit. W.Bro.Studley proposed and W.Bro.E.K.Tucker seconded that the sum of £100 be donated to the Matrons Amenity Fund. This fund is used to benefit the residents for such items as Birthdays, Christmass and Special Anniversaries.

The Installation Lodge meeting of Wednesday, 11th. February was marred by the death, several days earlier, of the most senior Past Master of the lodge, the Very Worshipful Brother James Joseph Latham Gore, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Past Grand Sword Bearer. The W.Master, W.Bro.M.Saffin paid tribute to the life of this V.W.Brother and made many references to his work as an outstanding Freemason. The assembled Brethren stood to order as a mark of departed merit. There then followed the Installation of the Senior Warden, Bro.D.R.Lowman as the master of the St. Thomas Lodge for the year 1987/88 in the presence of the Asst. Prov. Grand Master, W.Bro.K.J.Alford, P.J.G.D. who gave the address to the W.Master following the Installation ceremony. The address to the Wardens was given by W.Bro.E.K.Tucker, P.Pr.S.G.W., and the address to the Brethren was given by W.Bro.R.Discombe, P.Pr.A.D.C. The minutes of this Installation lodge meeting show in a letter attached to the page of the minute book that the late V.W.Bro.Gore bequeathed a sum of money to the lodge along with all his Masonic Regalia, books and papers. It is a tribute to this great Mason that his lectures are still delivered to lodges throughout the Province also that the three V.W.Brethren who have succeeded him as Dep.Prov. Grand Master have all requested from the St. Thomas Lodge the privilege of wearing his Regalia. Also attached to the page of the minute book is a copy of the Order of service for the funeral of our late brother in the parish church of St. Thomas, Exeter on the

afternoon of Wednesday, 18th. February 1987. At the April meeting of the G.P. & F. committee the estate of the late V.W. Bro. Gore bequeathed to the lodge was discussed. The secretary reported that the meeting with the executors of the late V.W. Bro. Gore and W. Bros. Sir Gordon Shattock and R.T. Discombe held on the 17th. March. The bequest of the regalia, books and papers is extensive and valuable and is in the process of being catalogued. The Provincial Benevolent Fund representatives suggested that the bookcase containing the books and papers could be included in the bequest and this was taken to Gandy Street in transport kindly provided by W. Bro. E.K. Tucker. W. Bro. Buller and the Secretary will complete the cataloguing as soon as possible and the W. Master agreed that the matter would be raised again at a future date. At the May meeting of the G.P. & F. committee the Secretary was able to report that the cataloguing of the late V.W. Bro. Gore's books was completed and stated that there was a total of 64 hard back books and as yet an unknown number of booklets, ritual books and pamphlets. At the regular stated lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 13th. May, following an explanation of the First Tracing Board an organ recital was given by Bro. J. Wase, P. Pr. G. Org. Before commencing his recital Bro. Wase gave a short talk about the music he was to play also some details about the Lodge organ. Following the recital the W. Master thanked Bro. Wase and went on to explain to the Brethren that the recital had been arranged as a memorial to the late V.W. Bro. J.J.L. Gore, P. Gd. Swd. B., Dep. P. G. M.

The late spring and summer of 1987 passed and the Brethren returned from the summer break in September when Grand Lodge certificates were presented to three brethren, also an explanation of the Second Tracing Board was given prior to a lecture prepared by the late V.W. Bro. J.J.L. Gore, P. G. Swd. B., Dep. P. G. M. and read by W. Bro. R.T. Discombe, P. A. G. D. C., Prov. G. Treas. this lecture being entitled; "The Antient Landmarks of the Order".

At the October meeting of the G.P. & F.C. the W. Master made reference to the official opening of Cadogan Court to which he had been invited and indeed had attended. The lodge being well represented by W. Bro. Saffin and Bros. Lashbrook, Tolman, Kay and Cox. The W. Master stated that the lodge owed these Brethren a debt of gratitude for acting as Stewards at the opening at very short notice. The W. Master had also acted as escort to Mrs. Branton, wife of the late W. Bro. Branton who had been Charity Steward of the lodge for many years and had put in a tremendous amount of work towards raising money for the creation of Cadogan Court.

Also at this G.P.meeting a Brother made a case for the post of Director of Ceremony be no longer a progressive post. It was,however ,pointed out that from longstanding tradition and direction,that the post of D.C. was progressive and on a previous occasion a similar proposal to the one now presented and that this had been rejected also.

At the regular stated lodge meeting the folowing week,following the Raising of a Brother who is now a Senior Member of the lodge, the Charity Steward, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards, P.Pr.J.G.W.,in his report to the lodge was happy to state that the lodge had raised the sum of £19,000 toward the cost of building and furnishing Cadogan Court. A truly remarkable effort by the Brethren of St. Thomas Lodge.

The G.P.& F.C.meeting of Thursday,5th. November was marred by the announment,by the W.Master, of the death of W.Bro.W.D.Plumer,P.Pr.G. Reg., and the W.Master called upon the Brethren present to stand to order as a mark of departed merit before the business of the evening commenced. W.Brother Plumer had been ill for some time and had asked that someone stood in for him as Treasurer until such time that he was able to resume his duties in this post. In view of the present situation W.Bro.W.E.R.Chanter,P.Pr.G.D.had agreed to act as Treasurer for the remainder of the year. The W.Master also reported that since the last meeting the harmony of the lodge had been disturbed. There had been critisism of the Senior Deacon and the W.Master said that the Senior Deacon's performance in lodge in his opinion has been good. The Senior Deacon was very upset and was not present at the meeting. The W.Master suggested thatthe Brethren concerned should settle their differences amicably and offered his own assistance if desired.This is the first reference to be made,in the history of the lodge, of any feeling of dissension between the Brethren in the lodge, it is regrettable that it should occur at all. Some comfort can,however ,be found that it was an isolated incident,the first in 67 years lifespan of the lodge. At the lodge meeting the following week following the Raising of a new Brother within the lodge, the Charity Steward,W.Bro.G.F.Edwards reported that the draw conducted at the Ladies Night had raised £200, the W.Master thanked Bros.Jones and Cox for their efforts in raising this sum. The W.Master reported to the Brethren that two copies of a Lithiograph of Cadogan Court, from a limited edition of 50 prepared by George Bradford.

The W.Master proposed that one of the prints should be kept and displayed at Gandy Street whilst the other should be presented to Cadogan Court. This proposition was readily approved by the Brethren. At the December meeting of the G.P.& F.committee the W.Master reported that the lithoprint to be donated to Cadogan Court was to be suitably framed and that on the reverse side a panel giving the details of how the print came into the possession of the lodge was to be affixed. The print was to be presented early in the new year at a small ceremony to take place at Cadogan Court at which the W.Master together with several officers of the lodge also the donor of the print would be present.

The year of 1987 drew to it's close with the December lodge meeting conducting the usual Christmass lecture under the direction of W.Bros. G.F.Edwards and A.W.G.Chanter. The lecture worked being the last three sections of the Second Lecture. Following the completion of this Labour the notice of motion, by the Charity Steward, W.Bro.Edwards, that £2,000 be donated from the lodge charity fund to the Prov.Grand Lodge Benevolent Fund for the Home Appeal was considered and approved by the Brethren in open lodge. This donation brought the total amount raised by the St.Thomas Lodge to the cost of Cadogan Court to £20,000, a truly remarkable effort.

The year of 1988 began in the time honoured manner with the domestic night lodge meeting being held on Wednesday, 13th. January. No fewer than three candidates for Initiation being successfully balloted for along with the other business associated with the domestic lodge meeting. The Charity Steward, W.Bro.Edwards then read a letter which he had received from Miss G.Lowman, of Minehead stating that she had been selected to represent the United Kingdom, as a Junior Guide Leader and to travel to the West Indies in this capacity. The purpose of her letter was to seek sponsorship from the St.Thomas Lodge for this venture. The request was discussed and the Brethren approved the grant of the sum of £200 be sent to miss Lowman from the lodge Charity Fund. Here then was yet another example of the charity rendered by Freemasonry in general and the St.Thomas Lodge in particular to just causes without the sphere of the Brotherhood.

The Installation Lodge meeting was held on Wednesday, 10th. February in the presence of the Asst. Prov. Grand Master, W.Bro.E.J.Holman. The P.G.M. should have been in attendance but had tendered his apology for being unable to attend owing to an unexpected call to a meeting in London.

Following the Installation ceremony, the Investiture of the Lodge Officers and the addresses to the W.Master, Wardens and Brethren which were given by the A.P.G.M., V.W.Bro.E.J.Holman, W.Bro.T.Petherick, P.Pr.S.G.W. and W.Bro.E.K.Tucker, P.Pr.S.G.W. respectively. The newly installed W.Master W.Bro.G.W.Long presented to the Asst.Pr.G.M. a cheque for the sum of £2,000 for the P.G.M. special fund for Cadogan Court.

At the march G.P. & F. committee meeting the Regalia and papers of the late V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore were the subject of much discussion. At the December 1987 G.P. meeting it had been debated that these papers had been catalogued and that it was thought that at least 1000 handwritten sheets of the late V.W.Brother's lectures should be committed to micro film record. At this March meeting W.Bro.M.Saffin reported that he had been invited to visit the factory where micro filming processes were available. W.Bro.Buller reported that he had sorted out the papers for printing, but the motion must go before the lodge prior to any definite action could be taken. Also at this meeting the secretary reported that he had received a letter from St. John the Baptist Lodge asking the lodge to agree that the portrait of the R.W.Bro.Kneel was the joint property of the Craft Lodges in Exeter. The members of the committee accordingly agreed with the contents of this letter. The Secretary also reported that he had received a letter from Mrs.Plumer concerning the Masonic Jewels and Regalia of her late husband. At the time of his death it had been her desire to keep W.Bro.Plumer's Masonic effects including his Past Master's Jewel. However W.Bro.Cshmore reported that the regalia referred to was to be used by himself during his lifetime and that it would be eventually willed back to the lodge for use by other members. Further information was given to the lodge that W.Bro.Tucker had other regalia belonging to Mrs.Plumer and that other items such as books, papers and lectures had been handed to W.Bro.W.E.R.Chanter. Following upon all this business the W.Master read a passage from the booklet "Information for the Guidance of the Craft" which explained that a Lewis had no priority over other candidates for Initiation. This information being in opposition to that passage in the First Tracing Board explanation which states that a Lewis has the right to Initiation before any other candidate. It is obvious from these minutes that some discussion on this matter had taken place as events will show that during the current year of 1988 a Lewis was the last candidate to be brought into the lodge.

The March lodge meeting saw the first of the three candidates for Initiation for the current year duly initiated into the Craft. Following this ceremony the Secretary reported that at the G.P. & F.C. meeting the previous week a motion had been put forward to micro film 1000 pages of the lectures written by the late V.W. Bro. Gore. This motion was now proposed in open lodge by Bro. Lashbrook and seconded by W. Bro. Tucker, this proposition was agreed by the Brethren. A letter was also read by the Secretary from the Association of the Friends of Cadogan Court informing all lodges of the formation of the association and its aims and objectives.

The April lodge meeting held on the 13th. of the month was a momentous evening for two reasons. First it was the Fiftieth anniversary of the Initiation of W. Bro. M. H. Buller, P. Pr. G. W. into the St. Thomas Lodge on Wednesday, 13th. April 1938. (Note the day and dates coincide). This occasion was marked by the antient minutes of the lodge meeting that evening in 1938 being read by the Assistant Secretary, Bro. M. T. Haggett. This was followed by a presentation to W. Bro. Buller of a framed scroll giving details of his fifty years service to Freemasonry in general and to the St. Thomas Lodge in particular. At the festive board following the lodge meeting W. Buller was also presented with a bouquet for his Wife. The second reason is one of a purely personal one. It was the night that the author of this history was Initiated into the lodge.

At the lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 11th. May the third candidate for initiation was duly introduced to the lodge and Initiated. This was Bro. J. C. Cornish, son of the Junior Warden. Also present was the Candidate's Brother, a member of a London lodge also the Candidate's Uncle, a Povincial Officer of the province of Somerset. A truly momentous evening for the family Cornish, to have four members of a family in a lodge at the same time must be something of a record. Following the Initiation Ceremony an explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board was given by the Asst. Secretary, Bro. M. T. Haggett. The W. Master thanked Bro. Haggett for the excellence of his work which was received with acclamation by the Brethren.

The late spring and early summer passed without any unusual event, some discussion taking place at the July G.P. & F.C. meeting with respect to the proposed change in rental charges to individual lodges levied

by the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. Some individuals may pass the comment "Whats new about that"; however it has to be acknowledged that costs still keep increasing, inflation continues to rule the economy and therefore our lives.

The lodge returned from the summer break in September and the Brethren showed their appreciation of a lecture delivered by W.Bro.R.D.Hudson entitled "The Making of a Mason"; this lecture being compiled from notes left by the late V.W.Bro.Gore. Following this lecture an organ recital was given by Bro.J.Wase, P.Pr.G.Org. which included works by Handel, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Sibelius. Needless to say this recital was received with great pleasure and acclamation by the Brethren. The autumn progressed to winter with the October and November lodge meetings being devoted to the raising the the Third Degree of two of the years newcomers to the lodge. So once again the December lodge meeting was imminent and the usual Christmass lecture was to be given. This year it being the three sections of the Third Lecture, these being worked under the direction of W.Bros. G.F.Edwards and A.W.G.Chanter. So yet another year in the life of the St. Thomas Lodge had come to a close and the Brethren left to look forward to the Festive season and to the New Year ahead.

The year of 1989 commenced with the January G.P. & F. committee meeting on Thursday, 5th. January at which the members of the committee learned of the gift of new Menu Holders to the lodge by Mrs. Killey, an example of which was shown to the members of the committee. These holders being used at the Top Table at the Installation Festive Boards. The domestic lodge night meeting being held the following week produced the usual 'crop' of elections in addition to the one of choosing the forthcoming W.Master. February saw the Installation of the Senior Warden, Bro.R.M.Lashbrook as the W.Master for the year 1989/90, the ceremony being conducted in the presence of the R.W.Bro.A.J.Huxtable, Prov.G.Master, who, after the Installation ceremony delivered the address to the W.Master. The address to the Wardens and the Brethren being delivered by W.Bro.S.J.Forague, Prov.S.G.W. and W.Bro.K.J.Alford Asst.Prov.G.Master respectively. The Prov.G.Master then presented to the Immediate Past Master a Past Master's jewel and congratulated him on receiving the Past Master's jewel worn by the late V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, Dep.Prov.G.Master, a Past Master of the lodge.

At the G.P. & F. committee meeting on Thursday, 2nd. March the Almoner, W. Bro. Parnell reported that Mrs Killey had handed to him her husband's, the late W. Bro. J. W. Killey, Masonic Jewells and Regalia for donation to the lodge. These had been handed to W. Bro. M. H. Buller. Also at this meeting a letter was read by the Secretary, from the Charity Steward, W. Bro. G. F. Edwards stating that on a recent visit he had paid to Cadogan Court it was said that the Home was in need of a clock in the entrance Hall. W. Bro. Edwards suggested in his letter that the lodge could make the gift of a suitable clock in lieu of an annual donation to the Home. This suggestion was immediately proposed by W. Bro. Buller and seconded by Bro. P. K. Tolman. The committee members agreed that the choice of the clock be left with the Matron at the home and that a suitable inscription be placed on the body of the chosen clock. The proposition was put to the Brethren in open lodge at the April lodge meeting and was approved. This splendid timepiece now records the time for all to see in the foyer of Cadogan Court.

At the May G.P. & F. committee meeting the W. Master, W. Bro. Lashbrook reported that he had received a suggestion from the Asst Prov. G. M., W. Bro. A. K. Alford that the St. Thomas Lodge might wish to hold an Emergency Lodge meeting at Cadogan Court in order that the Brethren resident in the Home could enjoy a lodge meeting and so maintain Masonic activity. The committee approved the suggestion and W. Bro. Cashmore proposed and W. Bro. Long seconded and it was approved that the W. Master should liaise with the Matron to find how many Brethren could be accommodated on such a visit and when it could take place. This was, of course, providing that the Benevolent Institution gave it's permission and the Prov. Grand Lodge gave dispensation for such a lodge meeting to take place. It is a pleasant fact that these Extraordinary Lodge meetings at Cadogan Court are now an accepted annual occasion by the St. Thomas Lodge, and to make the occasion more enjoyable by the resident Brethren, two of the W. Brothers living there are invited to act as Senior and Junior Wardens at these lodge meetings. It was at this inaugural lodge meeting that the clock was officially presented to the home at a small impromptu ceremony in the foyer by the W. Master, W. Bro. R. M. Lashbrook. The agenda at this

Cadogan Court Lodge meeting was composed of two lectures. The first was given by W.Bro.M.H.Buller, P.Pr.G.W., entitled, "Masonic Knowledge," "Charity and Benevolence" and "On the Square". The second lecture was entitled "Some remarks on early Freemasonry in Exeter", was given by the W.Master, W.Bro.R.M.Lashbrook. This first meeting being held on Saturday afternoon the 22nd. July, 1989. This new venture in the scope of activities undertaken by the St.Thomas lodge brought the lodge to it's summer break. However before the summer break took place the lodge meeting of May was of interest in that a lecture that had been written by the late V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore entitled "The Volume of the Sacred Laws" was rendered by W.Bro.M.Saffin, part of the contents of this lecture referred to the fact that a medieval Bishop of Exeter, Bishop Miles Coverdale had translated the Bible into English. This lodge meeting was the occasion of the annual fraternal visit of a sister lodge namely the Miles Coverdale Lodge No.5069 and the lodge Secretary, W.Bro.L.A.C.Spring was able to inform the Brethren present that Bishop Miles Coverdale had indeed made the translation of the Bible in 1500 and at that time the summer palace of the Bishop of Exeter was located at Paignton hence the name of the Miles Coverdale Lodge.

With the passing of the summer the lodge took up it's duties with the G.P. & F.committee meeting for it's September discussions on Thursday, 7th. September at which the W.Master reported that he had seen Bro.Baker at Cadogan Court since the lodge meeting held in July. Bro.Baker was an old member of the St.Thomas Lodge who had retained his membership even though he had lived for some number of years in Newquay in Cornwall before being admitted to Cadogan Court. At this meeting Bro.Baker had given W.Bro.Lashbrook the Past Masters Jewel which had belonged to his Father W.Bro.W.T.Baker who had been Master of the St.Thomas Lodge in 1930. At the lodge meeting the following week the Brethren had the great pleasure of receiving, from the W.Master, a lecture entitled; "The Three Chairs". This lecture outlined the history of the Masters and Wardens Chairs in the Temple at Gandy Street. The chairs were placed in the centre of the lodge room and the W.Master described the carvings on the chairs and gave details of their

origination in 1823, they were consecrated in 1877, and the W.Master gave details of their association with the Temple at Gandy Street. Needless to say this lecture was received with great interest and acclamation by the Brethren.

The autumn progressed and at the November meeting of the G.P.& F. committee the Almoer was pleased to report to the Members that the Brethren at Cadogan Court had expressed their pleasure and thanks for Extraordinary Lodge meeting that had been held and requested that the occasion be repeated as soon as permissible. At the regular lodge meeting the following week the highlights of the evening were an explanation of the Second Tracing Board by Bro.M.T.Haggett followed by a lecture on the Second Tracing Board by W.Bro.M.Saffin. Both these two pieces of work being appreciated with acclamation by the Brethren. It is noteworthy that the explanation of the Second Board by Bro.Haggett was in some way a'double barreled'effort as he had rendered an explanation of the First Tracing Board some twelve months previous. This is the first time, to the best of my knowledge that a Member of the lodge had carried out this duty of explaining both boards.

The December lodge meeting was clouded by the W.Master's announcement of the death of the lodge Secretary, Bro.G.E.Smith. Bro.Smith suffered a fatal heart attack whilst visiting his Son at Mortenhampsead. The W.Master paid tribute to Bro.Smith saying that he would be greatly missed in the lodge. The Brethren stood to order as a mark of departed merit. The lodge then brought the year to a close by working the first three sections of the First Lecture under the usual direction of W.Bros. G.F.Edwards and A.W.G.Chanter.

Chapter Nine

With the coming of the New Year the lodge entered the Seventh decade of it's life and the domestic night lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 10th. January 1990 every indication was evident that the year was to be a busy one, there being no fewer than three ballots for candidates for Initiation and also a ballot for a joining member to the lodge, this being in addition to the usual election of the forthcoming W.Master, Treasurer, Charity Steward ETC. for the forthcoming year.

The Installation Lodge meeting was held on Wednesday, 14 th. February in the presence of the Asst.Prov.G.Master, W.Bro.D.Penny, P.S.G.D. Prior to the Installation ceremony the Almoner gave details of sick Brethren, one of whom, in the preson of W.Bro.M.H.Buller, P.Pr.G.W. sent apologies for his absence and stated in his letter that this was the first Installation meeting he had failed to attend in 52 years with the exception of the war years. A truly remarkable record. The occasion of the Installation of the Master Elect, Brother D.R.Cornish was noteworthy in the fact that his Installation was attended by no less than two of his three Sons and also his Brother who held Provincial rank in Somerset.

At the March lodge meeting the W.Master carried out the first ceremony following his Installation. This must have given him a feeling of immense pride as it was his duty to Initiate his third Son into Freemasonry. At the Festive Board following the lodge meeting I recall that the Initiates younger Brother, in his speech of welcome to the lodge visitors that evening, remarking that the tables had now been turned as he was now the big brother Masonically, as he had been initiated the previous year. These two Brothers are now in immediate progression through the lodge offices. It is worthwhile noting that with this Initiation history was repeating itself in the lodge in the respect that a Father and two Sons were members of the lodge. I refer to the Chanter family, where Father and his two Sons together with an uncle were all members of the lodge.

The April lodge meeting saw another Initiation take place, this occasion being of significance to the writer as it was his first experience of 'working on the floor ' of the lodge. The duty being to present the Working Tools of an Entered Appretice. As many will no doubt

agree the first ever 'Work' can be a profound experience to say the least.

This last Initiation ceremony gave the chance for the lodge to carry out a ceremony, at the May lodge meeting, that had not been done for a number of years; That of conducting a double passing ceremony. The raising of the two Brothers who had been at the centre of the double Passing ceremony occurred at the June and July lodge meetings thus bringing the lodge to it's summer break. But this was not before the second Extraordinary lodge meeting was held at Cadogan Court on Saturday, 21st. July. Again this lodge meeting consisted of two Masonic Lectures, the first being entitled "The Tyler" which was presented by W.Bro.R.M.Lashbrook, Immediate Past Master. The second lecture entitled "Some Masonic Odds and Ends" being presented by the W.Master, W.Bro. D.R.Cornish. As on the previous visit in 1989, following the lodge meeting the Brethren of St. Thomas Lodge were entertained to light refreshment in the company of the Lady residents of Cadogan Court in addition to the Retired Brethren living there.

On returning from the summer holiday period the September lodge meeting was the occasion of the Initiation of the third candidate to be admitted during the current year. This was followed by an explanation of the First Tracing Board given by Bro.J.C.Cornish, steward. The W.Master thanked Bro.Cornish for the excellence of his work.


At the October G.P. & F. Committee meeting one of the items discussed was the question of paying for the meals of visitors to the lodge on the occasion of Fraternal visits. It was thought to be unfair that Brethren who had made such visits to other lodges should be asked to pay for more than one meal in respect of visiting Brethren. On raising the question to the Senior Steward, Bro.G.K.Jones, he stated that the Hospitality Fund was in good stead and that should there be an imbalance of Brethren making Fraternal visits and return visiting Brethren from other lodges then the Hospitality Fund could cope. It was therefore resolved that in the future no Brother in the lodge would be asked to pay for more than one meal in respect of visitors. At the regular stated lodge meeting the following week a Passing ceremony was followed by an explanation of the Second Tracing Board by Bro. R.Fish who was thanked for his rendition by the W.Master. In his report to the lodge the Secretary read a letter from Prov. Grand Lodge with regard to Brethren being given a custodial sentence following criminal charges being laid. This letter stated that in such cases the matter

must be reported to Provincial Grand Lodge; as stated in rule 179 & 179A, Book of Constitutions. It is most unfortunate that such a ruling has to be made and from time to time its existence brought to the attention of lodges. The final item was the proposal; from the Charity Steward, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards, that the Widows Christmass gift be increased to £20.00 for the forthcoming Festive Season. On being seconded by W.Bro.A.W.G. Chanter the motion was carried unanimously by the Brethren.

At the November G.P. & F. committee meeting a letter was read by the Secretary which contained a request from the Nore Lodge No. 3610 in the province of Essex seeking to attend a lodge meeting either March or April 1991 as they hoped to visit one of their retired Brethren who was a resident at Cadogan Court, whom they hoped to bring to the lodge at their expense. It was agreed that we would be delighted to have them providing that they let us know in good time in order that arrangements could be made. At the regular stated lodge meeting the following week a Raising ceremony was followed by the Secretary reading a letter of Thanks which had been sent by the Secretary of the Friends of Cadogan Court Association thanking the St. Thomas Lodge for the purchase and presentation of six putting Clubs for the use of the residents at the Court on the newly set out Putting green. A letter, which had been received by the Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd., from Mr. and Mrs. Lapca, the Caterers, thanking all those who had contributed to the cheque presented to them on the occasion of their Marriage.

At the December G.P. & F.C. meeting the W. Master welcomed the Almoner, W.Bro. Parnell who had been ill for the past two months. The W. Master expressed the pleasure of seeing W.Bro. Parnell back in the 'fold'. In his report the Almoner thanked all those who had written, phoned or visited during his illness. He then went on to report that most of the Widows had been visited and received their Christmass gift from the lodge and expressed thanks to those Brothers who had assisted with the deliveries. At this point the Charity Steward, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards mentioned that he had received a communication from a W.Bro. Godfrey in London informing us of the present situation of Mrs. Resterick, one of our longstanding widows, although not in very good health she was being well looked after and W.Bro. Edwards proposed that the annual gift of £30.00 be raised to £40.00 in her case. This was readily approved by the committee.

At the lodge meeting the following week the Almoner in his report stated that all the Widows gifts had been delivered and also he had

visited all those aged Brethren who were unable to attend and left a gift, from the lodge, of a bottle of Port wine. He said that the reception he had received had been quite memorable and they all sent greetings to the lodge and said that they would drink to absent Brethren at the appointed time on lodge night. The Brethren of the lodge then worked the customary Christmass Lecture under the direction of W.Bros.A.W.G.Chanter, G.F.Edwards and G.W.Long; the lecture worked being the last four sections of the First Lecture. So yet another year had drawn to a close in the life of the lodge.  1991

At the first G.P. & F. committee meeting of the new year two items of interest were discussed and it was agreed to bring these items before the Brethren at the Domestic night lodge meeting the following week. The first of these matters being the John Stocker Bible and when it should be used in the Temple. The two Bibles owned by the lodge were produced for examination by the members of the committee and from an inscription in the John Stocker Bible it was agreed that this one should only be used on Domestic night and the Installation Lodge. The second item was the request made by the Provincial Grand Secretary that Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge come forward and volunteer to deliver some of the lectures written by the late V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore to lodges within the Province. At the Domestic Night lodge meeting the following week the usual business associated with this lodge night was carried out. Again there being no fewer than three candidates for Initiation being successfully balloted for, yet another busy year was the indication for the Master Elect, Brother P.K.Tolman, S.W. The items mentioned in the G.P. meeting were brought before the Brethren in open lodge and with regard to the use of the Bibles the recommendation of the G.P. committee was accepted by the Brethren. With respect to the request for lecture readers W.Bros.D.R.Lowman and G.W.Long together with Bro.M.T.Haggett expressed a willingness provided ample time was given in advance in order that they could familiarise themselves with the content of the lecture to be given.

The Installation meeting on Wednesday, 13th. February was attended by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, V.W.Bro.K.J.Alford, P.G.Swd.B. who following the installation ceremony gave the address to the newly installed Master of the Lodge W.Bro.P.K.Tolman. The Pr.J.G.W. W.Bro. R.Galt gave the address to the Wardens and W.Bro.E.K.Tucker, P.Pr.S.G.W. gave the address to the Brethren. The W.Master after presenting the Gavel

of the lodge to the D.Pr.G.M. and having it returned with thanks and congratulations; then presented to the Dep.Prov.G.Master a cheque for £1,000.00 as a contribution to the 1997 Festival

At the March meeting of the G.P. & F. committee the W.Master called on all present to stand to order as a mark of respect for departed merit for our recently deceased Almoner, W.Bro. H.R. Parnell, P.Pr.G.Reg. The W.Master then went on to pay tribute to the way W.Bro. Parnell had worked in the role as Almoner for the lodge in particular and the contribution he made to Masonry in general. Among the items discussed at the G.P. meeting was the condition of the Hospitality Fund. W.Bro. Buller stated that the fund was in reasonable good health but that the audit for the last year showed a negative cash flow of approximately £47.00. the purpose of the fund and the level of income from the lodge officers was considered but it was agreed that nothing could be resolved that evening. The W.Master undertook to bring the matter to the attention of the committee in six months time together with some definite proposals.

At the regular stated lodge meeting the following week the Brethren stood to order as a mark of respect for W.Bro. Parnell, and the W.Master also read a letter from Mrs. Kay Parnell thanking all who had attended her Husband's funeral. The W.Master then welcomed Bro. R. Fish back to the lodge following his recent accident at work. After greeting all visitors to the lodge the W.Master invested W.Bro. G.F. Edwards as Charity Steward, Bro. H.W. Stride as Almoner, Bro. R. Fish as Asst. Secretary and Bro. J. Wase as Organist. All these Brethren being unavoidably absent at the Installation. There then followed a Raising ceremony, this being the first working to be carried out under the watchful eye of the recently Installed W.Master. Following this the Charity Steward, W.Bro. Edwards, stated in his report that the sum of £277.50 had been collected and would be donated to the Masonic Samaritan fund in memory of our recently deceased W.Bro. Parnell.

The April, lodge meeting was the occasion when the Brethren of the Nore Lodge visited St. Thomas lodge during a visit to the oldest subscribing member of their lodge who was a resident at Cadogan Court. There then followed an Initiation ceremony. In his report to the lodge the Charity Steward, W.Bro. G.F. Edwards stated that he had received a letter from a Brother in a London lodge, seeking sponsorship in the forthcoming London Marathon; the Charity steward went on to say that if every lodge supported the request then the Royal Masonic Hospital would receive a tremendous boost to its funds. It was resolved that Twenty Six Pounds be

donated from the lodge charity fund.

At the May G.P. & F. committee meeting had to report the death of W. Bro. R. M. Sampson, P. Pr. G. Supt. W. and requested the Brethren to stand as a mark of departed merit. In the course of his report, the Almoner, Bro. H. W. Stride stated that he had collected most of the late W. Bro. Parnell's regalia and masonic records from Mrs. K. Parnell. W. Bro. R. D. Studley offered to assist in sorting these effects and advise on their use. The Treasurer reported a change of bank address due to the Sidwell St. branch of Lloyds bank closing. The W. Master undertook to find out what had happened to the lodge property stored by the bank. At the regular lodge meeting the following week an Initiation ceremony was followed by the Secretary reporting the proposal by the North Devon Masters lodge to hold a special lodge meeting on Lundy Island on Monday 17th. June, any Brethren wishing to attend this meeting should obtain an application form from the Secretary, together with details of the travel arrangements. The Charity Steward reported that he had received a letter of thanks from Bro. Kevin Cowan, who had successfully completed the London Marathon, for the £26 the lodge donated.

At the June meeting of the G.P. & F. committee meeting an item of business arose that could be of interest and useful for future reference. the question arose to whether a resigned Brother of the lodge could attend the lodge whenever he was in the area, this particular Brother had taken up residence abroad. It was pointed out that he could only attend if invited as a guest and then only on a single occasion. This procedure is fully explained by Rule 127 Book of Constitutions. At the lodge meeting the following week a ceremony that had not taken place for a number of years was that of a Double Passing ceremony.

The July lodge meeting arrived and was the occasion of the Raising of the first initiate of the year. It was notable in that the candidate's Father travelled from North of the border to witness this important ceremony. At the Festive Board later that evening Bro. Dechan Senior expressed great delight in being present and that it was unfortunate that the Candidates Grand father could not be present, it being too great an effort for his years. With this very enjoyable evening for everyone in general and the Candidate in particular, the Brethren of the St. Thomas lodge departed for their summer break. Before the summer holiday could commence properly one final obligation had to be completed

this was ,of course,the Extraordinary Lodge meeting to be held at Cadogan Court on Saturday afternoon, 20th. July. On this occasion the Nore Lodge No. 3610 were present and had been invited to work the First Degree ceremony as practised by the Province of Essex. Following the reading of the Dispensation issued by the Provincial Grand Master of Devonshire,R.W.Bro.A.J.Huxtable, the lodge was opened in Due and Antient form with Solemn prayer. The W.Master of the St.Thomas Lodge then invited the W.Master of the Nore lodge to take the Chair of King Solomon and to request his Officers to take their respective positions within the lodge. The Candidate for Initiation being acted by W.Bro.A.Barnes, a Past Master of the Nore Lodge. Following the completion of the First Degree ceremony an explanation of the First Tracing Board was given by W.Bro.G.Bennett, another past Master of the Nore Lodge. Before vacating the Chair W.Bro.B.Hayward, W.Master of Nore lodge thanked the W,Master of St.Thoimas Lodge,W.Bro.P.K.Tolman for allowing the Nore lodge to carry out this demonstration in the presence of their oldest subscribing member, W.Bro.S.Gibson, who was a resident at Cadogan Court.W.Bro. P.K.Tolman resumed the Chair and reinstalled his Officers. He then thanked the Brethren of Nore lodge for an excellent demonstration which was received with acclamation by the members of St.Thomas and also the Residents of Cadogan Court. W.Bro.L.A.Bennett, L.G.R. expressed the thanks of the Residents of Cadogan Court to the Brethren of St. Thomas and Nore Lodges for holding the Lodge at the Court.

On the return from the summer holiday period the G.P.& F.committee met on Thursday,5th. September to a full agenda of business. The Almoner reported that in the future he intended making a monthly visit to Cadogan court to ensure all was well with the Residents and also our own Bro.R.Friend who had taken up residence at the Court earlier in the spring. There were two proposals for candidates for Initiation for the forthcoming year in addition to a proposal for a joining member to the lodge. The Treasurer, W.Bro.R.Chanter,in his report stated that W.Bro.C.F.Jacknelle,who was Master of the lodge in 1984 had been unable to pay his subscriptions due to the serious illness which resulted in his death. The members of the committee immediately made a collection to put this matter to rest in a satisfactory manner. In the absence of the Charity Steward the W.Master read a letter from W.Bro.G.F.Edwards in

which he gave details of the proposed memorial to the late V.W.Bro.W.A. Kneel, Past Provincial Grand Master, who had died in May. The Charity Steward reported that Provincial Grand Lodge had suggested that individual lodges should not contribute more than £100.00 to this memorial. W.Bro.Edwards proposed this sum in his letter and this was seconded by the W.Master and approved by the committee. The second item in the letter was the formation of the new Samaritan Fund linked to the Lord Cornwallis appeal. Grand Lodge was of the opinion that Craft Lodges may wish to make a lodge donation of not more than £500.00. W.Bro.Edwards proposed that this sum be donated, in his letter, and this was seconded by the W.Master and approved by the committee. This proposal was put to the members in open lodge the following week, at regular stated lodge, and approved unanimously.

The autumn progressed with the lodge conducting an Initiation ceremony in September and on this occasion the candidate received an explanation of the first Tracing Board immediately following his return to the lodge following the Initiation being completed. This explanation was given by Bro.R.M.Cornish, who was thanked by the W.Master for the excellence of his presentation. At the November G.P.& F. committee meeting the Secretary read a letter of invitation which had been received from the "Zur Etmigkett" Lodge located in Frankfurt, Germany. This invitation was for members of the St.Thomas Lodge to attend the 250 th. anniversary of the formation of the lodge. After discussion it was agreed that when the extent of positive interest was known the secretary would advise our German Brothers accordingly. The subject of the safe keeping of the effects of the late V.W.Bro.Gore arose yet again, this topic had been discussed several times at G.P. meetings in previous months. It was resolved that until a firm offer of secure storage space, was received from the Exeter Freemasons Hall Ltd., the effects of the Late V.W.Brother should remain in the care of W.Brother M.Saffin. The regular stated lodge held the following week was the occasion of the Passing of the Brother Initiated the previous month. This was again something of a concentrated ceremony for him as he also received an explanation of the Second Tracing Board from Bro.R.Fish immediately after the Passing ceremony. Following this, the Secretary read the letter from Germany to the Members in the lodge and stated that the visit, if made, would be from the 28th. to 31st. May 1992 and requested Brethren to inform him of their intentions as soon as possible in order that he

could pass this information on to Germany.

At the December G.P.\$ F.committee meeting the Secretary read a letter resignation from the lodge received from Bro.J.Wase, the lodge organist. The reasons given by Bro.Wase for his resignation were such that the lodge had no alternative but to accept with deep regret Bro.Wase decision. It was agreed by the committee that his resignation was a great loss to Freemasonry in general and his musical talents would also be missed. Also at this meeting the Secretary reported that in response to the invitation from the German lodge to attend the celebrations of the lodge's 250th anniversary he had notified them that a total of six Brethren and their Ladies would be attending this function in May 1992. And so the end of the year was upon the lodge once again and this was marked in the usual manner by the lodge working the first three sections of the Second Lecture at the December lodge meeting held on Wednesday, 11th. December under the directions of W.Bros.A.W.G.Chanter, G.F.Edwards and G.W.Long.

The year of 1992 commenced with the General Purposes and Finance committee meeting on Thursday, 2nd. January at which once more the loyalty of Brethren of the lodge was exemplified by the Secretary stating that he had received a telephone call from W.Bro.M.Gater who was calling from Singapore, where his ship was berthed, to extend Fraternal Greetings to the Master and Brethren of the lodge and to extend the compliments of the season to all. The Secretary did not mention the time of day that he received the call, but thinking of the time differential between the Far East and the United Kingdom it is to be hoped that neither party was talking in the early hours. Also at this meeting the W.Master reported that Bro.M.Dee-Shapland had expressed a wish to step down from presenting the explanation of the Grand Lodge Certificate which he had done for a considerable number of years. Many older Brethren in the lodge will no doubt remember the team work of Father and Son, in the persons of Bros. Dee-Shapland, giving the explanation of the Master's apron and Grand Lodge Certificate. The regular stated lodge meeting the following week was once again an indication that the lodge was to have a full programme of work for the incoming W.Master, there being ballots for two candidates for Initiation and also proposals for two joining members to the lodge. The following week the Installation of the Master Elect, Bro.J.R.Simmons took place in the presence of the Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro.A.J. Huxtable and Asst.Pr.G.Master E.J.Holman. Here yet again is an example

of lodge loyalty inasmuch that W.Bro.Simmons lives near Reading and during his year of office in the Chair attended every lodge in addition to only one absence at a G.P.& F.committee meeting. A truly remarkable effort which was acknowledged by the Brethren in that a draw was organised, the winner being the Brother who estimated the nearest number of miles travelled by W.Bro.Simmons in his attendances at lodge and G.P. meetings. Needless to say that a goodly figure was raised for Masonic Charities by this means.

At the March lodge meeting, following a raising ceremony, the Secretary read a letter from United Grand Lodge informing the Brethren of the 275th. anniversary celebrations of the formation of U.G.L. would be taking place at Earls Court, London on the 10th. June 1992. These celebrations would take the form of a Grand Lodge meeting at Earls Court followed by a celebration dinner. Whilst only Grand Officers and Masters and Wardens of Craft Lodges were eligible to be present at the Grand Lodge meeting, Brethren wishing to attend the dinner were most welcome. The Secretary also reminded the Brethren that a service, to mark the 275th. celebrations, was to be held in Exeter cathedral on the evening of the 26th. June. As this was to be the last official function attended by the Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro.A.J.Huxtable, before his retirement from this high office the Brethren were appealed upon to make it a memorable occasion by ensuring a full attendance.

At the May meeting of the G.P.& F.committee the Treasurer read a letter from the Charity Steward, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards regarding the W.Bro.Tolliday's Past Masters jewel which was in the lodge safe at Gandy Street. The committee agreed that Bro.Stride, Almoner, should take the sum of £50.00 to Mrs.Tolliday in view of the particular circumstances in this case and as set out in the Charity Stewards letter. After a lengthy discussion the committee deferred further recommendations of what action to take in the future in similar cases but endorsed W.Bro.Edwards recommendations that Past Masters should put a letter with their will addressed to the executors advising them what they wished to happen to their Past Masters jewel. Under the heading of A.O.B., at this meeting, W.Bro.P.K.Tolman stated that he had attended Grand Lodge in the company of W.Bro.R.D.Studley and witnessed W.Bro. E.K.Tucker receive his Grand Lodge Collar. The W.Master then congratulated those W.Brethren who had received promotion or appointments to Provincial Grand Lodge rank. These were; W.Bro.W.E.R.Chanter, P.Pr.S.G.D. to Past Prov.Junior Grand Warden. W.Bro.R.J.Jacobs..... Past Provincial Grand Standard Bearer.

W.Bro.M.A.Gater..... Past Provincial Asst. Grand Director Ceremony
 W.Bro.J.D.W.Barnett,L.G.R... Past Provincial Grand Registrar.
 A truly impressive list in a single year.

At the regular stated lodge meeting the following week the Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro.G.W.Long Honoured W.Bro.E.K.Tucker, Past Asst. Director of Ceremonies, P.Pr.S.G.W. it being W.Bro.Tucker's first attendance in the lodge since his promotion to Grand Lodge Office. The W.Master congratulated W.Bro.Tucker upon his appointment and W.Bro. Tucker suitably replied. The W.Master also thanked W.Bro.Tucker for donating his Past Masters jewel to the lodge. In his reply W.Bro.Tucker said that he was pleased to present the jewel to the lodge as he had been presented with it by the late V.W.Bro.J.Gore, who was also a Grand Lodge Officer.

At the June lodge meeting the Secretary reported that he had received a letter from Provincial Grand Lodge announcing the resignation of R.W. Bro.A.J.Huxtable and that His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent had been pleased to appoint V.W.Bro.K.J.Alford, P.G.Swd.B. to the office of Provincial Grand Master for Devonshire with effect from the 24th.June 1992. At the July meeting of the G.P.& F.committee a follow up letter from Provincial Grand Lodge gave the date of the Installation of the Prov. Grand Master Elect as being Thursday,17th.September 1992 by the Asst.Grand Master, tthe Right Hon. the Earl of Eglington and Winton. The Provincial Grand Master Elect announced that he would be appointing W.Bro.E.J.Holman as Deputy Provincial Grand Master and confirming W.Bro. R.O.Osborn as Asst.P.G.Master. In addition W.BroJ.F.Annear and W.Bro. M.P.Haig would be appointed Asst. P.G.Master. Also at this meeting the W.Master,W.Bro.J.R.Simmons thanked the lodge for giving him the honour of attending the 275th.Anniversary meeting to celebrate the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England. W.Bro.Simmons pointing out that it was only because the Members of the lodge had elected him Master for 1992 that he was able to be at Earls Court for the celebration meeting.

The regular stated lodge meeting on Wednesday,8th.July was to have been a Passing ceremony, but immediately prior to the lodge assembling the candidate telephoned to say that unfortunately he had suffered a car accident and that whilst he was fortunately uninjured he had to remain at the scene until he had completed his statement to the Police. In order that the evening could proceed as planned,therefore avoiding any dissappointment the the guests in the lodge,Bro.M.J.Egerton volunteered to take the place of the candidate thus allowing what

could be regarded as a rehearsal of the Passing Ceremony to proceed.

On Saturday, 18th. June 1992, the fourth extraordinary lodge meeting to be held at Cadogan Court took place. On this occasion the lecture, given by W.Bro.R.M.Lashbrook, was entitled; "A few words in Freemasonry". This took the form of listing some thirty three words used in Freemasonry and an explanation of the definition of these words.

On returning from the summer holiday period the September lodge meeting proved to be a very full evenings work. First an explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board was given by Bro.J.C.Cornish. The W.Master thanking and complimenting Bro.Cornish on the excellence of his work. There then followed the Passing of the Brother who had unfortunately been unable to attend in July due to reasons beyond his control. Having been duly passed to the Second Degree or that of a Fellow Craft Freemason the candidate was given an explanation of the Second Degree Tracing Board by the W.Master. Under the heading of any other business the W.Master reminded the Brethren that W.Brother Studley had arranged a visit to the Chatterton Lodge in Bristol on the 1st. October when a First Degree Ceremony would be taking place.

At the October meeting of the G.P. & F. committee the W.Master stated that he would be writing on behalf of the lodge to the Prov.G.Secretary confirming the continued loan of the late V.W.Bro.J.Gore's regalia to W.Bro.Holman. The regalia had originally been borrowed from the lodge by Right W.Bro.K.Alford. It was reported that a letter had been received from Prov.G.rand Lodge confirming that W.Bro.K.Hayes had been appointed Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon as part of the Provincial Grand Master's Installation awards. The investiture of W.Bro.Hayes was to take place at a lodge meeting to be held on the 12th. October. The W.Master expressed his congratulations, on behalf of the lodge, to W.Bro.Hayes.

October and November passed without incident and the festive season rapidly approached. The lodge conducted its usual Christmas meeting by working the last three sections of the Second Lecture under the directions, as usual, of W.Bros.A.W.G.Chanter, G.F.Edwards and G.W.Long. To close the year, a backhanded present? to the Brethren was a proposal to increase the annual subscriptions as from the commencement of the New Year.

The domestic night lodge meeting of January 1993 was, as usual, a busy night for the lodge, three ballots for Initiation taking place along with all the other domestic night business. On this particular evening however an additional item was presented. W.Brother R.T.Discombe, P.S.G.D. attended

the lodge in order to give an explanation of the object and aims of the 1994 Grand Charity Festival. This explanation was very full and explicit and left the Brethren in no doubt whatsoever as to how the money raised would be spent. Before the lodge was closed the Charity Steward, W.Bro.G. F. Edwards proposed that at the Installation meeting in February, which was to be attended by the Provincial Grand Master, the lodge should hand him a cheque for £1000.00 as a donation to the Festival. This was seconded by W.Bro.E.K. Tucker and unanimously approved by the Brethren. To end the lodge meeting a letter was read from the W.Master, W.Bro.J. Simmons apologising for his unavoidable absence on this his last full lodge meeting. This being one of the very rare occasions when he had not made the journey from Reading to attend the lodge.

February saw the Installation lodge meeting taking place in its usual smooth and efficient manner, this being conducted in the presence of Rt. W.Bro.K.J. Alford, Provincial Grand Master, who following the Installation ceremony gave the address to the newly Installed Worshipful Master, W.Bro.F.A. Cox. On presenting the Past Masters Jewel to the I.P.M.W. Bro.J.R. Simmons, the P.G.M. congratulated him on an excellent ceremony and for the way he had governed the lodge during his year of office.

At the March lodge meeting following an Initiation ceremony the I.P.M. W.Bro.J.R. Simmons presented to the W.Master a cheque for £130.00 which was the proceeds of the raffle that had been run, in which the number of miles he had covered in traveling to G.P. and lodge meetings had to be estimated. It is unfortunate that the minutes of the lodge meeting do not record the actual number of miles travelled by the I.P.M. nor the name of the Brother who was successful in this draw. Also at this lodge meeting was a visiting Brother from the Johannesburg Lodge No. 2060 in the Province of Hamburg who donated a short history of his lodge.

The April and May lodge meetings were the occasions for Initiating new Brethren into the lodge and following the May ceremony the three candidates who had been brought into the lodge during the spring months were given an explanation of the First Tracing board by Brother A.E. Bigwood. The W.Master thanked Bro. Bigwood for the excellence of his work. At this meeting another noteworthy occurrence took place. Bro. W. King a visitor to the lodge from his Mother lodge in Germany presented to several Members of the lodge Forget-me-not lapel pins. One of the lodge officers who had received one of these pins presented it to that evening's Initiate as a memento of a very important evening in

his Masonic life. The significance of these Forget-me-not pins lies in the fact that in 1933 Adolf Hitler, who had just risen to power in Germany and was responsible for the formation of the Nazi party, banned Freemasonry in Germany and drove the Grand Lodge of Germany and its members underground. German Masons however were not to be suppressed without a struggle and continued to hold lodges in secret. In order that a German Brother could recognise other Brethren they took to wearing a Forget-me-not flower in their lapel. This practice, now no longer necessary, thank goodness, continues to be observed by our German Brothers. At the opening of the lodge that evening the W.Master informed the Brethren that our Almoner, Bro.H.W.Stride had been rushed into hospital the previous week, at the early hour of 5.0am. to be operated upon for a burst intestine. Fortunately all was well with this extremely hard working and greatly respected Brother and visitors would be welcome.

At the June G.P.& F.committee meeting the W.Master reported further on the form that had been received by the Secretary the previous month requesting details of all the Brethren in the lodge. It appeared that the Provincial Grand Lodge were intending to set up a database on computer of the complete membership within the province and up to date information was requested by P.G.L. in order that its records would be accurate. Also at this meeting it was confirmed that an informal Ladies Night would be held on the evening of June 24th. The lodge meeting the following week passed uneventfully, a Passing ceremony taking place for the first Initiate of the year. One item of interest following this ceremony was the Secretary reading a letter from U.G.L. informing all Brethren who were intending to visit Italy to contact U.G.L. before visiting lodges in that country. Obviously something was at variance between the two constitutions which made this warning necessary.

At the July G.P.& F.committee meeting the W.Master welcomed back the Almoner, Bro.H.W.Stride, following his recent operation. Bro.Stride expressed his pleasure in being returned in good health to the lodge and thanked everyone for their kind thoughts. A discussion took place on how rehearsals could be improved, W.Bro.Tolman proposed that the Director of Ceremony should run the rehearsals and this office should be a non-progressive post. This however did not meet with the approval of the committee. Bro.Hunter proposed that W.Bro.R.D.Studley act as instructor at rehearsals and this was seconded by Bro.Fish who expressed the opinion that rehearsals were not being treated seriously enough.

W.Bro.Studley accepted this new post. The W.Master, W.Bro.Cox announced that the Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro.K.J.Alford would be present at the annual extraordinary meeting at Cadogan Court, and would be accompanied by the P.J.G.W., W.Bro.R.Richards, the W.Master called upon the Brethren to give this meeting their full support. The W.Master also thanked Bro.M.Egerton for the work he had put in to make the informal Ladies night held at Gandy Street on the 14th.June such a great success. It is also noteworthy to record that at this event the Ladies, Guests and Brethren of the lodge were entertained to a short account of the formation of the lodge in 1920 by W.Bro.R.D.Studley.

The lodge meeting the following week saw the return of a ceremony that had not been conducted for several years, that of a Double Passing, this was undertaken the W.Master obligating both candidates. The entrusting of the secrets of the Second degree was carried out by W.Bro. A.W.G.Chanter, P.Pr.J.G.W. assisted by W.Bro.M.A.Saffin. The work in the South East corner was carried out by W.Bro.R.D.Studley, P.Pr.J.G.D. who also presented the working tools. On their return to the lodge, the two candidates were joined by the third Brother to join the lodge in 1993 and all three were then given an explanation of the Second Degree Tracing Board by Bro.R.M.Cornish. Before the lodge was closed the Charity Steward, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards proposed that the sum of £130.00 be donated for the benefit of the Brethren resident at Cadogan Court. This was seconded by W.Bro.R.D.Studley and approved by the Brethren.

Saturday afternoon, the 14th.July was the occasion of the annual visit of the lodge to Cadogan Court. This lodge meeting was graced by the presence of the Provincial Grand Master, Rt.W.Bro.K.J.Alford who after returning the Gavel to the W.Master, expressed great pleasure at being present at the meeting. Following the reading of the dispensation allowing the meeting to take place the lodge was opened in the First Degree and then opened in the Second Degree. A lecture entitled; "An explanation of the Past Masters Jewel". was then given by W.Bro.P.K.Tolman. The labours of afternoon being ended the lodge was closed first in the Second back to to the First Degree and then closed in the first Degree. As was customary the Brethren then joined the ladies resident at Cadogan Court for afternoon tea. Once again the Brethren of the St.Thomas Lodge had spent a very enjoyable afternoon with elder Brethren living in retirement thanks to the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution.

The lodge returned from the summer recess and at the September lodge meeting the W.Master had the sad task of reporting the death of two longstanding members of the lodge. The Brethren duly stood to order as a mark of respect for departed merit before continuing the rest of the business of the evening which consisted of Raising a Brother who had been Passed before the summer break. Following this ceremony Bro.W. King presented to the lodge a bronze plaque which had as it's motif, in relief, the arms of the Golden Kugel Lodge at Hamburg, Germany. This being Brother King's Mother Lodge. The plaque was cast from a section of the propellor taken from the Pocket Battleship "Turpitz" when it was returned to the shipyard where it was originally built. As anyone having a knowledge of Naval history is aware, the Turpitz was a sister ship of the Admiral Graff Spee also the Bismark. The Turpitz itself was the target of both the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force many times during the second world war and was finally damaged beyond further service in a Norwegian fiord by midget submarines of the Royal Navy. The story goes that the Navy never claimed to have sunk the Turpitz because although it lay on the bottom of the fiord the depth of the water was such that the deck of the Turpitz remained above the surface. It was due to this situation that the vessel was able to be returned to Hamburg by a massive salvage operation after hostilities ceased in 1945.

At the October G.P. & F. committee meeting, among the other items of business was the proposition that Bro.W. King be admitted into the lodge as a joining Member. It was, however, pointed out that as Bro. King was a Brother in the German constitution he could not be admitted to the lodge until approval had been obtained from United Grand Lodge in London. With this requirement in mind, proceedings were actioned immediately as it was felt that this approval would take some considerable time for approval to be obtained. At the lodge meeting the following week a Raising ceremony was conducted and this was followed by the Secretary reading a letter of thanks from W.Bro. Savage and his wife thanking the lodge for their gift of flowers to mark their 50th. (Golden Wedding Anniversary). A letter was also read by the Secretary concerning the Methodist Church's attitude to Freemasonry. This letter unfortunately stated that Methodism and Freemasonry were incompatible.

The autumn passed and the Christmass season arrived and the lodge prepared to present the Christmass lecture. At the December G.P. & F.c. committee meeting the Treasurer reported that the late Bro. Kerswell, who had passed to the Grand Lodge above during the summer holiday period, had bequeathed a legacy of £200.00 to the lodge from his estate. As usual, at the regular lodge the following week the Brethren worked the last three sections of the Third Lecture under the direction of W. Bros. A.W.G. Chanter, G.F. Edwards and G.W. Long. The lecture on this occasion be worked in the presence of the Asst. P.G.M.W. Bro. P. Haigh. So yet another year in the life of the lodge drew to a close.

The year 1994 started with the G.P. & F. committee meeting on Thursday, 6th. January with the W. Master reporting that W. Bro. E.K. Tucker had asked W. Bro. R.D. Hudson to take over from him the responsibility of representing the lodge on the Provincial General Purposes committee and that W. Bro. Hudson had agreed. The regular lodge meeting the following week was of course domestic night for the lodge and a very full nights business was conducted. Following presentations of Grand Lodge certificates, by W. Bro. E.K. Tucker, P.A.G.D.C., P.Pr. S.G.W. and an explanation of these also the Master Masons Apron to the two candidates who joined the lodge in 1993, the lodge carried out the usual domestic night operations of electing the Master for the forthcoming year also the lodge officers. The Secretary then read a letter which he had received from Provincial Grand Lodge stating that at the Annual General Meeting of P.G.L. in May W. Bro. R.D. Hudson would be appointed Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon.

At the G.P. & F. committee meeting held on Thursday 3rd. February the W. Master had the sad report to make that W. Bro. M.H. Buller, P.Pr. G.W. had passed to the Grand Lodge above. The Brethren stood to order as a mark of departed merit for this a Senior and much loved W. Brother. The business of the G.P. meeting then continued with the report that the plaque, presented to the lodge by Bro. King, on behalf of the Golden Kugel lodge of Hamburg, had been approved by the Directors of Exeter Freemasons Hall for hanging in the Bar at Gandy Street provided that a suitable inscription was placed beneath giving the history of the presentation. The following week was of course the Installation Lodge meeting. Before the business of the lodge was commenced. The W. Master paid tribute to the late W. Bro. M.H. Buller, P.Pr. G.W. and all that he had done for Freemasonry in general and the St. Thomas Lodge in particular. W. Bro. Marshall had been a Mason for almost Fifty Six years having been initiated into the lodge on the 13th. April 1938. He had played an active part in the life of the lodge

during the full span of those years only being interrupted by the war years when he served in the Royal Artillery. In addition to his Masonic career he was also a strong member of his church. He was church organist at the age of eleven at his village church in Somerset. He sang in the Cathedral Choir in Exeter for many years and following his cremation following the funeral service in the Cathedral his ashes were laid to rest in the Garden of Remembrance by the Cathedral Chapter House.

W.Bro.Marshall Buller will long be remembered for his strict adherence to Ritual and his firm but friendly guidance at lodge rehearsals. Following the tribute paid to the late W.Bro. the Installation ceremony took place in the presence of the Dep.P.G.M.V.W.Bro.E.J.Holman who on completion of the Installation of W.Bro.M.T.Haggett, gave the address to the W.Master. The addresses to the Wardens and the Brethren being given by W.Bro.R.Richards,Pr.J.G.W. and W.Bro.E.K.Tucker,P.A.G.D.C.,P.Pr.S.G.W. respectively.

At the March G.P.& F.Committee meeting the Secretary read a letter from Mrs.Alford, the Wife of the Provincial Grand Master, thanking all the Brethren within the province for their support. The Provincial Grand Master had contracted terminal cancer and had only a few months to live. This news came as a tremendous shock to the Province and it took some time to accept that our greatly respected Grand Master was shortly to be taken from us. To anyone who had met him and spoken to him, Ken Alford was a very quiet, sincere man who had time to listen to anyone, even the lowliest of Brother. Also at this meeting W.Bro.M.Saffin reported that he had received from Mrs.Buller the Past Masters Jewel that had been presented to our late W.Bro.M.H.Buller in 1960. This gift was to be acknowledged by the W.Master writing to thank Mrs.Buller, on behalf of the lodge. At the regular lodge meeting the following week the Almoner, Bro.H.W.Stride reported that Bro.King had left hospital and was at present in Germany for the Installation of his friend into the Masters Chair of Bro.King's Mother Lodge, the Golden Kugel Lodge of Hamburg. An interesting point being that this lodge meets every second Wednesday of the month, and Bro.King had remarked to Bro.Stride that he would be thinking of and raising his glass to absent friends of St.Thomas at the appropriate hour. Following the Almoner's report the W.Master then invested those Officers who had unfortunately prevented from attending the Installation Lodge meeting the previous month. There then followed the Initiation of the first candidate balloted for at the Domestic Night Lodge meeting in January.

At the April meeting of the General Purposes and Finance committee some concern was expressed by W.Bro.G.F.Edwards with regard to the lodge annual accounts. After a prolonged discussion it was resolved that a Budget and statement of the lodge accounts would be prepared, jointly by W.Bro.Edwards and W.Bro.R.Chanter and presented to the committee members at the June G.P.meeting. Also at this meeting it was proposed by W.Bro.D.R.Cornish and seconded by Bro.R.Fish that the Dean of Exeter Cathedral's address at the memorial service to the late W.Bro.M.H.Buller, P.P.J.G.W. be read in open lodge as a Masonic tribute to our late Brother. This proposal was unanimously agreed upon. At the regular lodge meeting the following week an Initiation ceremony was followed by the report from W.Bro.E.K.Tucker that he was visiting United Grand Lodge the following week for the purpose of witnessing W.Bro.A.R.Goddard, a Past Master of the Lodge, receive the Grand Lodge collar of Past Assistant Director of Ceremonies. W.Bro.Tucker also stated that he was to visit the Provincial Grand Master who was very ill. On a happier note, Bro. W.King presented to the lodge, on behalf of the W.Master and Brethren of his Mother lodge, the Golden Kugel Lodge a handsome sword engraved on the blade with the name and number of the St.Thomas Lodge and also the name and number of the Golden Kugel Lodge. The W.Master, W.Bro.M.T. Haggett thanked Brother King for this wonderful gift and asked him to convey the thanks of the lodge to the Master and Brethren of his Mother lodge, the W.Master stating that the sword would be used henceforth by the Inner Guard at all our meetings.

At the May meeting of the G.P. & F. committee the Senior Steward, Bro. M.Egerton requested guidance on the cost of covering the visits of residents of Cadogan Court to the lodge. After some discussion it was decided that for the present the usual practice of appealing to individual Brethren on a rota basis would be continued until an alternative method could be introduced. W.Bro.H.Curzon raised the matter of lodge etiquette when Provincial Lodge Officers answered salutations. Active Provincial Grand Lodge Officers, irrespective of rank, held precedence over Past Provincial Grand Lodge Officers. Brethren should therefore be required to inform the W.Master or the Director of Ceremonies when inviting Active or Past Provincial Lodge Officers to the Lodge.

At the May lodge meeting before the business of the evening was commenced the Tribute to the late W.Bro.M.H.Buller paid by the Dean of Exeter Cathedral was read to the lodge by the Senior Deacon, Bro.R.Fish.

This privilege being claimed by Bro.Fish as he was Initiated into the lodge immediately after the tributes paid to W.Bro.Buller,by the lodge, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of W.Bro.Buller's Initiation in 1938. for the interest of all and younger Masons in particular I reproduce the Dean's tribute in full.

Marshall Buller was a man much respected and a man worthy of that respect. If one had to choose a single word with which to characterise him I think that it would be steadfastness. He was utterly dependable, someone who once he had put his hand to any undertaking would not leave off from it until it had been carried through to the best ending which he could possibly achieve.

He had a life of considerable achievement upon which to look back. His whole career of teaching was spent here in Exeter, finishing with his Headship at Redhills. It is good to think of the hundreds of children who will have been influenced for good by his just and equable and firm dealings and his very clear and open faith in God. How many of these children,I wonder are aware that he was a cricketer of near-county standard and that his career as an organist had started with his playing the organ of his village Church in Somerset at the age of eleven? But he was ever modest and no doubt many of them remained in ignorance of these abilities. Perhaps also that they did not know of his having been a Captain in the Gunners in the war.

Here in this Cathedral we remember with thankfulness his forty years of singing with the Voluntary Chior who properly and appropriat~~ely~~ are singing here today,in which for some years he was joined by his son Anthony. We also recall with gladness and delight his superb reading of lessons at the Eucharist,with the clarity and passion enriched by his lovely Somerset voice. We unashamedly looked forward to the times when he read.

In the last years he had reduced health. In this,as throughout the fifty years of their married life,he was loved and upheld by Jean,and it was largely thanks to her that he enjoyed so long a life,when it might have been much shorter.

He and she shared a true faith in god and when it was not possible to come to the Cathedral, they rejoiced to receive the sacrament at home. His faith, and hers, inform and gave meaning to this commendation of him to the mercy of God and of his Son, our Saviour, and this we do in real hope and trust for this good man, and in Thanksgiving for his life.

There then followed an explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board by Bro.S.Dechan which was then followed by a lecture entitled;"English Royal Freemasons" given by W.Bro.P.K.Tolman. During the course of the lecture W.Bro.Tolman informed the Brethren that the lecture was the work of W.Bro.H.C.Cashmore,P.Pr.J.G.W., who first gave the lecture to the lodge in 1982.

At the June meeting of the G.P.& F. committee the Secretary apologised for the lack of information about the death of the Provincial Grand Master, Rt.W.Bro.K.J.Alford. This was due entirely to the announcement being made after the draft summons had been placed with the printers. Needless to say the committee members stood to order as a mark of respect to departed merit to our late P.G.M., before any business of the evening was conducted.

At the request of his family, the funeral of our late P.G.M. was a private family service held in the local village Church. However, on Friday 10th. June a Memorial service was held in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter, Exeter, this service allowing Masons throughout the county of Devon and beyond to pay their last respects to a great Freemason who was well resected by the Fraternity and all who had the priviledge to know him.

Returning to the June G.P. meeting, among the items discussed was the concern the W.Master felt at the delay in obtaining clearance from Prrovincial Grand Lodge with regard to accepting Bro.W.King of the Golden Kugel Lodge as a joining member of the St.Thomas Lodge. The Secretary was instructed by the W.Master to urge P.G.L.to attend to this request as some twelve months had passed since the initial request had been lodged. The regular stated lodge meeting the following week passed uneventfully with a Passing ceremony followed by an explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board being given by Bro.S.Dechan. This was the second consecutive month that Brother Deachan had rendered this service.

At the July meeting of the G.P.& F.committee the Treasurer, W.Bro. R.Chanter reported that an increase in the rent of the Gandy St., premises meant that the lodge had to find an extra £700.00 per annum.

he also explained that the late V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore had bequeathed to the lodge the sum of £500.00 which, due to interest had now accrued to the sum of £647.96. After much discussion it was proposed by W.Bro.Edwards that this sum be used to offset the lodge rent. This was seconded by W.Bro. Studley and agreed by the committee. The regular lodge meeting the following week passed uneventfully, the second Initiate of the year being passed to the Second Degree. So bringing the lodge to the holiday period but not before the annual Extraordinary Lodge meeting was held at Cadogan Court. This meeting took place on Saturday afternoon, 30th. July at 2.30pm. Following the reading of the dispensation from the P.G.M. giving his permission for the lodge to be held, the lodge was opened by the W.Master who invited W.Bro.L.Bennett, L.G.R., to act as Senior Warden and W.Bro. P.Rice, P.Pr.G, Reg. to act as Junior Warden. A lecture entitled; "The history of Freemasonry in Exeter" was given by W.Bro.P.K.Tolman. This lecture, one from the library of the late V.W.Bro.Gore proved to be very interesting and informative. After the lodge closed the Brethren of the St.Thomas Lodge were entertained to afternoon tea by the residents of Cadogan Court.

On recommencing their duties following the summer recess, the members of the G.P. & F. committee were informed at the September meeting that the lodge subscriptions would have to be raised with effect from the 1st. January 1995. It was also reported that a scheme, whereby members could pay their subscriptions by Bankers Order, should they so desire, was to be introduced from the same date. The Treasurer stated that Brethren would be encouraged to pay by this method as it would assist the cash flow for the lodge as well as easing the drain on an individual Members finance by being able to subscribe over a period of time and not in one payment. The following week the Brethren of the lodge returned from their holidays to receive an explanation of the Second Degree Tracing Board rendered by Bro.A.Bigwood. This was followed by a lecture given by W.Bro.M.Saffin, Pr.J.G.D., it is unfortunate that neither the Summons for this lodge nor the minutes of the lodge record the title of this lecture.

The month of October passed with the lodge conducting a Raising ceremony which was followed by the Secretary, W.Bro.R.Chanter stating a motion that at the next lodge meeting he would propose an increase in Initiation fees also increases in lodge subscriptions for Town and Country members of the lodge.

The regular lodge meeting the following week passed uneventfully, a Second Degree ceremony taking place followed by an explanation of the Second Degree Tracing board being given by Bro.S.Dechan.

At the November meeting of the G.P. & F. committee W.Bro.Studley, lodge representative on the Board of Directors of Exeter Freemasons Hall, gave a report on the meeting of the Directors where it had been proposed that certain changes would be undertaken with the premises once the necessary capital, approx £50,000.00, had been raised. Among these changes were, an increase in the seating capacity of the Temple, improvements to the space in the bar and an improvement to the access to the premises in order that the appearance be brought up to the standard expected of a Masonic hall. The W.Master informed the committee that at the next lodge meeting Bro.W.King, a joining member to the lodge would be asked to read in open lodge a declaration swearing allegiance to the English constitution, as was required, by United Grand Lodge, of all Brethren of a foreign constitution. Bro.R.Fish proposed that the 75th. anniversary of the consecration of the lodge on the 20th. December 1920 be recognised and celebrated by holding a special lodge meeting on Thursday, 21st. December 1995 also a service of Thanksgiving and Re-Dedication in the parish Church of St. Thomas on Sunday, 17th. December 1995. This proposal was seconded by W.Bro.J.Savage and approved by the committee.

At the regular lodge meeting the following week Bro.W.King was duly balloted for and welcomed to the lodge by the W.Master. The declaration made and signed by Brother King, vowing allegiance to the English constitution is attached to the page of the minute book recording the business of the lodge on this particular evening. A second ballot was also taken for a joining member of the lodge, this was for W.Bro.W.G.Edney, P.Pr.Asst. G.Chap. a subscribing member of the St.Georges Lodge No.1728.

The December lodge meeting on Wednesday, 14th. of the month was as usual a massive turn out for the St.Thomas Lodge Christmas lecture. In addition to the Brethren of the lodge there were no fewer than 55 visiting Brethren in the Temple when the first Three Sections of the First Lecture were worked by the Brethren of the lodge, so bringing the lodge to the end of the year.

The year of 1995 started in the usual manner for the St.Thomas Lodge by the lodge holding it's domestic night on Wednesday, 11th. January at which the usual business of a lodge domestic lodge meeting was carried out. The most important item of the agenda being the ballot for the Master of the lodge for the ensuing year. This ballot, as was the norm, being in favour of the Senior Warden, Bro.G.F.Hunter. Successful ballots

were also conducted for two candidates for Initiation thus ensuring that the lodge would have a full programme for the coming year.

At the meeting of the G.P. & F. committee on February 2nd. W.Bro.R.D. Studley gave a report on the directors meeting which had been held in January and which had been attended by W.Bro.P.K.Tolman and Bro.M.Egerton. W.Bro.Studley stated that proposals had been put forward with regard to moving to alternative premises and that this should be put to the Brethren to seek their opinion. W.Bro.Saffin reminded the committee that the city Council had blocked a proposed move to premises in South St. some years previously. It was also suggested at the directors meeting that each lodge set up a small sub-committee of three brethren to investigate and suggest methods of raising money to assist the upkeep of the Freemasons Hall. The total sub-committees meeting as a full fund raising committee under the chairmanship of W.Brother C.Nightingale, Past Master of the Semper Fidelis Lodge, No.1254. The suggestion by W.Bro.Studley that the money collected by the draw at the Festive Board be donated to the building fund was considered but it was felt that W.Bro.G.F.Edwards be consulted before any decision was made, as the draw money was usually donated to Masonic Charties. From all this discussion one certain fact was apparent; That was that something had to be done if the Freemasons Hall at Gandy Street was to undergo refurbishment.

The Installation lodge meeting was held on Wednesday, 8th. February and a very full attendance that turned out to be. No fewer than 54 members of the lodge being present and also 74 visitors to the lodge to witness the Senior Warden, Bro.G.F.Hunter be Installed as the 75th. Master of the lodge, the year when the lodge would celebrate its Platignum Anniversary. The ceremony took place in the presence of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, V.W, Bro.R.O.Osborn, P.S.G.D. who gave the address to the W.Master after his Installation. The address to the Wardens and the Brethren being given by W.Bro.W.B.Bourne, the Pr.S.G.W. and W.Bro.E.K.Tucker, P.Asst.D.C. respectively. The minute book entry for the Installation lodge meeting shows the restoration of a practice that had not be carried out for a number of years, this was the complete listing of the names of the Brethren who were subscribing members of the lodge also the list of Past Masters eligible to attend United Grand Lodge meetings. This list showed that at the end of 1994 there were 75 subscribing members of the lodge including 28 Past Masters both of and in the lodge.

At the March G.P. & F. committee meeting the Secretary reported

that he had received letters from four members of the lodge tendering their resignations. The committee had no alternative but to accept these with regret. The Secretary also reported the application from three brethren for consideration for Country Membership. It was agreed by the committee that these applications be brought before the lodge the following week. The Charity Steward, W.Bro.G.F.Edwards reported that the draw at the Ladies Night had raised the sum of £350 for charity and he was seeking instruction as to the disposal of this sum. Owing to the absence of the W.Master it was decided to defer any decision until the April G.P.meeting. Following an Initiation ceremony at the regular stated lodge of Wednesday,8th. March. The charity Steward, W.Bro. Edwards proposed and the Treasurer, W.Bro. H.Curzon seconded that the recommendation by the G.P. committee to grant Country Member status to three members of the lodge be approved. This was duly carried.

At the April meeting of the G.P.& F. committee no decision was made with regard to the Ladies night draw proceeds due to the absence of the I.P.M. it was thought that he should be present when this decision was made in order that he, the I.P.M., could make his feeling known to the Brethren. Though the Treasurer was absent at this meeting, written report from W.Bro.Curzon was read in which he made reference to the reduction in costs of producing the lodge summons, of some 60% had been achieved with the cooperation of the Secretary. Subscriptions were still coming in, but one particular one gave him some concern and the Treasurer requested, and received permission from the committee, to write to one Brother by recorded post requesting payment of this Brother's subscriptions as earlier correspondence had not been replied to. The forthcoming 75th. anniversary of the consecration of the lodge were discussed and the Secretary was instructed to write to the Exeter Freemasons Hall Co. seeking to alter the date of the December lodge meeting from Wednesday, 13th. December to that of Thursday, 21st. December. The Secretary was also requested to write to the Prov.G.Chap. inviting him to conduct the service of Thanksgiving and Re-Dedication on Sunday, 17th. December in St. Thomas Parish Church. For which purpose the Secretary was to write to the Rector of St.Thomas, the Revd.A. White.

At the lodge meeting on Wednesday, 12th. April the W.Master requested the Brethren present to stand to order as a mark of departed merit to two brethren well known in the St. Thomas Lodge. One was W.Bro.T.E.

Draper, P.Pr.S.G.D. who was Master of the lodge in 1967, and was Initiated into the lodge in Sept. 1947. The other deceased Brother was W.Bro.L. Bennett, L.G.R. The late W.Bro. was not a member of the lodge but had been a regular guest of the lodge since his admission as a resident of Cadogan Court on that establishment's opening in 1988. The main item of business for the evening was then conducted. This consisted of an Initiation ceremony of the second candidate to be introduced into the lodge in the current year.

The regular stated lodge meeting of Wednesday, 10th. May could be described as one of those evenings when the lodge was not conducting Ceremonies but was engaged in work of a more relaxing nature, except for the Brethren carrying out the work programmed. The Brethren were, along with the two Initiates given an excellent explanation of the First Degree Tracing Board by Bro.J.C.Cornish, Junior Deacon. This explanation was faultless in its presentation, for which Bro.Cornish was congratulated by the W.Master and acclaimed by the Brethren in the manner usual among masons. Following a request for the Entered Apprentices to retire from the lodge, the Brethren then received an explanation of the Master Masons Apron from Bro.S.B.Thomas. The last item on this relaxing evening was an excellent organ recital from the lodge organist, W.Bro.K.Hayes, P.Pr.J.G.D. who entitled his recital; "My kind of music". W.Bro.Hayes played compositions by Bach, Mozart, Elgar and Handel. Needless to say this recital was acclaimed with tremendous appreciation and acclamation by the Brethren.

The late spring and early summer passed with the lodge conducting two Passing ceremonies, one in each month of June and July. The annual extraordinary meeting was held at Cadogan Court on Saturday, July 22nd. at which the lodge and the Brethren resident at Cadogan Court received a lecture entitled; "Masonic Challenge" given by W.Bro.P.Rice, P.Pr. G.Reg. Worc. a resident of Cadogan Court. This lecture proved to be a challenge to the conscience of any Freemason and it was received by the Brethren with great applause and acclamation. As an encore W.Bro. Rice rendered an inspired recitation of a Masonic poem written by Bro.Rudyard Kipling entitled "The Initiate". This was then followed by a seconded lecture written by the late V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore, Dep.Pr.G.M. entitled "Dress, Behaviour and Mis-Behaviour in Lodges" which was delivered by W.Bro.P.K.Tolman. This lecture proved to be amusing as

informative to the assembly in respect of the way our antient Brothers conducted themselves in the lodge in days now long past. There then followed afternoon tea with the Ladies and Brethren resident at Cadogan Court so bringing to a close what proved to be yet another successful and enjoyable annual visit to the Court by the Brethren of the St. Thomas Lodge.

On returning from the summer recess the lodge entered the Autumn period by holding it's regular stated lodge on Wednesday, 13, September at which an explanation of the second Degree Tracing board was rendered to the Fellowcraft Brothers by Bro. R. M. Cornish. This was followed by a lecture, delivered by W. Bro. G. W. Long entitled; "The Beginnings of Architecture". This lecture was written by W. Bro. B. Ferris, a Past Master of the lodge who resigned from the lodge some years ago due to him taking up residence in Wales. The W. Master thanked both W. Bro. Long and Bro. Cornish for the excellence of their presentation. There then followed yet another first in the history of the St. Thomas Lodge. Bro. R. Fish had at the July lodge meeting proposed that our retired Senior Steward, Bro. George Jones be elected an Honary member of the lodge in recognition of the work he had undertaken for the lodge until ill health had forced his retirement. This proposition had been seconded by Bro. H. W. Stride and approved by the G. P. & F. committee. Therefore a ballot, at the September lodge was taken and proved favourable for the admission of Bro. Jones as an Honary member. This was accepted with thanks by Bro. Jones on receipt of a letter informing him of the Lodge decision. With the business of the lodge concluded the Secretary was pleased to report, and read a letter received from the Childrens Hospice Southwest thanking the lodge for the donation of Six Hundred Pounds. This being the sum raised by the draw at the Ladies night in January also the sum raised in lieu of gifts to the ladies at the Ladies night festivities. W. Bro. G. F. Edwards, Charity Steward, in his report to the lodge stated that a longlasting tie with the lodge had been broken inasmuch that a Widow of the lodge, resident in London, had been admitted to hospital on a permanent basis due to extreme age and infirmity. This lady was Mrs. Resterick the widow of a Brother who was Initiated into the lodge in 1940 and subsequently moved to London in the course of his work. She first petitioned the lodge on behalf of her husband in 1961 due to his failing health. So ended an association in the cause of charity which spanned a period of thirty four years.

At the November meeting of the G.P. & F. committee the Acting W. Master called the Brethren to order as a mark of departed merit in the name of Bro. J. F. Bidder who had passed to the Grand Lodge above following a short illness. In his report to the committee the Charity Steward, W. Bro. G. F. Edwards stated that he had made the customary contribution to a Masonic charity as a memorial to our late Brother. W. Bro. Edwards stated that he had received a letter from W. Bro. G. Heywood, a Senior Past Master of the lodge stating his intention at being present in the lodge for the 75th anniversary celebrations. As this involves a journey from the Shaftsbury area of Dorset by a Brother who was Initiated into the lodge in 1946, and therefore nearing his 50th. year in Freemasonry, and was "In the Chair" in 1960. This surely is yet again an example of loyalty to one's lodge even in advancing years. With regard to the arrangements for the celebrations at the December lodge meeting the Secretary was pleased to report to the committee that he had been able to obtain the use of the car park at the Castle Court centre. The Treasurer, W. Bro. H. Curzon volunteered to stand at the entrance to the car park to collect a parking fee from those Brethren using this facility. Any excess monies left, after paying the authority for the use of the car park, being donated to charity. Bro. Fish continued his report by stating that W. Bro. K. Hayes and himself had had a meeting with the Rector of St. Thomas and agreed an order of service for the Service to be held on Sunday, 17th. December and this order of service would be prepared by Bro. Fish. In addition it was also agreed that a small informal reception would be held in the Buller Hall after the service at which the lodge would act as host in order that the regular congregation of the Church could meet the Brethren. A glass of wine and mincepies being offered to those attending. The regular lodge meeting held the following week on the 8th. November passed uneventfully, the second candidate to introduced into the lodge in the current year being Raised to the Third Degree.

The December meeting of the G.P. & F. committee was held on Thursday, 7th. December, several interesting items were brought before the members, not least of which was the Almoner's report. Bro. Stride said that he had paid a visit to Mrs. Joy Bidder, widow of our late Bro. Jim, at this visit Mrs. Bidder had expressed her gratitude and thanks for

the kindness, care and attention that she had received, during her recent bereavement, from Bro.D.Guppy. Here again is yet another example of the work which is carried out by members of lodges which never appears in the light of day except in such circumstances as here. The future of the Freemasons Hall, Gandy Street was the subject of a report given to the committee by W.Bro. Studley who went into great detail concerning the plans being drawn up for the refurbishment of the hall. One of the schemes under current discussion was the modernisation of the Foyer area and the downstairs toilets. Several plans had been produced and costed, free of charge, by two members of the St. Thomas Lodge, but as yet had to be approved by the directors and also, more importantly, the cash raised to pay for the scheme. Reporting on the preparations for the 75th. Anniversary celebrations the secretary stated that he had received letters from the Prov. Grand Master and the Prov. Senior Grand Warden thanking and accepting invitations to attend the celebratory lodge meeting on the 21st. December. Bro. Fish also stated that the order of service for the Church service to be held on Sunday evening the 17th. December was with the printers and that the wine and mince pies for the reception following the service had been ordered and that he would collect these and deliver them to the hall himself on the evening of the service.

The service of Thanksgiving and re-dedication took place on Sunday evening, 17th. December 1995 in the Parish Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, Cowick St., St. Thomas. The service was conducted by the Rector of St. Thomas, Revd. A. White. The service was attended by the Provincial Grand Master, Rt. W.Bro. E.J. Holman as well as a goodly number of the Members of the lodge along with their Ladies. The Prov. Grand Master read the First Lesson and the W. Master, W.Bro. G.F. Hunter read the Second Lesson. The sermon was preached by the Prov. Grand Chaplain, W.Bro. P.L. Baycock, Rector of Chagford and the Organist for the evening was W.Bro. K. Hayes, P.Pr. J.G.D. a member of the St. Thomas Lodge. An audio tape recording of the service was made via the P.A. system in the church but unfortunately for reasons unknown a section of the service failed to be recorded. However a copy is on tape and this has been placed in the lodge archives, together with a copy of the Order of Service, which are stored in the vaults of

the High Street Branch, Exeter, of Lloyds Bank. Following the service the congregation retired to the Buller Hall for an informal reception at which wine and mincepies were served. At this reception the Prov. Grand Master enquired of the Lodge Charity Steward the amount placed in the collection plate at the service and requested that the lodge make the donation to this collection to a round figure of £200.00 of which he was prepared to grant half of this figure from his Prov. Grand Master's Fund. All that was left now was to hold the 75th. anniversary lodge meeting some four days later in the week on the 21st. of the month.

Thursday, 21st. December 1995, the original St. Thomas Day, (the Church Commissioners changed the day to 3rd. July when the Alternative Service Book was adopted in 1980); the Brethren of St. Thomas Lodge together with their guests gathered at Freemasons Hall, Gandy Street, Exeter to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of the Consecration of the Lodge. Distinguished guests in the persons of ;

Rt.W.Bro.E.J.Holman, Provincial Grand Master.

W.Bro.M.T.Penny, Provincial Senior Grand Warden.

W.Bro.Dr.J.D.Shapland, Provincial Junior Grand Warden.

W.Bro.Revd.P.L.Baycock, Provincial Grand Chaplain.

were present. Following the opening of the and the usual introductory labours of a normal regular stated lodge the celebration proper commenced with the secretary, Bro.R.Fish reading the notice of consecration followed by the minutes of the inaugural lodge meeting at which the first W.Master of the St.Thomas Lodge being Installed. On completing this reading the W.Master, W.Bro.G.F.Hunter also the Provincial Grand Master, Rt.W.Bro.E.J.Holman signed a declaration which had been inserted into these original minutes certifying their reading on this especial day. The Provincial Grand Maser then read in open lodge the Warrant issued to the Lodge dated 3rd. November 1920. There then followed the customary working of the Christmass Lecture which on this occasion was the last Four Sections of the First Masonic Lecture, the question masters being;

W.Bro.A.W.G.Chanter, P.Pr.J.G.W.

W.Bro.G.F.Edwards, P.Pr.J.G.W.

W.Bro. G.W.Long.

The following Brethren of the lodge answered the question from their positions in the lodge by standing, saluting the W.Master before answering the question master:

W.Bro.M.Saffin,Pr.J.G.D.

W.Bro.R.D.Hudson,P.Pr.S.G.D.

W.Bro.M.T.Haggett.

Bros. R.Mallett.

S.Dechan.

I.R.Black.

R.M.Cornish.

R.Fish.

J.C.Cornish.

D.G.Guppy.

C.Ansfield.

P.Joll.

M.J.G.Deer-Shapland.

S.Rupp.

J.J.Harreld.

AE.Bigwood.

Following the completion of the Labours of this especial lodge meeting the Brethren and their guests retired to the Festive Board for the celebration banquet the menu being as follows;

Melon and Pinapple in Raspberry Sauce.

Roast Pork

French Beans

Cauliflour in White Sauce

Carrots

Roast Potatoes

Boiled Jacket New Potatoes

Clementine Mouse

Cheese and Biscuits

A total of Ninety Five Brethren sat down to this excellent repast.

In his speech following the Festive Board, the Provincial Grand Master thanked the W.Master and the Brethren of the lodge for inviting him to attend and also take part in such a momentous evening for the St. Thomas lodge. He outlined specific Brethren who had been Members of the lodge throughout it's Seventy Five years, notably V.W.Bro.J.Stoker who was the first Master of the lodge, also V.W.Bro.J.J.L.Gore and the remarkable contribution that this worthy Brother had made to Freemasonry, Even by saying that he, the P.G.M. could not understand why V.W.Bro.Gore had never been invited to give a Prestonian Lecture. Rt.W.Bro.Holman continued his remarks by reminding the assembly that the St. Thomas Lodge could boast of having had Four Brethren raised to Grand Lodge Officer rank while other lodges had never aspired to a single Grand Officer. The P.G.M. concluded his speech by thanking the Prov.G.Chaplain, W.Bro.Revd. P.L.Baycock for an inspired address at the Church service the previous Sunday evening at St. Thomas Parish Church. And so a momentous evening in the life and history of the St. Thomas Lodge came to a satisfactory close and along with it the history of this marvellous lodge of ours. Long may it continue and to hold the reputation it enjoys within the Masonic Province of Devonshire.

In compiling this history of the St. Thomas Lodge I had access to the minute books of both the Lodge meetings and the General Purposes and Finance Committee. This is the reason that it reads more like a diary, for which I apologise. However it does allow any Member of the Lodge to acquaint himself with what has gone before without the need to spend considerable time reading the old minute books, which are not immediately available. One item of importance that I discovered is that the late V.W.Bro.J.J.L. Gore compiled the history of the first Fifty years of the lodge. This I have no doubt will be amongst his books and papers that he bequeathed to the Lodge in his will. Whether this was published and distributed to the Brethren at that time is not mentioned. Should my humble effort be duplicated for distribution I leave to the decision of the Elders of the Lodge. For myself it has been an exercise that has been educational and interesting and one from which I have obtained immense pleasure.

I now pass on to the younger Brethren of the Lodge the charge to add to this account of the life of the St. Thomas Lodge when the year of Two Thousand and Twenty, the year the Lodge gains it's Centenary, is in the immediate future.

So Mote It Be.

Brother Raymond Fish.

December 1995.