

Address given to Barron Barnett Lodge No.146 U.G.L.Q.
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(slightly modified in 2010)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF QUEENSLAND

UNDER THE SCOTTISH CONSTITUTION

"HIGHLIGHTS AND LOWLIGHTS"

by

Dave Lauder Ph.D. P.M. (No.37 and No. 296)

INTRODUCTION

In the "Centennial Story", published by U.G.L.Q. in 1959, it was stated that the records of the Queensland District Grand Lodge of Scotland were lost, probably destroyed by fire or flood. Fortunately, this was not the case and we are now in possession of all but ten years of minutes out of a total period of 54 years. Details of the documents discovered are;

- a. One hand written minute book covering the period 1866 to 1892.
- b. Two (identical) copies of printed Proceedings from 1902 until closure in 1920.
- c. Set of intrant books for District Grand Lodge - i.e. a combined Lodge roll book.

We know the Proceedings of the Quarterly Communications were printed prior to 1891, as one printed page was appended to the hand written minutes, hence it is still possible that the missing material from 1892 until 1902 may be discovered.

As is the custom of Masonic histories, this paper is divided into sections corresponding to the administrative periods of the District Grand Masters. These men, together with their dates of Installation were;

17 APRIL 1866
12 MARCH 1875
6 JANUARY 1879
30 MAY 1895

WILLIAM MARTIN BOYCE
ARTHUR MACALISTER
JOHN DOUGLAS
THOMAS MYLNE

16 NOVEMBER 1907

THOMAS STEPHEN BURSTOW

Before proceeding with the history, it is worthwhile to note that;

(1). Prior to 1880, the District was known as the Province of Queensland, and the District Grand Master (D.G.M.) as the Provincial Grand Master (P.G.M.)

(2). In 1903, the Scottish Lodges in North Queensland were given into the care of a separate District Grand Lodge of North Queensland, based alternatively at Townsville and Charters Towers. The history of the northern District is not the concern of this paper, though it is worth noting that the minutes are extant and that it was the existence of this northern Scottish body that led to the formation of the District of North Queensland under U.G.L.Q.

It should be stressed that this paper is only a summary of dates, people, places and major events, preceding, hopefully, the production of a more comprehensive work.

ADMINISTRATION No.1 : WILLIAM MARTIN BOYCE (1866-1875)

Remembered outside the Craft as Brisbane's first Town Clerk, Boyce was installed as the Provincial Grand Master of Queensland under the Scottish Constitution on 17 April 1866 at the Albert Street Masonic Hall, by Augustus Charles Gregory (P.G.M., E.C.) and Maurice Charles O'Connell (P.G.M.-elect, I.C.). Shortly after, Boyce resigned his commission as Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the local English district. Three Lodges were involved in the formation (i.e. St. Andrew No.435, Athole and Melville No.455 and Caledonian No.456) and two of the foundation office-bearers were later to become District Grand Masters (i.e. John Douglas and Thomas Mylne).

With only three Lodges to draw Officers from, not all Officers were Past Masters, and neither were the attendances by some senior Officers commendable. However, as the senior Officers were normally men of some standing in the community, they may well have had other commitments. The third meeting of P.G.L., scheduled for 22 February 1867 lapsed for the want of a quorum. The continued absence of Officers led Mylne, in 1868, to propose that future absent Officers be fined. The proposal was not accepted.

Boyce's administration was to last for nine years and was basically concerned with the establishment of Scottish Freemasonry in the infant Colony. (The Colony had only achieved separation from New South Wales in 1859.) During Boyce's term, only one new Lodge was chartered, and one Lodge, Border Thistle in Stanthorpe, failed to survive long enough to receive a Charter. The new Lodge

was Silver Cross No.504.

The minutes of Boyce's administration are largely concerned with the annual appointment of Officers, suspension of various Brethren, and sundry charges of unmasonic conduct between different Brethren. For example, in 1871, W.H.Chambers outlined "sundry charges" against Mylne and a committee was formed to investigate them. At the next Quarterly Communication, the committee reported that it was unable to resolve the issue and the charges were heard by P.G.L. (The minutes do not specify the charges.) After consideration, Boyce requested Mylne and Chambers to shake hands. Chambers declined, and after more discussion, Boyce declared the charges unproven.

A further interesting item occurred in 1873, when Boyce announced that he had received an Installed Masters ritual from Scotland, and that he would proceed to confer the degree on all Past Masters who presented themselves at the next meeting of St. Andrew.

In 1874, Boyce announced his retirement due to family illness and nominated Arthur Macalister, then Premier of the Colony, as his successor.

ADMINISTRATION No.2 : ARTHUR MACALISTER (1875-1879)

Macalister's four year term commenced with his Installation by Boyce on 12 March 1875 at the Brisbane Town Hall, a meeting attended by the P.G.M.'s of both the English and Irish Constitutions; Sir Augustus Charles Gregory and Sir Maurice Charles O'Connell, respectively.

Macalister spent most of his term as P.G.M. overseas, and is only recorded as attending two P.G.L. functions apart from his own Installation. These two functions were the laying of the foundation stone at the Toowoomba School of Arts, and the consecration of the Ipswich Masonic Hall (both in 1876). To his credit, he offered to resign in 1876, but this was not accepted.

In his absence, P.G.L. was administered by his Depute, Alfred Hubbard, Mayor of Brisbane from 1877 to 1878. No new Lodges were chartered during Macalister's term.

His resignation was accepted in 1878 and D.G.L. petitioned the Grand Lodge of Scotland for John Douglas to be the next R.W.P.G.M. Interestingly, Douglas had lost the ballot in 1866 to Boyce for the foundation P.G.M.'s position.

ADMINISTRATION No.3 : JOHN DOUGLAS (1879-1895)

The Installation of John Douglas as P.G.M. by Boyce within the Albert Street Masonic Hall on the 6 January 1879 marked the beginning of an expansionary period for the Scottish Constitution in Queensland. Douglas was also a State Premier, but was well known in eruditic circles in Brisbane, having been foundation President of the Spring Hill Mechanics Institute and President of the North Brisbane School of Arts (1872-85).

By the time he resigned in 1895, 25 new Lodges had been added to the roles, an increase of over 600 percent. By no means all his own doing, Douglas spent most of his time after 1885 in Torres Strait. He was, however, ably assisted by his Deputes; Thomas Mylne 1879-1881, 1882-1886 and John Barnes 1886-1892. Although Douglas offered to resign in 1886, he continued in office (albeit in absence) for a further nine years.

Due to the increasing numbers of Freemasons in the Brisbane area, a new meeting place was required. Hence, on the 21 August 1885, Mylne joined Gregory and Theodore Unmack in laying the chief corner stone of the Alice Street Hall. The building was duly constructed, and was dedicated on the 1 December 1886.

In 1887, a most unfortunate incident occurred. In that year, no members of St. Andrew No.435 were appointed to District Grand Office, a fact pointed out by a Past Master of St. Andrew on the night of Installation. Twenty-nine members of St. Andrew signed a letter of complaint to Douglas (who was in Torres Strait) complaining of "unkind and unconstitutional actions of the Depute (Barnes) and other officers". Douglas sent the letter to Barnes, who after seeking D.G.L. support on the 8 Nov 1887, directed the D.G.Sec to prefer a charge of unconstitutional conduct against the St. Andrew signatories as they had failed to substantiate their claims. After some committee hearings, Douglas arrived in Brisbane to chair a meeting of D.G.L. Of the twenty-nine signatories, twenty-two had written a letter of apology, which was accepted and they were admonished from the chair. The seven who did not apologise were suspended for contumacy (stubbornness). The most prominent of the seven was Wor.Bro.J.L.McKellar, and it is his name by which subsequent affairs are remembered; i.e. the McKellar incident. The D.G.L. of England did not recognise McKellar's suspension as applying to his membership of the English Constitution, and on the 13 March 1890, all Scottish Lodges were directed that a rupture of fraternal relations existed between the two Districts and inter-visitations were disallowed. The letter advising this direction was withdrawn in July, and further developments are unknown. It is worthy of note that the E.C. Jubilee Review (1909, page 293) claims McKellar was only suspended by St. Andrew No. 435, whereas the Scottish D.G.L. minutes clearly

show the reason for his suspension.

The hand written minute book concludes on the 28 October 1892, with Barnes still occupying the Chair as Acting D.G.M. and Douglas on Thursday Island. From the minutes of Stanley Lodge, it may be ascertained that Robert Lee-Bryce became District Grand Secretary in 1893, and it is the minutes of his term of office that are missing.

Douglas remained on Thursday Island until his death. His interest in Freemasonry did not wane, however, for in 1895 he was the foundation W.M. of Lodge Torres Straits No.820 S.C.

ADMINISTRATION No.4 : THOMAS MYLNE (1895-1906)

Thomas Mylne was a senior Public Servant (Registrar of Titles) and an ardent Freemason, and his Masonic career has already been documented in the Ashlar (October 1987). It is unfortunate that the minutes of the majority of his term of office are still missing. His administration was one of expansion, but was, however, felt by some Brethren to be dictatorial (see John F. Shale's comments in the Queensland Freemason (Oct,1919)), and the abilities of the District Grand Secretary (Robert Lee-Bryce) to be lacking. Hence the minutes of 1902 and 1903 show considerable disharmony in D.G.L. with rulings by Mylne being dissented from by large majorities. This resulted in the secession from the D.G.L. to the new Grand Lodge of Queensland by 16 of the Scottish Lodges, although 5 Lodges split with some members continuing under the S.C. The five "split" Lodges were St. Andrew, Douglas, Stanley, Ionic and Diamond.

James Ashton took over as District Grand Secretary in 1903, but appears to have been unable to obtain the roll books and returns of the 1893 to 1902 period from Robert Lee-Bryce.

Mylne received approval from the Grand Lodge of Scotland to take such legal measures as necessary to recover the Charter and property of the "split" Lodges from that portion of the Lodge that had seceded to the Grand Lodge of Queensland. Presumably, this was achieved, for at the formation of U.G.L.Q., all of the five Scottish Charters were in Scottish possession.

Combined with the creation of the separate Northern Scottish District in 1903, the number of Lodges after the secession was reduced to less than 40, causing D.G.L. communications between 1905 and 1909 to be held within the Scottish Masonic Chambers at 183 George Street. However, Mylne still managed to arrange the consecration of a further six Lodges between the time of secession and his sudden death on 19 December 1906. His death was clearly unexpected as he had presided over a D.G.L. Communication only two

weeks before his death. A full masonic funeral procession and ceremony were conducted, the procession starting at Upper Glenelg Street, South Brisbane, and the service at Toowong cemetery. (Coronation Drive was traversed by carriage.)

ADMINISTRATION No.5 : THOMAS STEPHEN BURSTOW (1907-1920)

Thomas Burstow, a Mayor of Toowoomba, was installed as District Grand Master in the Centennial Hall in Adelaide Street on the 16 November 1907, by the Hon. Edward David Miles, R.W. District Grand Master of Scottish Freemasonry in North Queensland.

From 1907 until 1920, when the Scottish District Grand Lodge was closed to form the Queensland Grand Lodge, Burstow presided over an active and developing organisation. During this period, 51 Lodges were consecrated, of which 45 are still in existence, unamalgamated. (Ed's note; true in 1988, not necessarily in 2010.)

The names of many of the men who assisted in this last phase of the Scottish Constitution in Queensland are well known to Brethren of the Lodges formed in this period, as many of them were involved in the formation of, and held the office of W.M. of, many different Lodges. R.N.F. Quinn, Arthur Kaye, Dr.F.G. Butler-Wood, F.W. Buckham, T.W. Robinson, James Ashton, T.W. Green, John Taylor and Gerald Page-Hanify all assisted the District Grand Master in strengthening their Scottish Constitution.

Burstow enjoyed travelling his jurisdiction to attend his Lodges, and each year filed an annual report, summarising his travels. Typically, his report for 1910 showed that he travelled a total of 13255 miles to visit his Lodges; 10926 miles by railway, 2064 miles by steamship, 185 miles by coach and 80 miles by motor car.

D.G.L. resumed meeting at the Alice Street Hall in August 1909, and stayed there until closure. As before, the minutes largely consist of records of Officers appointed, relevant correspondence, and reports of developments within and without the jurisdiction.

An item of particular interest appeared in the minutes of 11 November 1918. The minute reads;

"In consequence of the feeling of anxious anticipation in connection with the termination of the war, a special messenger was despatched to ascertain the latest news, and, on his return, the R.W. District Grand Master announced that Germany had signed the armistice. The Doxology and National Anthem were fervently sung by the brethren, after which the business of the evening was proceeded with."

Apart from the usual benevolent activities of a District Grand Lodge, two special charitable funds were established during Burstow's term. These were the T.W. Robinson Trust and the Scottish Masonic Patriotic Relief Fund.

The Masonic Home and Orphanage Fund (T.W. Robinson Trust) was established in 1915 as a result of a bequest by a Past District Grand Treasurer, T.W. Robinson, who was also a benefactor of Morningside Lodge (now No.196 U.G.L.Q.). The money was kept invested, and in due time, over £3000 were handed to U.G.L.Q. at formation.

The Scottish Masonic Patriotic Relief Fund was founded on 9 November 1914 for the relief of dependants of those Scottish Masons who had fallen. During the war, donations to this fund amounted to over £1800. Presumably, claims on the fund were not as great as expected, as grants totalling only £21 were paid before the closure of the Scottish D.G.L. Two years after the conclusion of the Great War, the balance of the fund was paid into the U.G.L.Q. Benevolent Fund.

In closing D.G.L. for the last time on 8 November 1920, Burstow gave a resume of his activities as D.G.M., concluding;

"In conclusion, brethren, I wish to say that I regret very much the severing of our Lodges from the Scottish Constitution, but my regret is outweighed by the fact that we are doing what I regard as a step forward in the best interests of the Craft in Queensland, the Grand Lodges recognise this also and wish us God speed in our larger activities. I trust that the ultimate result will be a Grand Lodge that will at all times endeavour to live up to the best traditions of Masonry.

I trust that all the Brethren who have actively assisted our Constitution will always consider it their duty to help forward the interests of the new Grand Lodge, as they have those of this District Grand Lodge, and may God prosper the Craft."

With those remarks, the Scottish Constitution passed out of existence in Southern Queensland, and a winding-up committee was formed to manage the transfer of funds and property to the new Sovereign Constitution in Queensland - the United Grand Lodge of Queensland.

Combining their talents with those of the English Constitution and Grand Lodge of Queensland Brethren, the Scottish Brethren were to assist in the rapid early growth of the U.G.L.Q., and to construct the Ann Street Temple within ten years.

R.N.F. Quinn was Grand Master 1924-25. William Herbert Green, a Scottish Freemason from the Northern Jurisdiction was

Grand Master (1929-31), Pro Grand Master (1931-32), Grand Master (1932-34) and Pro Grand Master (1934-46). F.W.G. Annand was President of the Board of General Purposes (1936-46). T.W. Green was Grand Registrar (1922-29). And this is not to ignore the many, many Brethren who retained their love of the Scottish ritual, whilst still owing allegiance to the U.G.L.Q.

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