

ST LAURENCE LODGE

No. 5511

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS



W. Bro. Ralph E. Ball (P.M. St Laurence Lodge)
and Bro. David West

DEDICATION

The idea of this history occurred to W. Bro. Ralph E. Ball in the early part of 1982. He commenced the research about a year later. In a draft preface that he wrote, he declared his objective as "an attempt to combine a catalogue of facts with an appealing glimpse of personalities and events which would provide not only a useful reference but also a fascinating insight into the characters of those worthy men who conceived the lodge's birth and fashioned its development."

W. Bro. Ralph was called from us on August 10, 1983 and the present author can think of no finer reason for completing his work than the last sentence of that draft preface - a sentence which would, in its way, make a suitable epitaph.

"Throughout my years in the craft, I have retained a passionate belief in the principles of masonry and in producing this booklet, I envisaged the opportunity to fulfill a burning enthusiasm to contribute something to perpetuate those principles amongst the present and future membership of our very proud and happy lodge."

This volume is dedicated to that "passionate belief".



"Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge:
thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

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Masters of St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511

1935	W. Bro.	R.P. Harper PPGD, LGR
1936	W. Bro.	W.H. Foster PPAGDC
1937	W. Bro.	V.A. Wallace PPGD
1938	W. Bro.	E.A. West PPAGDC
1939	W. Bro.	A.E. Edwards PPAGDC
1940	W. Bro.	R.A. Ball PPGStB
1941	W. Bro.	A.V. Dowding PPAGDC, LGR
1942	W. Bro.	H.E. Milner PPGD
1943	W. Bro.	C.H. Claxton PPGD, LGR
1944	W. Bro.	A.S. Barrell PPGStB
1945	W. Bro.	P.J.W. Bunney PPGSwdB
1946	W. Bro.	T.C. Hutchinson PPGD
1947	W. Bro.	A.E.C. Blanche PPGStB
1948	W. Bro.	W.H.J. Prater
1949	W. Bro.	W. Drew PPGStB
1950	W. Bro.	J.L. Bassett PPAGDC
1951	W. Bro.	J.S. Edwards PPGD
1952	W. Bro.	W.F.J. Ingle
1953	W. Bro.	W.R. Mitchell
1954	W. Bro.	W.J.J. Bingham PPGD
1955	W. Bro.	R.W. Ames
1956	W. Bro.	B.E.B. Presslie PPAGDC
1957	W. Bro.	D.A. Thomas PPGOrg
1958	W. Bro.	G.S. Cook PPGStB
1959	W. Bro.	J.W. Halliday
1960	W. Bro.	C.E.R. Self PPGW, LGR
1961	W. Bro.	A.A.G. Butler
1962	W. Bro.	C.T.W. King PPAGDC
1963	W. Bro.	E.J.G. Gover PPGStB
1964	W. Bro.	R.E. Hill PPGW
1965	W. Bro.	E.H. Pryer PPGD
1966	W. Bro.	P.G. Dowling
1967	W. Bro.	A. Brown PPGD
1968	W. Bro.	F.L. Lodge PPGD
1969	W. Bro.	G.J. Dowding PPGD
1970	W. Bro.	R.M. Hutchinson PPGStB
1971	W. Bro.	D.E. Rawlings
1972	W. Bro.	J.D. Hill PPGSuptWks (Northants & Hunts)
1973	W. Bro.	G.J. Banks
1974	W. Bro.	F.J. Lowe
1975	W. Bro.	T.C. Larkin PPGD
1976	W. Bro.	H.R. Ball
1977	W. Bro.	F.V.C. Thurlow
1978	W. Bro.	R.E. Ball
1979	W. Bro.	V.L. Trytel
1980	W. Bro.	D.S. Rawson
1981	W. Bro.	F. Parker
1982	W. Bro.	W.D. West
1983	W. Bro.	R. Berry ProvGStwd
1984	W. Bro.	P. Rose
1985	W. Bro.	R.H. Self

Officers of St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511

Secretaries

E. West 1935
E. Harrison 1936-53
H. Milner 1954-63
G. Cook 1964
H. Ball 1965-68
R.E. Hill 1969-78
T. Larkin 1979-

Treasurers

P. Wheatley 1935-46
R. Harper 1947-58
T. Hutchinson 1959-63
J. Bassett 1964-65
C. Claxton 1965-66
E. Pryer 1967-75
G. Dowding 1976-

Directors of Ceremonies

D. Ramsay 1935-42
W. Foster 1943-58
C. Claxton 1959-63
B. Presslie 1964-68
C. Self 1969-72
F. Lodge 1972-

Asst Secretaries

E. Upton 1935-36
H. Milner 1937
C. Claxton 1938
A. Barrell 1939
J. Edwards 1940
E. West 1941-42
A. Edwards 1943-59
G. Cook 1961-64
H. Milner 1965-67
R.E. Hill 1968
A. Brown 1970-77
T. Larkin 1978
R. Hutchinson 1979-

Asst D. C.'s

A.V. Dowding 1935
W. Foster 1936-42
E. West 1943-49
R.A. Ball 1950-52
A.V. Dowding 1953-57
C. Claxton 1958
A. Barrell 1959-67
H. Milner 1968-69
F. Lodge 1970-72
G. Dowding 1973-75
F.J. Lowe 1976-78
H. A. Brown 1979-

Almoners

W. Reader 1935
R. Harper 1937-46
P. Wheatley 1947-48
V. Wallace 1949-59
A. Edwards 1960-62
C. Self 1963-66
G. Cook 1967
W. Ingle 1968-73
C. Self 1974-76
T. Larkin 1977
W. Ingle 1978
G. Draffan 1979-

Organists

D. Thomas 1947-50
T. Hutchinson 1954
D. Thomas 1959-80

Charity Stewards

F. Thurlow 1978-81
R.E. Ball 1982-83
V. Trytel 1983-

Chaplains

H.H. Holden 1935-40
H.R. Holden 1946-55
R.H. Hill 1964-67
F. Barker 1968
H. Milner 1971-77
A. Barrell 1978-

St Laurence Lodge

"A meeting of brethren interested in the formation of a new lodge of Craft Masonry in Upminster was held at the Bell Hotel, Upminster, on Friday the 9th March, 1934. Chairman; Bro. E.A. West. St Barnabas Lodge No. 3771."

So begins a book entitled on its inside front cover "Minutes of proposed new Lodge of Craft Masonry in Upminster (Taylor's working)", a book that becomes the first minute book of the General Purposes Committee of our Lodge. Thus we commence 50 years of the history of St Laurence Lodge No. 5511.

The background

W. Bro. Arthur Barrell, our first initiate who at the age of 92 has a memory of crystal, tells us that St Laurence Lodge came into being through the interests and efforts of a number of brethren in the Upminster, Hornchurch and Romford areas who travelled to London daily, many of whom were members of Stock Exchange firms. Many of them were also members of the Upminster School of Instruction.

The second page of our book quotes as one of the Reasons for Presentation of Petition that this "... is a very rapidly growing district, many of the brethren who are new residents desire to attend a Lodge near their homes." To fully understand this, it is necessary to imagine Upminster in the years leading up to 1934.

Many brethren may have difficulty today in imagining Upminster as a new housing development but, of course, that is almost exactly what it was in those years. It was participating in that explosive increase in private home building that occurred in the early thirties, following the Great Depression. While Upminster Garden Suburb was built from 1905 and the main line railway had been there since 1885 ⁽¹⁾, the District Line arrived only in 1932 and Upminster Bridge Station was built in 1934. Electricity was installed in 1922 and Roomes' first store opened in 1927. Many new roads were created at this time. Derham Gardens, a road with St Laurence connections, was built in 1926, taking its name from Dr Derham D.D., F.R.S., Rector of St Laurence, 1689 to 1735. Upminster had been quite separate from its neighbours and the Upminster and District Parish Council had been formed in 1894. However, as the population grew, the distinction between Upminster and its neighbour became less clear and it was amalgamated into Hornchurch Urban District Council in 1934.

In a letter to Grand Lodge, accompanying the General Petition, Bros Bob Harper and Ernie West speak of Upminster having doubled its size in the previous twenty years. While it is difficult to be sure about population numbers in that boundaries have often changed, the facts as they can be established bear out the claim. Upminster had grown very slowly from just over 1200 inhabitants in 1851 to just over 1500 in 1901. By 1931, it had grown to about 5500 and Cranham, rapidly becoming welded to Upminster, had grown from a hamlet of 280 people in 1848 to a sizeable population of about 1700 in 1931. At the time of the foundation of our lodge, Upminster would have represented a village in rapid transition to a town.

In 1934, there was only one lodge meeting in Upminster itself, our mother lodge, Ingrebourne No. 3345, founded in 1909 and it is pretty certain that the Ingrebourne Lodge was the first ever to meet in Upminster. Our mother lodge is a 'daughter' of the St John's Lodge, No. 1343 which was warranted in 1870 (consecrated in 1871) to meet at the Queen's Hotel in Grays ⁽²⁾ and the Ingrebourne Lodge itself was founded during an earlier growth period of Upminster, ⁽³⁾ warranted "to meet at the Old Roman Catholic Church Chapel, Upminster on the first Tuesday in January, February, October, November and December".⁽⁴⁾ It moved to St Laurence Church Hall in 1920. In 1934, the Ingrebourne Lodge had 67 members and advancement was slow. ⁽⁵⁾ Furthermore, the Ingrebourne Lodge was and is an "Emulation" lodge and our founders, the letter accompanying our petition tells us, wanted to "carry on the working with which they (were) well acquainted, viz. Taylor's working."

The Upminster School of Instruction indeed, founded in 1932, existed to further the instruction of a number of brethren from various lodges in Taylor's working. (The history of this school which later became the St Laurence Lodge of Instruction is discussed in Appendix 7.)

There were, of course, lodges in Romford and Hornchurch. Indeed, the two towns had been notable masonic centres for nearly 250 years. The first record of a lodge being founded in Romford is that of Lodge No. 182, founded in 1739 and meeting at the King's Head in the Market Place. It moved to the nearby Sun and Rummer ⁽⁶⁾ in 1741 and thence to the Red Lion in Hornchurch in 1754. It was erased in 1769. Several other ancient lodges have met in Romford although the next to be founded there, as opposed to moving into the area, was the Liberty of Havering Lodge, No. 1437. It was founded in 1873 and now meets in Upminster. Records exist of the Lodge of Friendship moving from Ilford to the Golden Lion in Romford in 1776 and meeting there for two years. (It returned to Ilford, to the Angel, and ceased to exist around 1800.) Perhaps the most famous Romford lodge was, and in a sense still is, the Lodge of Hope and Unity, now No. 214, the fourth ⁽⁷⁾ oldest in the Province. It was warranted, as an 'Antient' lodge, in 1795 to meet in Southwark. It moved to Bishopsgate in 1808 and thence to Romford in 1809. It met, within Romford, at various places from 1809 to 1877 when it moved to Brentwood. It now meets in the Masonic Hall, Hutton but for a brief while, between 1845 and 1851, it was actually known as "The Romford Lodge." ⁽⁸⁾

In 1934, there were thirteen lodges in Romford and Hornchurch and so active an area was it for masonry that in 1920 a Masonic Hall had been built in Hornchurch and on July 28 1934, the foundation stone for the Lord Lambourne Masonic Hall in Romford was laid. However, these lodges were all getting rather large, some of them extremely so:

In Romford, there were:

Liberty of Havering, No. 1437	warranted 1873 ⁽⁹⁾	with 93 members
Royal Victorian Jubilee, No. 2184	1886	130 members
Seven Kings, No. 2749	1899	75 members
Saint Chad, No. 3115	1905	120 members
Vigilance, No. 3859	1918	52 members
Lodge of Old Friendship, No. 3907	1919	66 members
Hainault, No. 4367	1922	64 members

while in Hornchurch, all younger lodges, there were:

Barking Abbey, No. 4542	warranted 1923	with 41 members
Dagenham, No. 4699	1924	64 members
Old Parkonians, No. 4709	1925	57 members
Heath Park, No. 5058	1928	62 members

and the two youngest:

Maylands, No 5375	1932	28 members
Valence, No. 5388	1933	with 36 members

Clearly, a need existed for more lodges. Indeed, at the same time that the then Provincial Grand Secretary, W. Bro. Goodwin, was handling the affairs for the creation of our lodge, he was also processing the petition for the Chafford Lodge, No. 5510.⁽¹⁰⁾ There are at least two letters from W. Bro. Goodwin in Grand Lodge Library, referring to both new lodges at once.

The founders

The need being there, our founders set about fulfilling it. This might be the moment to describe them as they were in 1934. Some, as might be expected, were members of the Ingrebourne Lodge, assisting the brethren to create the new lodge. Others exemplify the reasons for the new lodge.

W. Bro. R. Harper was Master in 1929 of the Walthamstow Lodge, No. 2472 in which he was initiated in September 1914, and which in 1935 was meeting at Freemasons' Hall. He was also a member of the Newbury Park Lodge, No. 4458 which met in Loughton. He lived at No. 1 Leasway in Upminster and was in exports in the City. First Master of the lodge, he was the father-in-law of W. Bro. Cyril Self, Master in our 25th year and the grandfather of W. Bro. Robert Self, Master in our fiftieth year. The family punctuates our history (See also page 17).



W. Bro. E.W. Harrison was initiated in our mother lodge in December 1919 and was its Master in 1932. He lived at 20 Grosvenor Gardens and was a stockbroker's clerk.

W. Bro. D.A. Ramsay was initiated on 17 September 1920 in the Burdett-Coutts Lodge, No 1278 which in 1935 was meeting in the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street. He was a Past Master of the Fleet Wood Lodge, No. 4556 which met at the Hotel Metropole, in Northumberland Avenue. He lived at 18 Tudor Gardens, Upminster and was a newsagent. He had two shops, one in St Mary's Lane opposite to where the International Stores is now and one in Station Road next to Talbots.

W. Bro. P. Wheatley was also initiated in our mother lodge in the same year as W. Bro. Harrison but one meeting earlier in the October. He was Master of Ingrebourne Lodge in 1929 and was its Assistant Secretary from 1932 to 1944. He lived at 52 Courtenay Gardens in Upminster and was a printer.

W. Bro. W.H. Foster was initiated in March 1921 in the Cripplegate Lodge, No.1613 which met at the Holborn Restaurant in Kingsway, a venue which figured prominently in the history of St Laurence Lodge. He was later Master of Cripplegate. His home was at 63 Ingrebourne Gardens and in 1935 he was a stockbrokers clerk.

W. Bro. H.H. Holden, of the Rectory, Upminster, is one of the major figures in the masonic history of the area. Initiated in the Apollo University Lodge, No. 357, 28 May 1895, a lodge meeting in the Masonic Hall in Oxford, he was a founder of our mother lodge and its Master in 1925. He remained very active in the Ingrebourne Lodge, being its Chaplain until his death in 1944. He is described on our petition as a "Clerk in Holy Orders", and was the fourth Holden to become Rector of St Laurence. (He was succeeded by his son, Hyla Rose Holden, who remains an honorary member of St Laurence Lodge.)

Bro. V.A. Wallace was initiated in September 1930 into the Rainham Lodge, No. 3079 which despite its name was meeting in 1935 at the Palace Hotel in Southend-on-Sea. At that time it had 114 members. Bro. Wallace is described on the petition as a works manager and he lived at 54 Ernest Road in Emerson Park, Hornchurch.

Bro. E.A. West was initiated on 18 May 1920 in the Merton Lodge, No. 2790 which met in Wimbledon. He was also a member of the St Barnabas Lodge, No. 3771 which was meeting in Freemason's Hall. He lived in St Mary's Lane, at number 179 and was a jeweller. His shop was also in St Mary's Lane.

Bro. E.W.J. Upton was a member, suitably enough, of the Upton Cross Lodge, No. 4454, having been initiated in that lodge on March 5 1930. In 1935, this lodge was meeting at the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street. He was a manufacturer of roofing tiles and lived at 97 Havering Road in Romford. His brother, A.V. Upton, was initiated into our lodge in 1936 and was a member until he resigned in 1962.

Bro. Ralph A. Ball, the father of W. Bro. Harry Ball and of the late W. Bro. Ralph E. Ball, was initiated in the Pro Deo et Patria Lodge, No. 4425 on 4 April 1928, a lodge that in 1935 was meeting in Freemason's Hall and of which he was later Master. He was also a stockbroker's clerk and lived at the time at 151 Hainault Road in Romford. Mrs R.E. (Mona) Ball recalls that Arthur Barrell, who then lived in Redriff Road, would walk each weekday morning to Ralph Ball's house and that they would then walk together to Romford Station (the 8.06 to Liverpool Street), passing the International Stores where she at age 15 was working as a cashier, tipping their hats to her as they passed.

Bro. A.V. Dowding, the progenitor of another St Laurence family, being the father of W. Bro. A.V. Dowding Jnr (now in Canada) and our Treasurer, W. Bro. G.J. Dowding, was initiated on 12 April 1929 in the Valentine's Park Lodge, No. 4412, meeting at the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street. He was a merchant's salesman in the City and lived at 86 Sunnyside Gardens in Upminster.

Bro. A. Edwards was initiated in the Queen Alexandra Lodge, No. 2932 on the 17 March 1925 which was meeting in 1935 at Pagani's in Great Portland Street. Bro. Andrew lived at 18 Gaynes Road and was an accountant.

Bro. W. Reader, who died so early, was a member of two lodges. He was initiated, 19 September 1919, in the United Service Lodge, No. 3124 which met in Sheerness in Kent and was a member also of The Liberty of Havering Lodge, No. 1437 which in 1935 was meeting at the White Hart Hotel in Romford and had 93 members. He is shown on the petition as "Gunner R.N. Rtd" and was a licensed victualler. He kept the Bull Inn on High Street in Hornchurch. His name is crossed through on the petition and then re-entered. The letter in Grand Lodge Library that refers to this tells that he was about to transfer his business elsewhere but that this did not, in the event, materialise.

Bro. H. Milner, the founder who survived the longest and was well known to many of our current brethren, was initiated in the Robert Mitchell Lodge on 18 March 1922. This lodge, No. 2956, was meeting in The Polytechnic in Regent Street. He was a bullion broker's clerk and lived at 31 New Place Gardens, Upminster. He was a man of about 34 years of age when our lodge was founded.

Bro. Hilary Martle, who was a founder but never in one sense a member, was initiated on 26 July 1924 in the Zodiac Lodge, No. 2615, meeting at the Holborn Restaurant. The record is not clear but it seems that, regrettably, a misunderstanding arose between Bro. Martle and one or two of the other founders which led to his resignation. Since Bro. Martle had paid his founder's fee, he was shown as a founder but he never entered the lodge. Bro. Martle lived in East Ham, at 8 Blenheim Road, and was a lighterage contractor.

Such then were the worthy brethren who founded the lodge, most of whom went on to serve it nobly.

Robert Percival Harper, PPGD, LGR, 1st Master Almoner 1937-1947, Treasurer 1947-1959, died 1959.

Ernest William Harrison, PPGW, PPGReg.
Secretary 1936-1954, despite his move in 1941 to Horsell near Woking, Surrey.
Honorary Member 1965, died 1971.

David Alexander Ramsay, LGR
Director of Ceremonies 1935-1943, died 1949.

Percy Wheatley, PAGDC, PPGW
Treasurer 1935-1947, Almoner 1947-48, Honorary Member 1951, died 1953.

William Horace Foster, PPAGDC, 2nd Master
ADC 1940-1943, Director of Ceremonies 1943-1958, died 1958 in harness, having missed but 3 meetings since the consecration.

Hyla Henry Holden, PAGChap., PPGChap.
Chaplain 1935-1940, died 1944.

Victor Alexander Wallace, PPGD, 3rd Master
Almoner 1949-1958, died 1965.

Ernest Arthur West, PPAGDC, 4th Master
Secretary 1935, Assistant Secretary 1941-42, ADC 1942 until his death in 1949. He never missed a meeting.

Ernest Walter John Upton
Assistant Secretary 1935-6, ADC 1937. Resigned from both St Laurence and from the Upton Cross Lodges in 1937. He re-joined St Laurence in 1939, in fact attending as an unattached visitor in November 1938 but then moved away to Hampshire.

Ralph Alexander Ball, PPGStB, 6th Master
ADC 1950-52, moved to Wiltshire and became a country member but still attended often, acting as JW twice in 1964, died 1970.

Albert Victor Dowding, PPAGDC, LGR, 7th Master
ADC 1935 and 1953-58. Apart from two occasions, when he was unwell, he was ever present in the Lodge for 28 years as a member, died 1963.

Andrew Edwards, PPAGDC, 5th Master
Assistant Secretary 1943-1960, Almoner 1960-63, Secretary 1963 until his death, having been absent on but 7 occasions in 29 years, died 1964.

Walter Redgrave Reader
Appointed Almoner in 1935, died suddenly after the first meeting.

Herbert E. Milner, PPGD, 8th Master
ADC 1936, Assistant Secretary 1937 and 1965-68, Secretary 1954-1963, ADC 1968-1970, Chaplain 1971-77, died suddenly in 1977, having served the lodge for 32 years and having missed only 8 from 171 meetings.

Since that time, we have had cause to be grateful to many devoted brethren who have safeguarded the Lodge through all its fifty years, as we shall see as this history develops. However, it is to the founders that pride of place must go - those men whose enthusiasm and dedication created St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511.

St Laurence

Our lodge was at first to be called the Upminster Lodge. The proposition to name it this is shown as being carried at the second founders' meeting. Quite naturally, the Ingrebourne Lodge demurred in that they considered themselves the senior Upminster lodge. At the third founders' meeting on 12th April 1934, since the Lodge intended to meet in St Laurence Church Hall, the name 'St Laurence Lodge' was unanimously accepted.

It is pleasant to be associated with this lovely church, with its masonic history. The foundation stone for the extension was laid in 1927 by the then Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Dr J.H. Salter. The stone can be seen to the right of the porch of the church. Its inscription records that it was laid by Lord Lambourne, Provincial Grand Master and Lord Lieutenant of Essex. However, Dr Salter was deputising on that occasion as Lord Lambourne was indisposed. The connection with the church increases our sense of tradition and continuity in that the church and its site have a very long history. "Ancient no doubt it is" in that it is believed that a church has existed on this site since the 8th century and the lower parts of the main tower of the present building date from the 12th century.

At the Consecration of our lodge, the Provincial Grand Chaplain, W. Bro. Rev. Canon W.E. Morrow, gave an account of the story of St Laurence, one of the early martyrs of the Christian Church. St Laurence, a deacon of Rome was murdered in 258 A.D. During the so-called "Valerian" persecutions one of the many persecutions of the early Christians, this one in the time of the Emperor Valerian), he was called upon to deliver up the treasures of the Church and produced the poor and sick of the city, who were his special charge. His fate was to be fastened to a gridiron over a fire and there, literally, broiled to death. So courageous a man was he, the legend goes, that he joked with his torturers, calling them to turn him over in that he was "done on that side". ⁽¹¹⁾

During the research for this work, several other St Laurence or St Lawrence Lodges of the English Constitution came to light, no doubt many but not all of them drawing their name from similar connections. It is not an uncommon name if one allows the variation in spelling. These lodges are listed in Appendix 2. The most exciting find, from this point of view, is perhaps the St Lawrence Lodge No. 2078, founded in 1885, exactly 50 years before our lodge and which is therefore celebrating its centenary in 1985. Fraternal greetings have been sent to Scunthorpe where this elder cousin lodge meets, to mark this remarkable coincidence.

The preparation

Reading through the pages of the minute book, one is struck by the sheer hard work required of our founders in bringing about the formation of the lodge. Typically, the General Purposes Committee of today meets two or three times a year. There has actually been a year when it did not meet at all. During 1934, the Founders' Committee met no less than eleven times and clearly there were other, less formal meetings, for instance in Chigwell with W. Bro. Goodwin, who gave invaluable advice and assistance.

The business of these early meetings included the formal petition, the setting of subscriptions, joining and initiation fees, and, of course, the setting of founders' fees. The latter eventually proved impossible: the founders made a guess and then settled up afterwards. We do not learn exactly what it cost in the end but the minutes of the November 1934 meeting state that the estimated cost of the Consecration was £137.16s.0d and each founder agreed to put in £10.10s.0d (ten guineas) as a start.

Ten guineas was not an inconsiderable sum at the time, a fact that was brought home to the present author when reading the notes of W. Bro. Ralph E. Ball's speech on his retirement from Havering Borough Council, when he spoke of earning, in his first appointment in 1932, the princely sum of twenty six pounds a year. At the back of the first Minute Book is a list of lodge equipment, almost certainly part of the calculation of the cost of creating the lodge. It is reproduced in Appendix 3 for the interest of brethren. If the founders' fees, whatever they amounted to, were not inconsiderable, neither were the initiation and joining fees. These were set at £15.15s.0d (fifteen guineas) and £7.17s.6d (seven and a half guineas) respectively, while the annual subscription was established at £3.3.0 (three guineas).

The Founders were, however, attempting to keep costs down. The Tyler, on being interviewed stated that "he was paid a fee of 15/- by all lodges except one which paid 10/6." The minutes proceed, "After further discussion it was unanimously agreed to recommend W. Bro. Penney to be Tyler ... at the fee of 10/6 per meeting." He accepted ! It was established that the hire of the St Laurence Church Hall would cost £1.10s.0d, the hire of the hut, 7/6 and that the caretaker's fees would be 5/- per meeting. It was agreed to pay the Ingrebourne Lodge 10/6 per meeting for "the use of their heavy furniture". The Ingrebourne Lodge generously rescinded their charge in January 1938 as one of many actions which have drawn the two lodges close together. Brethren will be accustomed now to the annual proposition that the master and secretary of the Ingrebourne Lodge be made honorary guests of St Laurence Lodge. This proposition dates from 1940, when it was reciprocated. (The equivalent proposition regarding the Abbotts Hall Lodge dates from 1946.) The bye-laws were drawn up. All but two, which were from the Walthamstow Lodge, were taken from the Ingrebourne Lodge bye-laws. Catering was decided upon. The quotation from Messrs Jerrard of Ilford was accepted at 5/6 per head per meeting plus 6d gratuity, a figure that was held constant until 1939. (In fact, after the war, an even lower figure was established.) Inflation was clearly a problem of the future.

The petition was posted on 6 October, 1934 and the crest of the lodge was chosen. Brethren will be aware that it combines the gridiron associated with St Laurence and the Upminster windmill (built in 1802). There is in the library at Grand Lodge, a letter from W. Bro. Goodwin to the Grand Secretary, the last sentence of which reads, "I enclose herewith design for the Lodge crest and I shall be glad to hear if it is approved by Grand Lodge." Either side of this sentence are drawn two parallel lines in pencil and underneath this is written "no panel on ribbon". Presumably, this means that the original design was rejected and altered in that there is no ribbon on the crest today. If it was altered, it was carried out in quick time. W. Bro. Goodwin's letter is dated 15 November and the minutes of 21 November 1934 read, in part:

"Bro. West read a letter from Grand Lodge giving the information that a Warrant had been granted for the St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511."

Finally we proceed to the minutes of 19 December 1934:

"Bro. West reported that he had communicated with Major Boyd, the Grand Tyler, & had made arrangements for the reservation of a Temple for the Consecration meeting."

Almost the last act of the Founders' Committee was to interview the proposed first initiate, Mr Arthur Barrell, at the Masons' Arms.

The Consecration

So on to the day that the founders had been working so hard towards, 12 January 1935. It poured with rain but that did little to dampen the spirits even if it did dampen the brethren themselves.

Assembling in No. 10 Temple (popularly known as the 'Indian') at Freemasons' Hall, one can just begin to imagine the feelings of our founders. Relief, no doubt, that all their planning had succeeded: quite conceivably a sense of awe and humility, faced with their surroundings and the eminence of the brethren that they were about to meet; anticipation of the future perhaps; even a thought for us who might be looking back at them

in fifty years time; above all, we are certain, immense pride in the venture that they were that day launching for posterity. It was an impressive ceremony. We will not describe it here in detail for just like the baptism of a new born baby, the marriage of a beloved daughter, the comfort is that many have trod the same road before and the ceremony follows a predetermined and codified pattern. Suffice to say that the consecration was in the hands of the Provincial Grand Master, Brigadier-General Sir Richard Colvin KCB, Lord Lieutenant of Essex, assisted by Sir Frederick Senier PGD, PPGW, Assistant Provincial Grand Master. The SW was W. Bro. Colonel J.L. French, Provincial SGW with W. Bro. Ernest Turner, Provincial JGW as JW. There were many other brethren of rank and eminence in attendance, including W. Bro. Herbert J. Goodwin, PAGDC, PPGW, the Provincial Grand Secretary, who by this time must have seemed like an old friend. In fact, after the Provincial Grand Master had conducted the opening parts of the ceremony, had addressed the brethren and retired, the installation of the first Master, W. Bro. R.P. Harper was conducted by W. Bro. Goodwin himself.

Let us listen to W. Bros Arthur Brown and Frank Lodge for a moment:

(Arthur) "Bob Harper - Everybody respected him. ... I can remember as a steward ... " *(Frank)* "Used to have you in fear and trembling !" *(Arthur)* "Used to go for another bottle of wine and you'd see him frown at you - you'd put it back again !" *(Frank)* "Used to glower - we've had enough of that! (he'd say)." ⁽¹²⁾

We are sure that W. Bro. Bob handled himself majestically that day ...

"The Worshipful Master thanked the Consecrating Officers for consecrating the St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511 and asked if they would accept Honorary membership & at the same time asking them to accept a souvenir of the occasion. ⁽¹³⁾ ... Sir Frederick Senier replied on behalf of the Consecrating Officers, expressing their thanks."

MENU

Choice Hors d'Oeuvre

.....

Clear Oxtail

Green Pea Soup

.....

Boiled Turbot

Hollandaise Sauce

.....

Lamb Cutlets

Spinach

Potatoes

.....

Surrey Capon á la Dreux

Nouilles

.....

Peach Melba

Petits Fours

.....

Coffee

.....

ARTISTES

.....

Miss RITA BARNABY . . Contralto

Bro. ASHMOOR BURCH . . Baritone

Then, no doubt in a mixture of relief and joy, everyone adjourned to the Holborn Restaurant. If Brethren wish to know more, it is all in the first pages of the lodge minute book, complete with the programme. Of course, brethren can always ask W. Bro. Cyril Self. He was there.⁽¹⁴⁾

The early years (1935 - 1938)

The early years saw a steady growth of membership. Ten brethren were initiated, five of whom later became Masters of the lodge - Bros Arthur Barrell, John Smith Edwards, P.J. Bunney, T.C. (Tom) Hutchinson and A.E. Blanche. There were four joining members, two of whom became Masters - Bros W. (Bill) Prater and C. (Charlie) Claxton.

Meetings, other than Installation meetings, were held in St Laurence Hall which, though very much home to the brethren, had its drawbacks. On one occasion, it was so cold that the brethren had to wear overcoats over their regalia and the curtaining left something to be desired. At a meeting in 1936, a first was carried out before a third in that the sun was shining brightly through the windows. Arthur Barrell recalls an incident in 1938 which, he claims, caused him as IG some embarrassment. During the working, a knock on the door heralded the arrival of a troop of Boy Scouts who wished to retrieve some equipment left in the hall previously. After the interruption, the working carried on. It was the custom, apparently, for the obligation in all degrees to be followed by prayer, sung by the assembled brethren - "Lord have mercy on us" - but this was discontinued after a couple of years in that Provincial Grand Lodge disapproved. It was considered an innovation (and possibly also limited to the Christian faith).

The festive board was laid in the Hall and in January 1937, the lodge was invited to subscribe £2.4s.0d towards the cost of trestle tables. Cross toasting "with dignity and decorum" was a regular feature. W. Bro. Arthur recalls that the resultant hilarity often became somewhat boisterous. (The general practice was, of course, stopped in 1956⁽¹⁵⁾ by a communication from Grand Lodge.) Those entitled would wear their collars at the festive board, two or three more than one might expect perhaps in that it was common, given the numbers, for lay brethren to take the offices of ADC and Assistant Secretary and even the first Secretary was a lay brother (as was Bro. Harry Ball much later on).

Installation meetings were held at the Holborn Restaurant, on the corner of Kingsway and High Holborn, opposite the Holborn Underground station. (The building no longer exists but was located where Aviation House now stands.) Evening dress was considered *de rigueur*. Visiting Brethren occupied the places of SW and JW at the first four installations and of IG at the first three. W. Bro F. Harrison of the Ingrebourne Lodge, the brother of our own E.W. Harrison, acted as SW twice and JW once. W. Bro. H. Nelson James, of the Newbury Park Lodge acted as JW twice and SW twice. W. Bros Sumpner, Hopkins and Cuthbertson (all of Ingrebourne) and Scorrer (St Barnabas) also assisted. In fact it was not until the fourth installation meeting that a St Laurence brother officiated - W. Bro. Bob Harper.

Compared with nowadays, our early brethren moved through the workings rather smartly, if the timings of the meetings are a guide. Regular meetings typically commenced at 4.15 pm, installation meetings at 4.45 while dinner was almost invariably at 7.00 pm. When one recalls that there were very often, if not usually, two and sometimes three ceremonies to complete, this is somewhat impressive. Admittedly, on the 8th meeting dinner was delayed until 7.30 pm. At that meeting the lodge carried out a double initiation, a second and a third.

Ladies' Festivals were held each year, the first at the King Edward Rooms, the second at the Holborn Restaurant, the third at the Abercorn Rooms and the fourth, in 1938 at the Connaught Rooms. The first Ladies' Festival is to be noted for its band - Cecil Kemp's Midnight Follies. Hal Kemp was later initiated into the Lodge in March 1939 and was renowned not only for his band but for his stewardship of the Brooke Bond Chimpanzees! The menu card for the 1937 Ladies' Festival has a most attractive coloured front page. If it were not for the year, one would describe the figure as that of a "flapper" girl. The photograph (from the Self Archives) overleaf is of that Festival.

The faces indicate that it was something of a formal occasion, not particularly associated with follies at midnight, chimpanzees or indeed flapper girls ! The photograph facing page 13 is of the 1938 Ladies' Festival which appears a more relaxed affair. This photograph, together with a copy of the beautiful menu card - two ladies in crinolines on the cover - was provided by Bro. Fred Andrews. The menus themselves were quite extraordinary, seven courses before coffee, and the entertainment perhaps just as extraordinary - 1937, Bro. Claude Chandler, a "Unique Entertainer with Original Novelties" and in 1938, Bro. Maxwell Carew, "Character Comedian (quite different)".

Finances had altered somewhat. The joining fee was reduced to three guineas in 1937 (a reduction of over 50%) while the Tyler's fee was increased to 15/- in 1938. The 1935 Ladies' Festival was priced at 21/- per ticket and Past Masters' jewels were made in 9ct gold (design no. 4 from Toye). In 1938, the revenue account totalled £134.0s.10d with "Artistes Fees" of eight guineas.

The sadness of the early years was the death of Bro. Reader, a founder who attended but one meeting. The lodge was in official mourning for the first six meetings - the last occasion when receiving the news of the death of Sir Richard Colvin. Masonic Mourning - three black rosettes - was worn. Bro. Graham McKenzie has examples of these rosettes in a case that belonged to Bro. A.F. Lovell, admittedly from a later time.

This apart, the lodge, having grown in size from the original 14 founders to a membership of 25 by the end of 1938, was well established when the darkness of war came upon it and the world.

The war years (1939 - 1945)

Although these years perforce were among the most dramatic in the history of the lodge, there is a distinct problem in describing them. The problem is that there is virtually no mention of the war either in the minutes of the lodge itself or of the General Purposes Committee. This does not appear to be unique to St Laurence Lodge. While there is more mention, particularly at the beginning of the conflict, in the minutes of Grand Lodge Quarterly Communications, it is certainly very understated. One might suppose that the events were so dramatic that the brethren did not feel they had to comment or indeed that they were actually avoiding comment, attempting to carry on life as normally as possible despite the events around them. For the historian, this is a little difficult in that the modern reader does need to set the events in context and the descriptions of the episodes of the World War sit oddly with what are frequently the very domestic concerns of the lodge minutes. Perhaps this very fact is the strength of masonry and describes more eloquently than any list of courageous actions can do, the determination to carry on, to win through, that characterised the time.

However, the war did not start at the beginning of 1939 and had not commenced when W. Bro Andrew Edwards became Master. His immediate problems were financial. Costs had become a problem and we find the brethren concerned to reduce the printing bill (unsuccessfully) and facing a demand for 6/6 instead of 5/6 from Messrs Jarrard, "in view of the small number of diners." The catering was changed to Messrs Hart and Holman of Forest Gate, "on the proviso that the sweet should be varied from time to time", a proviso that was soon to become somewhat hollow. The printing problem also became redundant as paper became hard to obtain. (Until March 1939, the summonses were printed in a very lovely style with ornaments at each corner and at the top, decorated with various masonic emblems, the trowel, the square and compass. Thereafter, they become very plain.) The festive board at this time was enlivened by the Worshipful Master's insistence upon the brethren entertaining each other in song. W. Bro. Arthur Barrel! recalls giving a rendition and also recalls hearing W. Bro. Bunney sing. Perhaps it was this tradition that was revived at installation meetings in the late 70's. The present writer recalls the occasion when W. Bro. Frank Lodge gave a superb solo rendition of the Master's song ("Here's to his health") while W. Bro. Fred Jones (of the St Pancras and Burntwood Lodges) replied to the carol chorus addressed to the guests with a unique version of "I'm forever blowing bubbles."

On 1 September, Hitler invaded Poland and on 3 September Britain declared war.



Ladies' Festival 1937 at the Abercorn Rooms - Top table R to L: Mrs. Ramsay, D. Ramsay, Mrs. Sybil Self, C. Self, Mrs. Harper, R. Harper, V. Wallace, Mrs. Wallace, P. Wheatley, Mrs. Wheatley, (4 unknown guests). **Near table clockwise from lower right:** [unknown] Mrs. A. Edwards, A. Edwards, (2 unknown guests), Mrs. J..S..Edwards, J..S..Edwards, (2 unknown guests). **Table beyond clockwise from R. A. Ball at end:** Mrs. Ellen Ball, Mrs. Rose Barrell, A. Barrell, Mrs. Bunney, P. Bunney, A. Blanche, Mrs. Blanche, Bro. & Mrs. Turnbull (guests), Mr. E. and Mrs. Lily Ball (guests). **Seated at end of table next but one:** A.V. Dowding.

Photograph from Cyril Self's collection



Ladies' Festival 1938 at the Connaught Rooms - **Top table:** 4 unknown, Mrs. Harrison, E. Harrison, Mrs. E. West (*standing*), E. West (*Master*), V. Wallace, Mrs. Wallace, 5 unknown. **Left table from top left:** 4 unknown, Mrs. J. Edwards, J. Edwards. A. Edwards (*at end*). Mrs. A. Edwards, 3 unknown. F. Andrews. Mrs. Andrews. **Table 2nd left:** 7 unknown, Pamela Claxton, C. Claxton (*at end*), Mrs. Claxton, rest unknown, **Centre table:** 6 unknown, C. Self. Mrs. Self, R. Harper (*at end*), Mrs. Harper. C. Richards, Mrs. Richards (guests), 4 unknown. **Next table:** 2 unknown, Bro. Luther (Ingrebourne). Mrs. Luther (daughter of P. Wheatley). 4 unknown. P. Wheatley (*at end*), Mrs. Wheatley, 7 unknown. **Right table:** Mrs. Bunney, P. Bunney, Mrs. Barrell, A. Barrell, 2 unknown, R. Ball (*at end*). Mrs. Ball, 2 unknown. A. Blanche, Mrs. Blanche.

Photograph from Fred Andrews's collection

Grand Lodge immediately sent out a circular "requiring the temporary suspension of all masonic meetings" and we find that Grand Lodge is debating the freedom of German subjects resident in Britain to attend lodge meetings. After a series of impassioned speeches and having had the matter referred back to committee at least once, Grand Lodge decided that no German subject in Britain (whatever his views on Hitler) should attend meetings. About this time Bro. Kurt Henry Otto Dell leaves the lodge. While it is the purest of speculation in that the last meeting that Bro. Dell actually attended was in October 1938, it may be that this decision was partly responsible for his not continuing. If so it was a pity. The passion of the time created what was perhaps an impossible dilemma - the choice between what appeared as proper patriotism opposed to the basic principle of brotherly love. Grand Lodge felt that it had to make a decision upon which came first. No masonic understanding of the time can be complete without recognising this and the feelings that gave rise to it. It was a time of tense anxiety, the expectation of air raids that did not, that year, arrive; the so-called "phoney war" when little happened but the awful waiting.

After about four weeks, Grand Lodge rescinded its command to cease meetings and indeed frequently thereafter exhorted lodges to hold such meetings as they could. The General Purposes Committee sent a circular to all brethren "to see if enough could attend" a meeting in November. The summons was sent out bearing the ominous words, "Dark morning dress or uniform", the latter phrase not being deleted until January 1948. A letter was received from Bro. Prater indicating that he had been called up into the Navy and "in consequence of the small allowance he was receiving, was regretfully forced to tender his resignation." The GP Committee reached a unanimous decision to pay his dues to Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge "for as long as he was serving his country." Fees for brethren during the war appear to have been taken from the Benevolent Fund. Such fees would, following a ruling from Grand Lodge, have been small, consisting only of reduced Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge dues. Bro. Fred Andrews; "I remember during the war years (early part), W. Bro. Prater came to the lodge meeting in his sailor's uniform which made the lodge feel very patriotic as he was a real sailor boy and much liked."

The November lodge meeting took place with light refreshments instead of a dinner, perhaps in response to the Grand Master's request that refreshments after lodge meetings should be "as simple as possible to conform with the need for national economy." The GP Committee decided that a dinner would take place after the December meeting as "there was so much work to do" and the subscription for 1940 was reduced to 3 guineas, with a "recredit at end of year if no banquets." Since there were none, it was reduced to 2½ guineas. The Lodge of Instruction ceased. Cigarettes (cost £5.14s.0½d in 1940 and £2.4s.4d in 1941) were voted to two brethren serving in the forces, believed now to have been Bro. Bill Prater and Bro. J.S. Edwards. In January W. Bro. R.A. Ball was installed as Master. He was fated to preside over only two meetings, for apart from his installation the lodge met only once in 1940, perhaps significantly to work the third degree for Bro. W. Mitchell. That meeting on 9 March saw virtually the last formal festive board of the war years and on 13 May, 1940, the brethren heard Winston Churchill speak, two days after the resignation of Chamberlain:

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. You ask, What is our policy? I will say: it is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us. ... You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word. Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of the terror; victory, however long and hard the road may be."

The terror was real and the miracle of Dunkirk followed hard upon these words - 27 May to 3 June 1940. On 18 June, Churchill warned that an invasion was imminent:

"Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say: 'This was their finest hour.' "

All German subjects were interned, road signs and station names removed and in 1940 the Home Guard was created. St Laurence was represented in "Dad's army" by at least five members: Bert Milner, Arthur Barrell, Ralph A. Ball, Bill Mitchell, Bro. Ralph's company commander and by Bro. A. Purnell who was initiated into St Laurence in 1942.

Life went on, even with optimism, for W. Bro. Ernie West "presented the Lodge with a handsome board for the names of the past masters of the Lodge as a memento of the happy year he had had as master."

On 10 July, by usual reckoning, the Battle of Britain commenced. Brethren will recall that Hornchurch air field was very much in the front line. On 7 September 1940, the Luftwaffe bombed London and the Home Guard were stood to arms, each of them expecting the invasion that very day. On the 15 September, the day traditionally associated with victory in the Battle of Britain, Churchill spoke of those who brought it about:

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

If the Battle of Britain had been won, the blitz continued. Three and a half million homes were destroyed, mainly in Greater London while the City, where it will be recalled so many of our brethren were working, and the East End were devastated. In Romford, most of the houses in the borough were damaged to some degree and 143 people lost their lives. ⁽¹⁶⁾

The end of the blitz is usually reckoned to be the 2 November and on that day our GP committee met, agreeing to postpone any attempt to hold further meetings in 1940. St Laurence did not meet from 9 March 1940 until the installation meeting in January 1941. By this time St Laurence Hall had been taken over for military purposes and meetings were held from this time until the end of the war in the Masonic Hall in Billet Lane, Hornchurch. This hall stood next to the Fire Station where Sainsbury's car park is now. (It was a venue crowded by many lodges and dates became difficult to establish. The lodge met on a Thursday in October 1944.) Installation meetings were still held in the Holborn Restaurant, though no longer in evening dress, though this one, exceptionally, in 1941 was held in Hornchurch. W. Bro. A.V. Dowding was installed as Master and Bro. (Flight Lieutenant) F. Andrews wrote to the lodge. He had been called up in 1939 and was serving in the Air Force. On 9 February 1941, one of the two emergency meetings in the lodge's history was called. It was needed to initiate Lt M.C. Mair, Royal Army Medical Corps, of the R.A. Mess, Blackdown, Nr Aldershot, Hants. Bro. Mair became a master mason just before being posted to North Africa. Already there was Bro. Fred Andrews who had been posted to North Africa in 1940. Subscriptions were further reduced to £2.2s.0d.

While the horrors of the blitz were over and the Battle of Britain won, the Battle of the Atlantic was raging. In April of that year, over 700,000 tons of allied shipping were sunk and it is believed that Bro. H. Young was in the middle of it all in the Merchant Navy. In May 1941, the Bismarck was sunk and in June Hitler invaded Russia, giving rise to one of Churchill's lesser known comments; "... if Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons." In September, we find the lodge unable to obtain a past master's jewel and receiving a letter from the Walthamstow Lodge, "asking to be allowed to participate in the cost of PGL clothing presented to W. Bro. Harper." Clearly, the question of Past Masters' jewels was on the mind of the brethren as on 20 December 1941, we find the GP committee deciding to place £15.15s.0d annually "to a fund to pay for each W. Master's PM Jewel, collar and collar jewel during the period of war so that when they were obtainable it would not deplete the Lodge funds in any one year." The fund was in fact used in 1952 when the expenditure amounted to £141.3s.2d against a reserve of £115.10s.0d. The fund did in fact cover the costs if one allows for the fact that three of the jewels bought were used in 1953-55.

It was impossible to hold Ladies' Festivals during the war years. Indeed, it was difficult enough to keep going at all. Some lodges reduced their subscriptions and became non-dining lodges (Ingrebourne chose this course). In place of a festival, the lodge voted £5.5s.0d to the Master's lady to purchase a memento each year. There are two letters in the lodge records from ladies replying in thanks, one from Mrs Ellen (Nellie) Ball and one from Mrs Ivy Dowding. Mrs Ball wrote, " ... I look forward to being present at the next Ladies' Festival and pray God the war will soon end to make that and many other things possible." Mrs Dowding echoed such thoughts, " ... the gift will be a reminder of past very happy evenings, and also act as a reminder that we all gave up, very willingly, some of our own pleasures." She asked that the money be put aside to help the "big cause" and expressed her "sincere wishes that the Lodge continue steadily through these hard times and flourish when quieter and happier days return."

In the December of 1941, Hitler's attack on Russia was halted and the Japanese made the fateful attack on Pearl Harbour that brought the U.S.A. into the war. While there were many horrors to come, the tide turned with these two events. Bert Milner was installed WM in January 1942 and the GP Committee minutes for June 3 record, for the historian, one of the most frustrating of comments. Bert Milner, "as he was the last of the founders to occupy the chair, ... thought it would be opportune to give a general review of the activities of the lodge ... and to stabilise the methods of procedure." If only we knew what those comments were. The minutes do not record what he said but only that he said it. February 1942 saw the fall of Singapore and more stringent rationing - no petrol for private motoring, a reduction in the clothes ration, curtailment of sporting events and a limit of 5/- on meals in restaurants. There was no white bread. It was perhaps the nadir of life in the lodge. The three meetings following the Installation meeting were attended by only 3 or 4 visitors and with a revenue account of £90.7s.4d and the rationing, the board was hardly festive. On the 2 September 1942, the M.W. The Grand Master, H.R.H. The Duke of Kent was killed on active service but in November of that year Montgomery forced Rommel to retreat and "The Eighth Army began an advance which ended only in Italy." ⁽¹⁷⁾

From 1942 to 1945, the lodge minutes do not record much other than the regular and routine events of meetings. These meetings, at the Hornchurch Masonic Hall, typically took place at 2.30 p.m. and were followed by "light refreshments", frequently prepared by the ladies of the brethren, among whom Mrs T.C. Hutchinson and the future Mrs R. Hutchinson were prominent. Installation meetings, at the Holborn Restaurant, frequently commenced with lunch at 1.00 p.m., the meeting proper following at 2.30. Famous names in the lodge became Master - Charlie Claxton in 1943, Arthur Barrell in 1944. Despite the difficulties, of communication as well as of finance, the Treasurer was able to report no arrears for 1944. During W. Bro. Arthur Barrell's year of office, the lodge received through W. Bro. Ernie West, an invitation to attend a rehearsal at Freemason's Hall of a degree performed by a Czechoslovakian lodge in exile.

June 6 1944 was D.Day and not, as it turned out, a moment too soon for one last bout of horror descended upon London. On 13 June the first V1 - the doodle bug - fell on London and on 8 September, the first V2. These two weapons killed nearly nine thousand people in London up to the day of final victory in Europe, 4 May 1945. The GP Committee met on 10 May 1945: "The Worshipful Master in referring to the cessation of hostilities asked the brethren to stand in silence as a token of thankfulness to the GAOTU." In the Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge of 6 June 1945, we read:

"The termination of hostilities in Europe by the victory of the Allied Nations has brought relief to a great part of the world ... The board (of General Purposes) wishes to place on record its appreciation of the manner in which lodges, even in places which have been particularly involved, have continued to carry out their duties in spite of the difficulties and even dangers which are inherent in a state of war. Freemasonry has meant much to its members during the past five and a half years and it is hoped that that spirit which has sustained them will be maintained..."

VJ soon followed and the war ended. While the joy of peace was real enough, there were still some hard days ahead as the nation sought to reconstruct itself.

St Laurence Lodge survived the war years almost intact. It suffered no deaths through war of its brethren and at the end of 1945 had 38 members, some 13 more than it had at the end of 1938. From 1939 to 1945 inclusive, 5 members joined the lodge (including Bro. E. Upton who re-joined), of whom one, Bro. W. Drew, in 1949, became Master and there were 11 initiates, of whom five became Master; Bros J. Bassett 1950, W. Ingle 1952, W. Mitchell 1953, W. Bingham 1954, and D. Thomas 1957. It lost a second founder, W. Bro. Rev. H.H. Holden who died in 1944, a friend in W. Bro. Goodwin who died in 1943 and three members had resigned, two in addition to Bro. Delf. The Lodge of Instruction recommenced in September 1945, now called a lodge having been a school previously, and St Laurence was poised for the great expansion experienced in masonry following the war, an expansion that paralleled that following the first world war.

T. Hutchinson W.M.

Percy Wheatley

H. R. Holden.

ST. LAURENCE LODGE, No. 5511.

PROVINCE OF ESSEX.



Installation

BRO. THOMAS C. HUTCHINSON, S.W.

Worshipful Master

Saturday, January 12th, 1946.

AT THE

HOLBORN RESTAURANT, KINGSWAY, W.C.

Signatures include: T.C. Hutchinson (WM), Percy Wheatley, H R Holden, A.V. Dowding, Arthur Barrell, H.E. Milner D.A. Ramsay, A.V. Upton, Wm Stokes (Tyler), A.E.C. Blanche, J.L. Bassett, D.A. Thomas, C.E.R. Self, Ernest A. West, A. Edwards, E.W. Harrison, C.H. Claxton, W.J.J. Bingham, Wm Drew, D.A. Smith.

The years of growth (1945-1960)

The post war years, from 1945 until the memory of war was dim in 1960, were years of rapid growth of the lodge. They were not, at first, easy years though things became much easier later - years that begin with bread rationing and end with the Beatles - years during which it grew from 38 members in 1945 to 68 in 1960 - years when a second generation was taking over the management of the lodge. W. Bros Ernie West and David Ramsay died in 1949; W. Bro. Percy Wheatley in 1953, W. Bro. Foster in 1957 and W. Bro. Bob Harper in 1960. In 1945, the offices of Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Ceremonies, Assistant Secretary, ADC and Almoner were all held by founders. In 1960, Andrew Edwards became Almoner, Bert Milner was continuing as Secretary but all the other offices were filled by the second generation.

W. Bro. Tom Hutchinson was the first Master since Ernie West to preside over the lodge in a complete year of peace - seven years had passed since 1938 and there was much to do in order to reconstruct normal life. 1946 may have been the first year of peace but the conditions of life remained just as stringent. Bread was rationed in that year, something that had been avoided throughout the war, and in 1947 the Government instituted a policy of austerity to counteract the financial crisis that had arisen, a crisis that occurred again in 1949 when the pound was drastically devalued against the dollar. Rationing continued until 1953, when sugar and sweet rationing ended, two years after the Festival of Britain. Those years after the war called for careful management. However, the man and the time so often come together and so it appears to have been with St Laurence Lodge. Tom Hutchinson was a most dedicated freemason. Initiated in 1936, he missed but five meetings between then and his death in 1972, four of those occasions being in the last three years of his life. He served as Treasurer from 1959 to 1963 and as Chaplain in 1969 and 1970. He was also a man of many parts. In later years, 1954 to be precise, the lodge found itself without an organist, because W. Bro. David Thomas was going forward, being S.D. in that year. W. Bro. Ron Hutchinson, Tom's son talking:

"He played the piano by ear ... so Dad made an effort to see what he could do ... My wife's mother had a little harmonium in her house in Romford, so Dad said to me once, 'Do you think Mother Gale would mind if I went and tinkered with her harmonium ?' It was one of these old pedal things ... he sat there for about three hours playing around and ... said 'I think I can cope.' So he did."

Tom Hutchinson was known as a specialist on Grand Lodge certificates, a specialism that W. Bro. Ron Hutchinson carries on today. Tom Hutchinson's Ladies' Festival, the first since 1938, was held in the Drill Hall in Upminster which was at the top of Upminster Hill, something of a change from the splendour of the pre-war occasions and shared apparently with three masters from other lodges. Still, there was entertainment - in the form of a magician of whom W. Bro. Ron reports, "He was lousy. He did three tricks and every one of them went wrong!" (18)

1946 was a year of putting things back to rights - which may have been something the magician wished he could do - and before commencing the March meeting, W. Bro. Tom spoke of the lodge's pleasure in returning to the St Laurence Hall for the first time in six years. He continued, "... to those of you who have joined us since (9 March 1940) I would say, 'Welcome to this your Masonic Home and may you all find here the peace and happiness we all desire.' " Home indeed were many of the brethren who had been called away on active service. Bro. Mair was back from North Africa, Bro. John Edwards, complete with black patch over his eye, had returned and had been appointed I.G. and Bro. Bill Prater arrived home to be immediately appointed J.W. Bro. Andrews was less fortunate. By then a regular officer in the RAF, he had been posted to Palestine in December 1945.

1946 was also a year of high activity. An emergency meeting was called on 2 May in order to ease the work schedule. At that meeting, David Thomas was raised, Bro. Tidbury passed and two brethren, F. Willoughby and Reg Ames were initiated. The year saw no less than five initiates and two joining members, one of whom was W. Bro. Hyla Rose Holden, Rector of St Laurence since 1944, the son of our late founder and the other being B.E.B. Presslie, who had been initiated in the Eagle Lodge, No. 19 in Mexico.

While the furniture in the hut at St Laurence Hall had been replaced by brethren from the lodges meeting there, the tenure of this "home" was short-lived. In 1947, during the mastership of A.E. (Bunny) Blanche, we find a notice of motion "That the lodge purchase fifty £1 shares in the proposed Upminster Masonic Hall Ltd from the funds of the Lodge." These shares, written off over five years commencing in 1951, led to the alteration of Bye Law No. 1 in a notice of motion, 8 November 1947; "That the Lodge change its place of meeting from the St Laurence Hall to the Upminster Masonic Hall, Deyncourt Gardens ..." In case any of the younger brethren think of this hall as the comfortable place in which we now meet, let W. Bros Arthur Brown and Frank Lodge put them right:

(Arthur) "This were in the days we were in the little tin hut down the road here" *(Frank)* "The old tin tabernacle !" *(Arthur)* "Every time a train went past - or it was raining - you had to wait - couldn't hear your own self talking!" *(Frank)* "When I became a joining member down there - you had to go outside even if you were a candidate you had to go out on the veranda because there wasn't room inside - and it was a cold day and I stood out on that veranda and by the time I came in my teeth were chattering!" ⁽¹⁹⁾

The Masonic Hall was a very cramped corrugated iron hut, which had hitherto been a private school, the site near the present hall but further down Deyncourt Gardens, on the bend next to Eversleigh Gardens. One of its assets was its proximity to a footpath, through an arch under the railway, leading to the Mason's Arms.

In 1948, the lodge was able to recover some of its old style with a Ladies' Festival in London. The Holborn Restaurant had been, or was in the process of being, pulled down but for 12/6 per head, the Bridge House Hotel, near London Bridge, catered for our revellers. Brethren might like to note that price and compare it with the 21/- quoted for the 1937 Ladies' Festival tickets. In fact, prices were lower after the war in many ways - that is, for what there was to buy since rationing remained severe. Bairds were catering for the lodge at 5/- per head, some 6d cheaper than 1939 and while the 1947 revenue account had increased by 33% since 1938 (£205.3s.9d in 1947, £134.0s.10d in 1938), there had been an 80% increase in membership during that time. Such an account was possible despite the extravagance of free sherry before each meeting and it is interesting that the accounts carefully detail the amount of sherry in stock - £4.11s.6d in 1948, £4.16s.0d in 1950 and so on - prices that would not buy two good bottles today.

The Tyler's fee had increased to a guinea a meeting by 1948, the year that Bill Prater became Master. This was also the year in which W. Bro C.T.W (Charlie) King joined the lodge. Master in 1962, Charlie King is famous in the Lodge of Instruction as 'Freshwater Charlie' - he lived on the Isle of Wight - and also as the name in that cry, now almost part of the ritual for any self-respecting Senior Deacon as he shows the T.B. to the Junior Warden. Edgar Gover was somewhat deaf. When he was Senior Deacon, he would hold up the T.B. to Charlie King, and would shout, as the hard of hearing often do, "All Right, Charlie?". Charlie King was a son-in-law of Bob Harper and, in turn, the father of Graham King who was initiated in 1971. Charlie King's son-in-law was Bro. J.R. Bridger. Initiated in 1958, Bro. Bridger moved to Yorkshire where he became Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer. 1948 was also the year when Cyril Self, Bob Harper's other son-in-law, finally joined the lodge of which he had been such an assiduous visitor.

In 1949, W. Bro. Bill Drew became Master. Leaping ahead in time, let us quote from a meeting of 14 October 1978, when the then Master, W. Bro. Ralph E. Ball spoke from the Master's chair:

"On another happy note Brethren, after welcoming our joining member (Bro. Albert Farrow), I would like to mention that we are honoured and delighted to have with us this afternoon a member of our own lodge who is celebrating this week 60 years in Freemasonry - 60 years brethren - I refer of course to W. Bro. Bill Drew. Bill was initiated into Freemasonry in a Scottish Lodge on the 8 October 1918 and joined St Laurence in January 1939. He served successively in all the floor offices and was installed as our 15th Master in January 1949. He has served the lodge with great credit and distinction and it says much for this magnificent character that he is as well known to our younger brethren as to the old. I'm sure, brethren, you would wish me to formally offer him our congratulations on this magnificent and I think comparatively rare achievement.

Hopefully we shall be able to enlarge on this little matter at the festive board - in the meantime Bill - our very sincere congratulations and I think it would be rather nice if you were to come and sit alongside me for the remainder of this meeting."

Edgar Gover, mentioned above, was initiated in 1950, together with Ron E. Hill, in a double ceremony. Bro. Gover was a farmer of Folkes Farm in Cranham and it is his son, Robin, who died so tragically at the age of seven, who is remembered in the 'Robin Trust', the income from which goes towards helping the widows of departed brethren. Edgar Gover and Ron Hill were initiated when Jack Bassett was master. W. Bro. Jack was a confectioner, with two shops in Upminster, one opposite Roomes Stores and one in Corbets Tey Road. Something of a character, he is remembered for the drawn out vowels of his name, "Jack Ba-a-a-ssett". It is also during Jack's year, 14 October 1950 to be precise, that a significant visitor attends from the Norman Lodge, No. 3502 - Bro. F.L. Lodge. Frank joined the lodge on 12 January 1952, shortly after Arthur Brown (13 October 1951) and these two have been conjoined ever since. Deacons together and now DC and ADC, they have reached an outstanding level in the ritual.



1955 LOI Ladies' Festival. Clockwise from left: Eddie Gover, Mrs Benfield, Tom Hutchinson, Mrs Hutchinson, a guest, (top table) Ron Hill, Mrs Peggy Hill, Mrs Hutchinson (jnr), C.C. Benfield, Mrs Gover.

In 1951, the year of the Festival of Britain, W. Bro. John Smith Edwards, the younger brother of W. Bro. Andrew Edwards, became Master and in 1952, the year that war time identity cards were finally abolished, the Master was W. Bro. Bill Ingle, the well-known Romford cricketer.

The year of the ending of rationing saw W. Bro. Bill Mitchell installed and one of the infrequent appearances of Bro. F. Watkins. Bro. Watkins had been initiated in 1943, had been appointed steward in 1949 but had moved residence - from Eltham to Knowle in Warwickshire, from Maidstone in Kent to Surrey - so frequently as to make attendance at the lodge nigh on impossible. In 1964, he entered hospital for what was a painful but ultimately successful treatment for Parkinson's disease. Bravely overcoming this experience, he was tragically and ironically killed in 1969 in a motor accident. On 14 November 1953, "Bro. Halliday informed the brethren of the scheme for the erection of the new Masonic Hall and after discussion W. Bro. Claxton proposed that a special meeting be called ... to discuss the scheme." This new Masonic Hall is indeed, this time, that in which we now meet, albeit somewhat smaller and less sophisticated than we see it today.⁽²⁰⁾ It was a long while a-building and St Laurence Lodge was the first lodge to use it, suitably enough on a rather special occasion. The summons for the meeting in January 1956, carries the "Special Notice: The Twenty-first Anniversary of the Lodge will be celebrated on the 10th March 1956, when it is hoped that we shall be meeting in the new Masonic Hall. Visitors' fees on that occasion will be £1.5s.0d." In the event the hall was not ready and the meeting was delayed, by dispensation, until it was, 5 May 1956. There were 48 members present at that anniversary meeting and 48 visitors, including brethren from the Chafford Lodge, the Walthamstow Lodge and from the Ingrebourne, Abbots Hall and St John's Lodges.

However, we have jumped ahead in time a little and missed what was a fairly significant year, 1954. This was the year of W. Bro. Bingham as Master, a year that saw the first stirrings of returning prosperity to Britain. It was the year in which the "Worshipful Master presented a silver salver, suitably inscribed, to W. Bro. E.W. Harrison PPGW retiring as Secretary, on behalf of the Brethren ... as a mark of their affection." It was the year in which the Dowding brothers were initiated, in another double ceremony, and the year in which their close friend, Ron Hutchinson was also initiated. In a unique year, two fathers had the pleasure of initiating their sons as the WM accorded W. Bro. Vic Dowding and W. Bro. Tom Hutchinson that privilege. A.V. Dowding Jnr, emigrated to Canada in 1957, becoming master of the Westminster Lodge, No. 174 BCR, under the Grand Lodge of British Columbia, in Vancouver. He has made several trips back, notably on 30 May 1969, when he visited the LOI. A special page in the LOT minutes commemorates this event.

Times were getting better, even if the first faint stirrings of inflation were being felt. A million houses had been built between 1951 and 1955 and in that latter year, income tax was reduced by 6d. The initiation fee was raised in 1955 from 15 to 20 guineas and the annual subscription from £3.13s.6d to five guineas, although W. Bro. A.V. Dowding Snr, mindful perhaps of his sons' bills, put an amendment to raise the annual subscription to only £4.10s.0d. The amendment was lost. In 1955 Reg Ames was Master, a man much admired in the lodge. W. Bro. Ron Hutchinson speaks of the effect that W. Bro. Reg had on him. He tells of a time when Reg, as a company secretary, had seen two companies collapse during the two weeks leading up to a meeting and had had no time at all to think of the ceremonies that he was about to perform. It was at that point that Ron recognised the importance of the LOI, for he describes Reg's performance as faultless. Ron himself, much later, had to fly to New Zealand and returned very shortly before he himself had a ceremony to perform as Master and jet lag and all, coped through the strength of the LOI.

In July 1955, at a Meeting of the General Purposes Committee, "W. Bro. H. Wilkerson, of the Upminster Masonic Hall Company Limited ... gave a lucid and detailed explanation of the position of the company ... a vote of thanks was proposed and carried to W. Bro. Wilkerson for his time and trouble." On the 12 November 1955 notice of motion was given that "... the St Laurence Lodge shall pay to the Upminster Masonic Hall Co. Ltd a sum not exceeding £60 per annum for a period of twelve years", an agreement helped by regular contributions from the LOT, which brings us back to 1956 and the 21st Anniversary. That event was budgeted at £50 to £60 but in the event appears to have cost but £20.

A small but delightful picture of life at that time is given by Bro. Stan Thompson, of the Hornchurch Lodge, No. 5790, then landlord of the Mason's Arms in Upminster. "In 1955 or 6 - before they were licensed here - they used to jump in their cars and come round to me at the Masons ... and they'd come back again for dinner. Used to catch me on the hop - about 60 of them (would) come in and I'm there by myself "⁽²¹⁾ Perhaps the sherry was insufficient !



1955 LOI Ladies' Festival. Jock and Mrs Presslie receiving Ron and Mrs Hutchinson

In 1956, on 8 October, it was "Proposed by Bro. G. Cook J.W. and seconded by W. Bro. Mitchell to serve wine at Lodge Meetings." This was passed unanimously by the GP Committee. Until this time, beer was always served with dinner. W. Bro. Cyril Self remembers pointing out to a reluctant Bob Harper that three bottles of Guinness (which some brethren consumed), at 1/3 per bottle amounted to the same price as a bottle of wine. (In 1958, the Masonic Hall became licensed.)

Ladies' Festivals, during this period, were held in London, in fact until the year that W. Bro. Derek Rawlings became Master, in 1971. From 1957 to 1965, as far as the memory of brethren serves, Festivals were held in the Russell Hotel, Russell Square, moving in 1967 to the Hanover Grand and in 1968 to the Northumberland Grand.

However, it was not all wine and roses. 1956, it should be remembered, was the year of the Suez campaign and in the following year the highest number of industrial stoppages ever recorded took place - 2859 disputes with a loss of 8,412,000 working days.⁽²²⁾ The world had indeed changed from 1946, leading up to 1958, the time of the "Affluent Society", the years of "You've never had it so good!" and "I'm all right, Jack!" Whatever the outside world's attitude to life may have been, the interest in Masonry and in St Laurence remained high. In December of that year, at a meeting of the GP Committee: "The programme of work for the year ahead was considered and in view of the number of applications for membership, it was agreed to work ceremonies with two candidates."

In 1957, when W. Bro. David Thomas became Master, St Laurence agreed to sponsor what was to become our only daughter lodge to date, the Upminster Hall Lodge, No.7573. The proposition was carried on 12 October 1957 and the lodge consecrated on 7 March 1958. Charlie Claxton became the first JW of Upminster Hall, although he did not go forward, becoming ADC there from 1966 to 1967. John Smith Edwards was another founder, indeed the moving spirit and Secretary of Upminster Hall from its foundation until 1964. Another founder was Bro. A.H. Gowers, the Professional at Upminster Golf Club, in a lodge which arose from friendships at that club and which has been known as 'the Golf Club Lodge'. A subsequent Master of Upminster Hall, in 1974, was W. Bro. Charles Fuller, the eminent local Mason who has been our Tyler for some time. ⁽²³⁾

By 1958, when W. Bro. George Cook became Master, the lodge had grown to a membership of 69, nearly five times its size at its consecration, a membership virtually the same as that of the Ingrebourne Lodge when it sponsored St Laurence. It appears that this may be the first year in which Christmas dinner was served following installation meetings, for the GP Committee early in January agreed to "... order the complete Christmas Dinner at a cost of 15/6 per head for the Installation Meeting. Visitors' fees to remain unchanged." The sherry continued until 1963 when it "was felt (by the GP Committee) to be an unnecessary charge against the House A/C."

In 1959 the bye-laws were revised. Rule No. 7 gave some trouble, being referred back to the Committee for reconsideration. The disagreement was over the amount that non-dining members should pay, it being finally decided that the sum should be two guineas and not one as the original rule had been drafted. W. Bro. J.W. Halliday was Master in 1959 and on 9 January 1960, he installed his successor, W. Bro. Cyril Edward Robert Self. W. Bro. Bob Harper, the first master; W. Bro. Cyril Self, his son-in-law, Master in our twenty-fifth year and, in turn, his son, Robert Hugh Self, Master in our fiftieth - sometimes coincidence appears a little more than just that. However, sad to tell, a matter of weeks before Cyril was installed, Bob Harper died. His death was announced at the January meeting. *(In the membership history in appendix 4, † indicates year when the lodge was informed.)*

By 1960 St Laurence was quite a large lodge⁽²⁴⁾ meeting in a new Temple, a lodge now managed by its second generation, adequately resourced, its members well-skilled in the ritual and with further growth to come. Memories of the war years had faded, 1960 being the last year of conscription and the meetings, if not back to the evening dress of pre-war times, had recovered their old style. It has always been a happy lodge but one might think that 1960 saw it at a rather special peak.

The autumn years (1960 - 1980)

However, the lodge had aged. Examination of the table in Appendix 4 will show that between 1963 and 1980, no less than 29 members died and while we are taught to prepare ourselves for this inevitable fact, such a number in so short a time can only have brought sadness upon the lodge. Masonry is about many things. One of them must strike the historian - that masonry is about the passage of time and of the natural events that time brings in its train, of generation passing the wand to generation and of the importance of memory and the affection that memory can maintain. The canvas upon which the constantly moving portrait of the lodge is painted may be small in the great order of things but it is none the less significant for those who feature in it. In these terms, great men passed on during this period; among the founders men like Vic Dowding, Andrew Edwards, Vic Wallace, Ralph Ball snr, Ernie Harrison and Bert Milner; Masters including Jack Baa-asset, Bill Prater, P.J.W. Bunney, Jock Presslie, Bill Bingham, Tom Hutchinson, Charlie Claxton, Reg Ames, Bill Mitchell, John Smith Edwards, Eddie Gover, Bill Ingle, Ronnie Hill and Freddie Lowe. Let this history serve in some small way as a form of memorial and as some small way of giving thanks.

But if the while I think on thee dear friend
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

1960 itself, however, opens on a quite different note - a note of continued growth - for at the GP meeting of 8 November two future Secretaries are proposed, H.R. Ball and T.C. Larkin together with another initiate Reg Wingate. "Brother Secretary reported a further application for initiation had been received from a Mr Thurlow."

1961, W. Bro. A.A.G. Butler as Master, sees three initiates and two joining members and the lodge grows from 68 members in 1960 to 73 in 1963. It grew still further until 1967 to reach its high point of 76 members. 1961 was quite a busy year. It opened with a most pleasing event on the 14 January when the "... W. Master presented W. Bro. Self with a Past Master's (collar) Jewel - the jewel which had been presented to W. Bro. R.P. Harper and returned to the Lodge on his death and now presented to his son-in-law." This jewel was presented back to the lodge by W. Bro. Cyril in 1965 when W. Bro. Charlie Claxton expressed the hope that it would " be used by each future IPM of the Lodge." Two work colleagues were initiated, passed and raised together - Bro. H.R. Ball and Bro. R. Wingate. Reg Wingate, who died in 1978, and Harry Ball worked in the same legal firm and were initiated by a founder (W. Bro. R.A. Ball), passed by a founder (W. Bro. A. Edwards) and raised by a founder (W. Bro. Bert Milner) - this, remember, some 26 years after the consecration.

In the March of that year, six days before the double initiation just described, a Church Service in aid of the Royal Masonic Hospital and Church Funds, took place at St Laurence Church. W. Bro. Ron Hutchinson remembers that the church was full with perhaps 200-250 people and while the service was not public, it was open to wives and close friends. The main feature of it was the procession to the church, in full regalia - today, of course, a most uncommon event. The preacher was the Rev. Canon J.R. Lewis, MA, PPGChap. and he was assisted by the Rev. Hyla Rose Holden, PPGChap., the Rector of St Laurence. His father, Hyla Henry Holden, it will be remembered, participated in the only other public masonic ceremony at St Laurence, the laying of the foundation stone for the church extension, on 20 July, 1928. The Order of Service for the 5 March 1961 does not describe the order of the procession itself, but that of 1928 does. How alike those two processions were, it is not possible to tell but it is obvious that such a masonic procession is a most imposing affair.

"... the brethren will assemble at the Church Hall, Corbet's Tey Road, at 3.30 p.m. and a Procession will be formed in the following order:

The CHURCHWARDENS

The DEPUTY PROVINCIAL GRAND DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES

The RECTOR OF THE PARISH and OTHER CLERGY

The PROVINCIAL GRAND TYLER, with Drawn Sword

Four Lewises, bearing the VOLUME OF THE SACRED LAW on a cushion

Three PROVINCIAL GRAND DEACONS bearing the CORNUCOPIA AND EWERS
OF WINE AND OIL

The PROVINCIAL GRAND TREASURER, bearing a Phial containing Coins and
Records to be deposited in the cavity of the Stone

The PROVINCIAL GRAND SUPT. OF WORKS, bearing the Trowel, accompanied by
an Entered Apprentice

The PROVINCIAL GRAND SECRETARY, with Book of Constitutions

The ARCHITECT, bearing the Plans of the Building, accompanied by two Fellow
Crafts

Two PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPLAINS

The PROVINCIAL GRAND WARDENS
with the Plumb-rule and Level

The ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER with the square

The DEPUTY PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER with the Heavy Maul

GRAND LODGE OFFICERS

Two DEACONS

The Right Revd. the LORD BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD

The PROVINCIAL GRAND DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES
The PROVINCIAL GRAND SWORD BEARER
The R.W. PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER
Two PROVINCIAL GRAND STANDARD BEARERS with the Standards
PROVINCIAL GRAND DEACONS
Two STEWARDS with Wands
A PROVINCIAL GRAND TYLER."

In 1962, W. Bro Tom Hutchinson celebrated his Golden Wedding Anniversary and the lodge was visited by a Bro. Robertson of the Kismet Lodge, No. 489 under the Grand Lodge of Detroit. (It was a time for visits from far distant lodges. 1963 brought a visit from W. Bro. V.L. Holies of the Matamak Lodge, No. 265, New Zealand and in 1964, Bro. B.G. Shepherd conveyed fraternal greetings from the Acacia Lodge, No. 1582, Southern Rhodesia.) Charlie King became Master - he was definitely 'All right'. In 1963 he installed Eddie Gover whose guests included no less than eleven members of the Royal Sovereign Light Lodge, No. 6630, a lodge which meets in Bexhill and of which W. Bro. Eddie was a frequent visitor. On the 12 October of that year, "at the request of the W. Master, W. Bro. A. Edwards, Secretary of the Lodge presented a gold wristlet watch to W. Bro. Milner in recognition of his services as Secretary ... since 1954." (Tom Hutchinson was presented with a gold watch in 1963.) A report was received that " .. all interest-free loans to the Upminster Masonic Hall Company had now been re-paid." In that year, a Mr R.E. Ball is proposed as a candidate.

1964 was the beginning of the Robin Trust, the year that W. Bro. Ron Hill was master and 1965 -master W. Bro. E. Harold Pryer - begins the tale of inflation. Subscriptions were raised again but in 1966 the Treasurer's report to the GP Committee discusses an overspend which " ... could not be avoided. Rent had increased 25% - catering costs (Bairds still) had increased as had wine and spirits. (The Treasurer) stated another point to note that our subscriptions had not grown in past years." The lodge had not quite finished its growth but such growth had slowed and from the following year membership and hence fee income declined. Finances dictated that "cheaper menus should be ordered (apart from Installation meetings) ... until such time as our financial position was more clear." While in April 1968, the Treasurer is able to report a healthy surplus of income over expenditure, finances become a frequent theme and concern.

In 1965, the question of the obligations was raised in the lodge for the first time. An informal meeting was arranged for 23 April of that year to discuss the matter. At this meeting, no member expressed a wish to alter the obligations and no wish had been received in writing. The lodge therefore decided that no alteration would be made. However, members remained free to raise the issue at any future time. It does not appear that the issue was raised again until 23 January 1980 when the G.P. Committee, discussing the address of the Grand Master (25.4.79) decided to keep "our present ceremony unless *instructed* otherwise". (*Italics added.* For the interest of the younger brethren, who would not have been at that GP meeting in 1980, the matter is briefly discussed in Appendix 5.)

In 1966, the Master, W. Bro. P.G. Dowling, welcomed Bro. Robert Crabtree as a joining member. Initiated and passed in the Victoria Falls Lodge, No. 5327, Northern Rhodesia, he was raised in St Laurence at the request of his mother lodge. The handsome clearance certificate is still in our possession.

Standards were kept high. In 1967, the Master, W. Bro. Arthur Brown - who better to approve such a minute - chairs a meeting which unanimously agrees "... that no brother should be recommended to advance in office unless he (has) reached a satisfactory standard set by the Preceptor of L01." This was no empty decision and indeed it has been implemented on at least one occasion.

In 1968, the decision is made to devote the charity gavel at the November Meeting each year "... to subsidise the Robin Fund" for the benefit of lodge widows and £15.0s.0d is authorised

to repair lodge furniture - W. Bro. Frank Lodge, Master. Frank is pictured about this time in the photograph below. It was taken in the garden of W. Bro. R.A. Ball, in Lavington, near Devizes in Wiltshire on one of the annual visits made there, between about 1963 and 1970, by Cyril Self, Frank Lodge, Bert Milner and Harry Ball, to attend meetings of the Chapter of Harmony, No. 663 which celebrated its centenary in 1969.



It is in W. Bro. Geoff Dowding's year (1969) that the beautiful lodge banner is presented to the lodge, at a Ladies' Festival on 29 November. It was made by two sisters-in-law, Mrs Ada Bunney and Mrs Ellen Banks. The banner was dedicated on 10 January 1970 in a ceremony conducted by W. Bro. D.O.R. Parry, Provincial Grand Chaplain.

In 1970, W. Bro. Ron Hutchinson as Master chaired the GP Committee that interviewed a certain Mr W.D. West, well known to one of the current authors and the bye-laws were reprinted at a cost of £13.10s.0d.

1971 was a fairly busy year. The proposed workings are set out in the minute book and make interesting reading as an insight into the proceedings of that committee.

1971

Jan.	Installation (Bro. D. Rawlings)	Proposal	(Mr G.R. King)
March	Initiate (W. West) W.M.	Raise (J. Bunney)	I.P.M.
Oct	Pass (F. Parker) W.M.	Initiate (G.R. King)	W. Bro. King
Nov	Pass (W. West) T.B.D.	Raise (F. Parker)	W.M.

1972

Jan.	Installation (Bro. J.D. Hill)		
March	Raise (W. West) T.B.D.	Pass (G.R. King)	W.M.
Oct	Raise (G.R. King) W.M.		

On August 17, 1971, Brother Secretary reported that "... a rather unique position had occurred in the Ingrebourne Chapter as for the ensuing year the three principal chairs of the Chapter would be occupied by brethren of St Laurence ..." Ronnie Hill was First Principal, Harold Pryer Second and Frank Lodge Third. The Master in 1971 was W. Bro. Derek Rawlings, who for many recent years has acted as Chief Steward. This latter appointment can be dated from 1975 when the GP Committee noted that the cost of wine had increased from £1.08 per bottle to £1.46. It was decided to appoint a PM as Chief Steward, "to ration the wine allocation to 1 bottle to 3 people and to supervise its distribution" - no doubt a thankless task ! In January 1976, it was announced that wine at £1.00 per bottle had been discovered. The word actually used is "chosen" although one doubts that the word "choice" is completely appropriate! It was W. Bro. Derek's Ladies' Festival which was the first to be held outside of London, at the Fairlane Hotel (now the Ladbroke Mercury Inn) on the Southend Road.

1972 was the year in which Phil Rose, our Installing Master in our fiftieth anniversary year was first interviewed. It was also the year of W. Bro. Danny Hill as Master. Danny is a most assiduous attender of St Laurence despite his residence in Rugby. W. Bro. Danny installed W. Bro. G.J. (Jim) Banks in January 1973, their names being coupled in a unique minute of August 1975, when it was agreed that Bro. Secretary "... would send congratulations and fraternal greetings to W. Bros Jim Banks , Danny Hill and Bro. Russell Hill on the occasion of (their) being installed into the chair of King Solomon in other lodges during November 1975." It was in Jim Banks's year that Bob Self was first interviewed.

So to 1974, when this history meets W. Bro. Freddie Lowe formally. It is one of the great sadnesses of the lodge that W. Bro. Freddie died so early. Initiated in 1960, Master in 1974, an expert ritualist, he became ADC in 1976. Freddie was a quiet man who found great happiness and friendship in masonry and his memory and speed of learning were phenomenal. What he might have gone on to do is unfortunately pure speculation for his masonic career was cut short just as it flowered in 1978.

These years, from 1960 to 1980, have been entitled the "autumn years" and by 1975, the lodge had declined in membership from its peak of 76 to 63 members, the membership that it had 20 years before in 1955. Age had taken its toll, as had inflation, but it seems so unkind for St Laurence to lose members whose contribution to the lodge, although already major by the time of their death, had not fulfilled the full potential to which they seemed so obviously destined.

1975 saw W. Bro. Trevor Larkin installed as Master - our current Secretary whose devotion to the lodge is already legendary - and he installed W. Bro. Harry Ball, son of the founder and brother of Ralph E. Ball, in 1976. Harry had been Secretary himself for four years, prior to being appointed IG, the second lay brother to be Secretary of the lodge. Harry installed that certain "Mr Thurlow" as Master. W. Bro. Frank emigrated to Australia in 1981 where he joined the Walkerville Lodge, No. 114 (South Australia). In 1983, he was present when Bro. Reg Roast was installed as master of the United Press Lodge, No. 134 (Western Australia). Australia seems to have a fatal fascination for St Laurence brethren. Bro. Steve Powell moved there later and was in fact raised in the Lodge of Sincerity, No. 179 (Grand Lodge of Victoria). At an LOI meeting in 1981, W. Bro. Frank had received a presentation of a pair of cufflinks for himself, and a pendant and chain for his wife, on their departure. He installed the present writer's father-in-law, the incomparable W. Bro. Ralph E. Ball, as Master in 1978.

Objectivity in writing about one's father or father-in-law is perhaps impossible, probably undesirable. In the present writer's case, the affection that he has for both colours every thought of them. In the case of the former, the issue can be avoided in that W. Bro. Bill West is very much with us. However, something must be said about W. Bro. Ralph Ball, the son of our founder.

The facts are easy to establish. He was initiated by his father in 1963, passed and raised in 1964 and became Master in 1978. In 1982, he was appointed Charity Steward ("Battering Ram Ball", as W. Bro. Ray Berry termed him - a phrase singularly inappropriate given the gentleness of W. Bro. Ralph). He survived three heart attacks and died of cancer in 1983.

His mastery of the ritual was surpassed only by his sincerity in delivering it. His unshakeable belief in the moral principles of masonry was surpassed only by the purity of the life that he led. He was simply a very good man. From the mass of papers, filed in perfect order, that he left it is difficult to single out one or two to exemplify the man. Thus, one will not try but only record two very contrasting documents that might demonstrate not the average but rather the range. The first is a letter that he wrote when he became Master.

Dear Bro.,

One thing that I had always promised myself was, that when I eventually became Master of St Laurence, I would send my fraternal greetings to all those members of the Lodge who are on the Country list. We do have quite a number of you now of course - regretfully there are some I have not seen. for a long time - and others that I have never seen. Being the son of a Founder I suppose I am what you might call the second generation, but I would like you to know that although probably the majority of you may well cherish happy memories of the earlier pioneers, those of us who are able to attend our meetings, really do include you in our thoughts - especially when toasting absent brethren. I hope that all is well with you and that you will enjoy a healthy, happy and prosperous 1978. Keep in touch.

Yours fraternally, Ralph

The second, by contrast, is represented by an address to the visitors (1982) preceding one of the series of carols that he composed, if that is the word, between 1978 and 1983. (The full text, or lyric, is reproduced in Appendix 6, for those brethren who can bear it!)

And now friends - visiting guests - we come to what can only be described as the absolute pinnacle of your day - the highlight of the evening (even higher than the light of our new WM - who, as you can all see, is of course a very short light.) In a few moments, when I have completed this little introductory diatribe, you will be treated to a moment of sheer ecstasy - a moment of pure joy - poetry in vocal motion, as it were. Now as some of you will know, on installation night in St Laurence, it has become our custom to render (and I use that word advisedly Brethren) to render the toast to all our visiting friends in. song - performed by a group of singers now well known all over the world; a group the name of which sends a tingling thrill down the spine of every housewife in the land every time their records are played on the D. J. radio programmes. I refer, of course, to that famous Pop group, the St Laurence Brothers - known affectionately in our home town as SLUDGE - which some of you may remember is short for:

St Laurence - Under Developed - Geriatric - Exhibitionists

Actually we like to propose the toasts to our guests in this fashion for two reasons really - first because the fact that the members of St Laurence do it together proves the universal warmth and sincerity of our greeting ... and secondly because it ensures that you will probably never ever come to our installation meeting again. May I just say that the usual facilities apply, Brethren. Ear plugs can be purchased at £50 per pair or alternatively on payment of £100 to our Treasurer, you will be permitted to escape into the bar until the toast has been completed. All proceeds for these concessions to our (charitable) fund. And now, if the members of SLUDGE will gently seep and slither toward me at the top table - bringing their glasses and music with them of course - we will clear our vocals and let them have it - straight between the ears.'

The losses of W. Bro's Freddie Lowe and Ralph E. Ball were heavy blows to the lodge. Their names were conjoined again during Ralph's year when Mrs Della Lowe donated the late W. Bro. Freddie's electric organ to the lodge.

In 1979, W. Bro. Vic Trytel as Master, a proposition to cease the supply of wine was, thankfully, defeated although the membership subscription was raised from £25.00 to £42.00. It is perhaps the hallmark of W. Bro. Geoff Dowding's Treasurership that his recommendations, not only carefully researched, carefully outlook the future so that since that time, no fears of deficits have arisen. While it is far too detailed to re-print here, there is in our records an analysis dated 22 May 1979, of the cost per member of every possible item

of lodge expenditure, ranging from "Subscription to Upminster Hall Association", at 0.06p per member, to the "Average cost of meal", at £4.29 per member. The same piece of paper is used to analyse the 1981 budget, when subscriptions were raised to £44.00 for a full member, showing that meals had risen in cost to £5.50 per head. (5½ pounds in 1981, 5½ shillings in 1938.)

Thus, we arrive at 1980, the year of W. Bro. Derek Rawson as Master. By the end of 1979, the membership (53) of the lodge had declined to but four more than it had been 30 years ago in 1950. The decline continued with the sad death of Julian Bunney in 1980. Bro. Julian had suffered from epilepsy all his life but had bravely encountered the ceremonies. He had moved to Norfolk where he had been an assiduous church-warden. On his death, a tablet was raised in the parish church of Martham to which the lodge contributed. (Julian's father, P.J.W. Bunney, left his Provincial Grand Lodge apron to W. Bro. Frank Lodge who still wears it.) In 1980 also, the lodge heard of the death of W. Bro. Ronnie Hill, who had been Secretary from 1969-78.

One has to draw the line at some point and the current author draws it at 1980. There is no reason for this except to say that from around 1980 onwards, the third generation of the lodge takes over. By 1980, Trevor Larkin had become Secretary; Ron Hutchinson, Assistant Secretary; Arthur Brown ADC and George Draffan, Almoner. Geoff Dowding had been Treasurer since 1976 and with the passing of Bert Milner in 1977, there were no founders left.

It is always as well to end an era on a point of optimism for the future. St Laurence is a lodge of hope and of love and it behoves the author to charge the current generation with the fulfillment of the continuing life of the lodge - to dedicate himself, a member of the fourth generation, with his contemporary brethren, from W. Bro. Bob Self to Bro's Jack Wilks, Bert Gillam, Peter Cracknell, Chris Pyne, Derek Rose, Albert Farrow, Ken Cownden, Graham Mackenzie, Les Berry, John Waite, John McKerrow, Len West and Mark Morgan, to the future of St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511.

A new spring

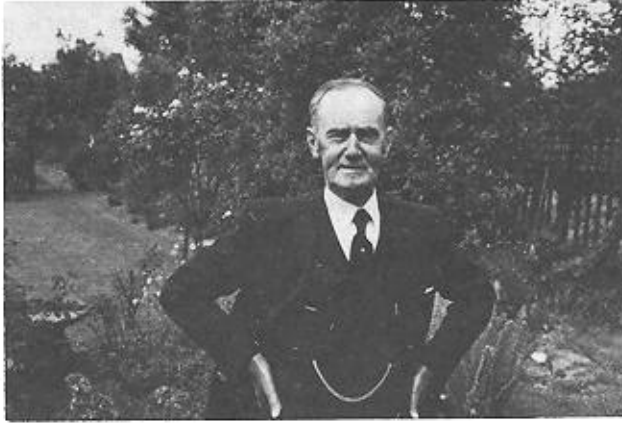
1980-1984 have seen eight initiates and one joining member - Bro. John McKerrow who enjoyed a first in the form of a most pleasant joining ceremony - and the decline in membership has halted. While in 1980, the Treasurer reported a 20% increase in the cost of catering and a 50% increase in the rental of the hall, no increases were reported in 1981 or 1982. Inflation has declined and with it, one hopes, the difficulties of distant brethren retaining contact.

One such distant brother, A. V. Dowding Jnr, became Master in his Canadian lodge in 1980 and in January 1981, a "presentation of an occasional table, some glasses and a bottle of sherry was made to W. Bro. D.A. Thomas ... as an appreciation of his services for many years as Organist of the lodge." W. Bro. Dave was first appointed Organist in 1947. As this history was in the last stages of proof reading, the sad news arrived of W. Bro. Dave's death just at the time that the brethren were hoping that he would recover from the eye trouble that had plagued him in recent years.

The Master who presided over that presentation was W. Bro. Frank Parker whose Ladies' Festival was held at the Heybridge Country Club. He installed W. Bro. Bill West as Master in 1982. Bill West's year was a most successful year financially as well as in all other respects. The Treasurer's report of January 19, 1983 tells that "subject to audit 1982 had a surplus of income over expenditure of £168.50 and the benevolent fund balance was £815.21. There were no outstanding dues for 1982. The Robin Trust Fund was gradually increasing and was now £792.66."

W. Bro. Bill installed W. Bro. Ray Berry as Master in 1983. W. Bro. Ray's year will be remembered for many things, not the least of which being the series of events at Quack's Farm, as his home became known, which helped to raise the extraordinary sum of £2,023 for the Master's list of that year. Ray installed perhaps St Laurence's most witty after dinner speaker, W. Bro. Phil Rose, our fiftieth Master whose toasts at Ladies' Festivals (since 1982 at West Lodge in Upminster) and at the festive board have long been star turns rivalled only perhaps by the stand-up comic routine performed by Bob Self at Ray Berry's Ladies' Festival.

Thus we arrive at the present, 1985, and the installation of our 51st master, W. Bro. Robert Hugh Self, on our 50th birthday. The next chapter in the history of St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511 should be left to our historian on the occasion of the installation of our 101st master, 50 years on.



Bob Harper in June 1959



Bob Self in June 1984

And not by eastern windows only
When daylight comes, comes in the light
In front the sun climbs low, how slowly
But westward, look, the land is bright.

The ancestry of St Laurence Lodge

Our mother lodge is the Ingrebourne Lodge No. 3345, consecrated on 25 February 1909. The mother lodge of Ingrebourne is the St John's Lodge, No. 1343, warranted in 1870 and consecrated in 1871. Although nowadays, its name is written with the abbreviation "St", its petition uses the full form "Saint". Its founders consisted of 5 farmers, 2 corn merchants, a clerk and a "clerk in holy orders" and the petition reads (in part): " ... we pray for a warrant of constitution, empowering us to meet as a regular lodge at the King's Arms Hotel, Grays, Essex ... " written not on a form but on a large and beautiful sheet of parchment. The Master designate of St John's was Henry Sandfield, a corn merchant, of the Vitruvian Lodge No. 87, its SW designate was the Rev. James Henry Bridge of the Royal Navy Lodge No. 429 and its JW designate was Richard Nicholls, a clerk, also of the Vitruvian Lodge. Grays has always had a larger population than Upminster. In 1871, it had 2,800 inhabitants and it had grown to 13,500 in 1901. Its rural nature is, however, shown by the occupations of the founders of St John's Lodge. The lodge still meets in the Grays area, at the Masonic Hall in Thurrock.

The petition of the St John's Lodge is supported by its mother lodge, the Priory Lodge No. 1000 which in 1870 was meeting at the Middleton Hotel in Southend. The petition of the Priory Lodge, written in bold copperplate on blue paper, is dated 28 January 1864 "for a lodge to be held at the Ship Hotel in Southend." The Priory Lodge was the first lodge native to Southend. There is another St Laurence connection with the Priory Lodge in that Bro. C.W. King (not to be confused with Charlie King) joined St Laurence on 9 March 1940, being a member of the Priory Lodge.

For the mother lodge of the Priory Lodge, we go deep into masonic history to The Lodge of True Friendship, now No. 160, the second oldest in the Province. W. Bro. Buck, in his history of masonry in the Province of Essex, devotes a fair amount of space to this historic lodge.

"The first act of Bro. Wix as Provincial Grand Master was to sanction the transfer of a 'London' lodge from Stratford to Rochford. It was the Lodge of True Friendship, No. 210, founded as No. 380 at the Crown and Thistle, near Tower Hill under a warrant dated 4th December 1766. After several moves eastwards, it met at the George Inn, Stratford Broadway in 1800. Falling into difficulties, it was acquired by some brethren anxious to establish a lodge at Rochford who purchased the furniture and regalia for £20 and agreed to settle its outstanding arrears with Grand Lodge." (25)

Were the Lodge of True Friendship warranted originally under the constitution of the Antient Grand Lodge, it would be easy to understand this purchase. At the end of the 18th century, during the war between France and England, several pieces of legislation were passed, the last of which, in 1799, known as the Unlawful Societies Act, forbidding meetings of societies "the members whereof ... shall take or in any manner bind themselves by any ... oath or engagement." The revolution had occurred in France and republicanism was also becoming a movement in England. Tom Payne had published *The Rights of Man* and societies such as the London Corresponding Society, rightly or wrongly, were seen as hotbeds of revolution and as being in collusion with other societies on the Continent whose aims were republican. The law would have prevented the continuance of masonry and the Duke of Atholl, Grand Master of the Antients, was instrumental in obtaining the ruling that the law would not apply to existing Masonic Lodges. However, the law did effectively prevent the formation of new lodges until it was revised in 1817. During this period, the Grand Lodge of the Antients 'sold' warrants of defunct lodges to brethren seeking to set up new lodges so overcoming the problems of the legislation. The 1969 Prestonian Lecture by W. Bro. J.R. Clarke discusses this topic.⁽²⁶⁾ Until 1966, when this legislation was nullified, Secretaries of lodges had to make annual returns of membership to the Clerk of the Peace which has given rise to comments that Masonry is strictly speaking illegal. Such comments are, of course, misguided and based upon insufficient research.⁽²⁷⁾

However, the Lodge of True Friendship was not an Antient Lodge but a Modern Lodge and thus while this may be an isolated instance of such action under the constitution of the

Premier Grand Lodge, the picture is not clear. Reading the lovely early pages of the 1801 minute book of the lodge, it would appear that the lodge may have bought the equipment and settled the debts with Grand Lodge but not actually have "bought" the lodge. The phrase "regularly transferred" is used, with what meaning it is not clear, and it appears that there may have been only one member of the lodge prior to its "regular transference", the Master, RWM W.T. Lowe. (28) Whatever the truth of this, the Lodge of True Friendship survived the decline of Freemasonry between 1827 and 1832 by when there were only four lodges in the Province of Essex and has received eight numbers in its history. In 1853, it had the honour of having Provincial Grand Lodge meet under its banner when it was meeting in Southend, of which W. Bro. Buck quotes a description as "that handsome town of 2,000 settled inhabitants, a fashionable watering place with its 1½ mile wooden pier from which steam vessels plied daily to London." Founded ten years before Thomas Dunkerley was appointed the first Provincial Grand Master of Essex, the Lodge of True Friendship celebrated its Bi-centenary in 1966 in the presence of the Deputy Grand Master the RW Bro. the Rt Hon. the Earl Cadogan.

Thus, to summarise our ancestry: **1935** St Laurence Lodge No. 5511, **1909** Ingrebourne Lodge No. 3345, **1871** St John's Lodge No. 1343, **1864** Priory Lodge, No. 1000, **1766** The Lodge of True Friendship No. 160.

Appendix 2

St Laurence or St Lawrence Lodges of the English Constitution

St Lawrence Lodge No. 43 (Provincial) was warranted on August 1, 1820 to meet "at the House of Bro. Thomas Graham" in Richibucto, Northumberland County, New Brunswick, Canada. Warranted under the Atholl (Antient) Provincial Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, it made returns until 1826. Richibucto is a town on the eastern coast of New Brunswick, facing the Northumberland Strait and Prince Edward Island.

St Lawrence Lodge numbered **640** in 1894, was warranted to meet in St Lawrence Hall, Great James Street, Montreal, Quebec in 1854. It was consecrated in the same year and is now No. 14 on the list of the Grand Lodge of Quebec. (Brethren will be aware that the river that flows from the Great Lakes of Canada to the Atlantic is called the St Lawrence.)

St Lawrence Lodge with the 1863 series **No. of 1516**, warranted, 20 October 1874, to meet in Alton in Hampshire at the Swan Hotel in the High Street. The warrant was never taken up and the lodge was erased in 1878.

St Lawrence Lodge No. 2078 - Scunthorpe, warranted 28 November 1884, consecrated 10 February 1885 and celebrates its centenary as we celebrate our fiftieth anniversary.

St Laurence Lodge, No. 2330 - Pudsey, warranted 28 September 1889, consecrated 17 December of that year.

St Laurence Lodge, No. 2724 -	Northfield	Warranted in 1898
St Lawrence Lodge, No. 3550 -	Ramsgate	Warranted in 1908
St Lawrence Lodge, No. 5928 -	Stroud	Warranted in 1943
St Lawrence Lodge, No. 6042 -	South Shields	Warranted in 1945
St Lawrence Lodge, No. 7227 -	Runcorn	Warranted in 1952
St Lawrence Lodge, No. 8205 -	Caterham	Warranted in 1967
St Lawrence Lodge, No. 8629 -	Marlow	Warranted in 1974

Appendix 3

The list of lodge equipment

The main body of the text dates the list of lodge equipment as before 1936 and as almost certainly part of the calculation of the cost of creating the lodge. The reasoning for this is that the handwriting of the minutes from August 1934 to October 1935 is different from the meetings which follow directly on, the first of which is dated March 1936. Since W. Bro Harrison took over as secretary at the end of 1935, in that Bro. West wished to go forward, the writing is almost certainly that of Bro. Ernie West, first secretary of the lodge. Further confirmation of the date is in the line, "Ballot box and balls". The lodge has never used black and white balls but beans, the original 1935 ones being still in use today. Thus the list probably refers to intended purchases. If the list can be dated before the consecration, it does give a nice indication of prices. We have attempted to reproduce it here as closely as possible to the original.

List of Lodge Furniture			
Bible and cushion	app 5/5/-		
Square and Compass	" 30/-		
Wardens Columns	" 3/3/-		
Wardens Triangle Rough & Perfect Ashlars		Settled	
" Emblem of Office i.e. Level & Plumb Rule (corrected) Line		settled	
Gavels & Sounding blocks & Maul	app 30/- (crossed through) 2/2/-		
Tracing Boards	from 4/4/-		
D.C. & A.D.C. wands	Settled		
Deacons	Settled		
Box of Working Tools inscribed	5/5/-	P. Wheatley	
Sword and Poignard	2/2/-		
Third Degree Sheet	2/2/-		
Cable Tow			
Ballot Box & Balls	2/2/-		
E.A. & F.C. Apron	17/6	2 each	
2 Hoodwinks			
2 pr Slippers			
Set of Books	5/5/-		
Charity Box			

The facing page is a list of Regalia which indicates that the cost of Collars was 15/-, of Jewels 10/- and of Gauntlets 45/-. It is noted that the IPM's Collar and Jewel was donated by W.Bro. Harrison. This list appears to support the idea that the pages were written before 1936 in that it appears to show Bro. V. Wallace as J.W., Bro. A. Edwards as S.D. and Bro. Ball as J.D., offices that they held in the first year of the lodge.

Membership of the lodge

St Laurence Lodge grew steadily, even during the war years, to reach its high point of membership in 1967 when it had 76 members. It then declined, rather more rapidly, to its recent low point of 48 in 1982. The reasons for the decline are obvious from the following table. During the first 25 years, the lodge suffered the death of 10 brethren. During the second 25 years, it "stood in silence for departed merit" for no less than 35 brethren. The lodge had aged.

Compounding these sad but natural events, the lodge lost 25 members through resignation or exclusion between 1972 and 1982. Several of these brethren had moved away from the district and were on the country list and no doubt the onset of high inflation, and the consequent rise in fees were major factors. Brethren will recall that inflation ran at an annual average of over 15% between 1972 and 1980, peaking at 24.1% in 1975. (It was 1.1% in 1960.) The subscription for full membership stood at £7.7.0 (£7.35) in 1969. By 1980, it had risen to £44.00 - a rise of no less than 598.6%. The non-dining subscription stood, in 1969, at £2.12.6 (£2.62). In 1980, it stood at £15.50 - a rise of 591.6%. In January 1970, the GP committee had proposed a reduction of non-dining fees from £2.12.6 to £2.10.0 but were overruled by the lodge which voted in an increase to £3.0.0. The GP minutes, following that event state:

"... there was an indication that this increase had affected the numbers of ND members who had not as yet paid their annual subscription."

Deficits were experienced in 1971, 1972, 1974 and outlooked for 1975 and 1976.

Clearly the lodge had many initiates and joining members in its formative years. After all, that was a major reason for its foundation. It also participated in the general rise in interest in the craft after the war. However, in later years, due perhaps to the fact that we have but four meetings a year (many other lodges have five or more) and due to proper caution on the part of General Purposes Committees, one or two initiates per year has been the norm.

While comparisons on such a subject are less than totally meaningful, brethren might like to note the following:

Average membership of lodges:

meeting in Romford	1934 - 85.7	1982 - 56.6
meeting in Hornchurch	1934 - 48.0	1982 - 58.5
meeting in Essex	1939 - 71.3	1982 - 58.5*

Some of the lodges that once met in Romford and Hornchurch meet now in Chingford and Hutton. The rest now meet in Upminster.

There were 143 Essex lodges in 1939 and 289* in 1982 (202% of 1939). There has been a large increase in membership of the craft in Essex (10,195 in 1939 - 16,914* in 1982, 165% of 1939) but the greater increase in the number of lodges has meant that average membership has declined. There has been an overall decline in Essex membership since 1975 of 6.6%, due perhaps to the inflationary factors described earlier. It may be that fewer brethren have multiple lodge memberships in that the decline, if any, in initiations in England as a whole is marginal.

* The 1982 figure here excludes two lodges, viz. Essex Installed Masters, 736 members and Essex Provincial Stewards, 97. On the chart following, † indicates deaths, the year being that in which the lodge was informed. The 1984 entries are correct only to the date of writing.

Membership History

	Initiated	Joined	†	Resign	Members year end	Fidelis ad Mortem
1935	3	3	1	-	19	Bro. Reader
1936	4	-	-	-	23	-
1937	1	-	-	2	22	-
1938	2	1	-	-	25	-
1939	3	3	-	-	31	-
1940	1	1	-	-	33	-
1941	2	1	-	1	35	-
1942	1	-	-	-	36	-
1943	1	-	-	2	35	-
1944	1	-	1	-	35	Bro. H.H. Holden
1945	2	1	-	-	38	-
1946	5	2	-	1	44	-
1947	2	1	-	2	45	-
1948	2	2	-	2	47	-
1949	1	-	2	-	46	Bros West, Ramsay
1950	3	1	-	1	49	-
1951	5	-	-	-	54	-
1952	2	3	1	1	57	Bro. Roberts
1953	1	-	1	1	56	Bro. Wheatley
1954	3	-	-	-	59	-
1955	2	1	-	-	62	-
1956	3	1	1	-	65	Bro. Dimmack
1957	4	-	-	-	69	-
1958	1	-	1	-	69	Bro. Foster
1959	1	-	1	-	69	Bro. Blanche
1960	1	-	1	1	68	Bro. Harper
1961	3	2	-	-	73	-
1962	1	-	-	2	72	-
1963	2	-	1	-	73	Bro. A.V. Dowding Snr
1964	1	-	1	-	73	Bro. A. Edwards
1965	1	2	2	-	74	Bros Wallace, Bassett
1966	2	1	2	-	75	Bros Prater, Chitty
1967	1	2	2	-	76	Bros Bunney, Young
1968	1	-	3	-	74	Bros Presslie, Gibbons, Barker
1969	1	-	2	1	72	Bros Howe, Watkins
1970	2	-	1	-	73	Bro. R.A. Ball
1971	2	-	2	-	73	Bros Harrison, Bingham
1972	1	-	2	4	68	Bros Hutchinson, Armstrong
1973	1	-	1	1	67	Bro. Claxton
1974	1	-	1	4	63	Bro. Ames
1975	1	-	1	1	62	Bro. Mitchell
1976	1	2	1	3	61	Bro. J.S. Edwards
1977	2	-	3	4	56	Bros Milner, Gover, Cumming
1978	1	1	3	1	54	Bros Ingle, Lowe, Wingate
1979	1	-	1	1	53	Bro. Crabtree
1980	2	-	2	2	51	Bros R.E. Hill, J. Bunney
1981	2	-	3	1	49	Bros C. King, Butler, Drew
1982	1	-	-	2	48	-
1983	2	1	1	-	50	Bro. R.E. Ball
1984	1	-	1	-	50	Bro. Thomas

The question of the obligations

The question of altering the wording of the penalties in the obligations was first raised in the Board of General Purposes of Grand Lodge in 1955. Nothing came of this but in January 1964 a paper, entitled "The Masonic Penalties" was delivered to the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, the premier lodge of research, by W. Bro. J.R. Rylands. As a result of this, RW Bro. Bishop Herbert, Provincial Grand Master for Norfolk, raised the matter at the Quarterly Communications of Grand Lodge in June 1964. He argued for change on both religious and ethical grounds and said:

"I think that almost all of us would welcome a removal of this cause of stumbling which is, incidentally, as we all know, also a potent weapon in the hands of the adversary."

RW Bro. Bishop Herbert argued for a permissive variation:

"In place of the words 'under the no less a penalty on the violation of any of them of having ...', the words 'ever bearing in mind the ancient penalty on the violation of them, that of having ...' "

W. Bro. Harry Carr, then Secretary of Quatuor Coronati, argued for the word "traditional" in place of the word "ancient" in that the penalties have never, to anyone's knowledge, been administered nor are they that ancient in the history of Freemasonry. His paper, "The obligation and its place in the ritual" (reprinted in *Harry Carr's World of Freemasonry*, Lewis Masonic, 1984, p367 ff) shows that the earliest manuscripts that mention penalties at all are late 17th century and then only for the E.A. degree. Penalties for the other degrees are later than this. The obligations in the early manuscripts carry no penalties attached.

Grand Lodge approved the permissive variation and while the MW the Grand Master expressed his own views in support of RW Bro. Bishop Herbert's resolution, Grand Lodge did not then, and has not since *ordered* change. (Details from "Penalties in the obligations" in *The Freemason at Work*, Harry Carr, Lewis Masonic, 6th edition 1981.) In 1979, the MWGM referred again to the topic and said:

"At my initiation ... I remember feeling a very definite sensation of repugnance when I came to repeat the penalties clause in its old form ... an oath which is scarcely practical and certainly barbarous.... I am not going to dwell upon the reasons why there has been some reluctance to adopt the new version, but I would urge all lodges that have not done so to look again at the alternatives put forward by Bishop Herbert. ... its moral implications are to my mind much more important than any considerations of preserving tradition."

St Laurence has not made any changes although the new (1975) edition of *Taylor's Handbook of Craft Masonry* carefully shows alternate versions to the "traditional" penalties. The lodge has preferred to keep to its old forms, even though the lodge was founded to use Taylor's, which in 1935, was a relatively new working (first edition 1908). Perhaps it is something that should be revisited.

Appendix 6

The 1982 Carol

Tune
Good King Wenceslas

Good King William West looks out
O'er our feast this evening
Wondering what its all about
Why his chest's still heaving.
Brightly shines his moon tonight
And his heart beats faster
For at last he's earned the right
To become our master. (chorus)

Not so long ago was he
Merely peppermint steward.*
Now from five foot three
Roars a voice that's feared.
Hither slaves and stand by me
Sing with throats dilated
To our guests who now should be
Brahms and Liszt and blo-ated. (chorus)

Pin your ears back to your head
Take off your bi-focals
So this foul noise may be heard
From our straining vocals.
For with full sincerity
All our guests we welcome
To these hallowed halls you see
Covered with velvet curtain. (chorus)

Freely flowed the wine tonight
Turkey sure was dandy.
Christmas pudd. all burning bright
Smothered in blazing brandy.
Now we pray and surely trust
You've enjoyed our gathering.
Hope you're full and fit to bust
And the seams are bursting. (chorus)

Teachers in our lodge do preach
Gospel of Saint Taylor's.
With such standards high to reach
Some of us are failures.
In our work today we tried
For a super finish
But our pre-cep-tors all cried
'What a load of rubbish'. (chorus)

Here inside this havened isle
It's been our endeavour
To bring you joy and make you smile
Happiness full measure.
If you think that truth to tell
It should have been much better
We suggest you go to!
And take your halo wid-yer. (chorus)

Brethren of Saint Laurence now
Rise and be upstanding.
Drink to friends who we avow
Graced our Christmas meeting.
Having you with us today
Brought us joy full measure.
Trust you'll come another day
For our lodge's pleasure. (chorus)

(W. Bro. Ralph Ball, 1982)

** Bill West once kept a newsagents and confectioners and was famous for supplying extra strong mints at the LOI*

The Lodge of Instruction

The major part of the life of any lodge that has its own LOI is of course carried on there in an informal sense for it is at the regular weekly meetings that members meet each other most often. Hence a full study of the history of the St Laurence Lodge of Instruction would be as long, if not longer than the history of the lodge itself. In this Appendix, just the highlights are recorded.

The St Laurence Lodge of Instruction arose from The Upminster School of Instruction. To be precise, it was the Upminster School of Instruction which gave rise to the St Laurence *School* of Instruction; it was not known as a "L" of I until after the war. As the main body of the history describes, before our lodge was founded there was only one lodge in Upminster, the Ingrebourne Lodge, which was and is an. Emulation lodge. There were clearly a number of brethren living in the area who belonged to other lodges which used Taylor's working. It was to satisfy the need to learn, practise and rehearse Taylor's that the Upminster School of Instruction was founded in the latter part of 1932, some two and a half years before the consecration of St Laurence Lodge.

The date of the first meeting of the Upminster School of Instruction is not recorded but its second meeting was on November 25 1932 at the Mason's Arms in Upminster. Present at that meeting were six brethren including Ernie West. At that meeting, the name of the school was decided and the venue of future meetings agreed, the Bell Hotel, a venue that was used thereafter until 1962 when the meetings were moved to the Masonic Hall in Deyncourt Gardens. The Bell Hotel was subsequently pulled down. Since that time, the LOI has met in various places, notably in the late 1970's and early 1980's over two shops owned by W. Bro. Phil Rose who generously provided the venue so enabling the subscription fees to be donated to charity.

The LOI minute book lists on its third page the founders and the joining members of the Upminster School. There were 10 founders including Ernie West, Vic Wallace and Dave Ramsay and among the early joining members are listed W. Foster, W.H.J. Prater, R. Harper, C.H. Claxton, A. Edwards and, 35th from the 36 on the list, A.V. Dowding. It is clear that the school served the needs of the brethren from a wide range of lodges. Five of the brethren were from Laindon Lodge, 5253, 4 from Rainham Lodge 3790, 2 from St Barnabas Lodge 3771, 2 from Fleet Wood Lodge 4556 and one from each of Hatfield Lodge 3190, The Lodge of Unity 183, Cripplegate Lodge 1613, Zodiac Lodge 2615, Metropolitan Lodge 1507, Ixion Lodge 2501, Prittlewell Lodge 4896, Golden Rule Lodge 1261, Walthamstow Lodge 2472, Royal Victorian Jubilee Lodge 2184, Wolsey Lodge 1656, (a Twickenham Lodge). Queen Alexandra Lodge 2932, Valentines Park Lodge 4412 and Sackville Lodge 1619, (a Sussex Lodge). Two other lodges appear as well although it is difficult to make out exactly which ones. One appears to be the Langthorne Lodge, No. 1421 although if it is this lodge, its number is given incorrectly as 2870. Another could be a St Catherine's Lodge but it is shown with the number 5736, a major anachronism in that St Laurence, for example, with the number earlier than this (5511), was still two years away from being founded. If it is a St Catherine's Lodge, it could be the London lodge No. 3743. Of these lodges, 10 or 12, allowing for the unclear entries, were London Lodges which gives further evidence for the need for another Upminster lodge as our founders stated in their petition.

The first mention of a Preceptor occurs in the minutes of the 6th meeting, when W. Bro. Foster combines this task with the office of IG, something which Vic Wallace exceeded on the 3 March 1933, when there were only four brethren present and the minutes record "... Bro. Wallace being called upon to act in the offices of S & JW, IG, Sec. & Preceptor, the duties of each being carried out in such a manner (as) called for admiration." The fact that the description of him acting as Senior and Junior Warden is almost certainly a mistake for Senior and Junior Deacon, only adds to the admiration. The school did however rapidly get going and such a low number of attendees was not repeated until one evening very much later when due to a snow storm only two brethren managed to attend! The minutes of the annual general meeting of 26 January 1934 include the Secretary's report: "... the membership had grown from 7 to 32, the members representing 17 lodges and the average

attendance was 10 members per meeting." That meeting re-elected W. Bro. W. Foster as Preceptor, W. Bro. W.G. Bunch as Treasurer and Bro. E.A. West as Secretary. The record shows the occurrence of a successful Ladies' Festival in that year with W. Bro. D. Ramsay as President.

A few words describing W.G. Bunch may be in order. He appears to have been a fairly significant figure in local masonry. He lived in Upminster, having moved, one presumes, from Hertfordshire in that his mother lodge was the Hatfield Lodge No. 3190. One of the founders of the Upminster School of Instruction and one of its most stalwart supporters, he remained very active even after the school became known as the St Laurence School of Instruction, serving as Treasurer from 1932 to 1934, Secretary in 1936 and as Deputy Preceptor from 1937-1939. He was elected Preceptor in 1940. The earliest records of the founders' committee of St Laurence show that he took an active part in the creation of the new lodge and that he did at first intend to become a founder. This he never did although he did become a founder and first Master of the Engayne Lodge, No.6831 in 1949. It is interesting to note that the Engayne Lodge arose from the efforts of a group of brethren attending another Upminster Lodge of Instruction, the Venture-Adventure LOI No. 2 attached to the Venture-Adventure Lodge No. 6022, of which W. Bro. Bunch was Preceptor.

The 57th meeting of the school on 23 March 1934 was visited by W. Bro. H.H. Holden and the attendance at the 74th meeting is somewhat significant. It consisted of Bros Wallace, Martle, Prater, Dowding, Edwards, Ball, Ramsay, West and Harper. These brethren were joined at the next meeting by Bros Foster, Wheatley and Milner. By this time, the brethren who were to become the founders and early joining members of St Laurence Lodge were the most frequent attenders at the Upminster School. The minutes of the 84th meeting, 14 December 1934, in recording the proposed future business indicate that the meeting of the school planned for 11 January 1935 had been put "at the disposal of the new lodge." The Annual General Meeting of January 4 1935 records the decision that the School would apply to the St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511 "for permission to work under their warrant as the St Laurence Lodge of Instruction." The last meeting of the Upminster School was a General Meeting on 11 January 1935 which re-elected W. Bro. Foster as Preceptor, Bro. E.A. West as Secretary and elected W. Bro. P. Wheatley as Treasurer. (W. Bro Bunch had accepted the post in 1932 on a temporary basis!) W. Bro. W. Foster had served as Preceptor for the two years of the Upminster School's existence and Bro. E.A. West and W. Bro. W.G. Bunch had served as Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the same period. Bro. V. Wallace had been elected Deputy Preceptor in 1934.

The first meeting of the St Laurence School of Instruction was on Friday 25 January 1935 which would have been the 85th meeting of the Upminster School. Dues were set at 6d (approximately 2p in today's currency) in 1935 and remained at this level until 14 September 1962 when they were raised to 1/6. This was an increase of 300% but what is more surprising to the modern reader is that they should have remained so low and for so long.

The school continued actively until the outbreak of war. During the war years, the St Laurence School of Instruction ceased to meet, the instruction of the brethren being taken up by the Little School of Instruction, no doubt as several lodges in the area joined together in difficult times. The St Laurence School of Instruction had its last meeting before the war time on 31 May 1940 and next met on 7 September 1945. This re-opening was not necessarily straightforward in that at a meeting on Thursday 2 August 1945 held to decide if the School should recommence, the matter was "vigorously discussed" and approved by a majority "after many members had stated their views." The fact that the minutes record such statements indicate that what might seem a simple enough decision was not uncontroversial. The minutes of the post war LOI indicate that a sum of 29 guineas, collected during the war, had been paid to masonic charity in the name of St Laurence by the Little School. When the school re-opened it was under yet another new name for Grand Lodge sanctioned the change of title to the Lodge of Instruction in 1945.

Brethren will be accustomed to the phrase 'officers in rotation', used when the Master for the following week states what he wishes to rehearse and with whom. Nowadays it tends to have no real meaning, indicating only that the officers will be chosen from the brethren

attending that next meeting. However, it used to mean that the officers for the following week would be those 'promoted' from the officers of the previous meeting: JD becoming SD, JW becoming SW. Thus seated in the SW's chair for the first meeting was Bro. Prater, who 'by rotation' took the chair for the next meeting on 1 February 1935.

The St Laurence School and Lodge of Instruction have always welcomed brethren from other lodges who find attendance at the LOI of their own lodge difficult for one reason or another. It is after all this very reason that gave rise to the Upminster School of Instruction and thereby the foundation of St Laurence Lodge. For example on 29 October 1937 there were 18 brethren present at the meeting, 10 of whom were from other lodges. This tradition is carried on nowadays by the very welcome presence at the LOI of W. Bro. Ernie Hahn who was installed WM in the Mithraic Lodge, No. 6396 in 1984.

The life of the lodge itself and the excellence of its working owes so much to the officers of the LOI. Indeed without the LOI it is difficult to see how the lodge would retain its character and its standards. Naturally not every officer has been able to attend every meeting and other brethren have frequently acted in office. In thanking those who took office, one should not forget those 'acting' officers. While it is not always desirable to single out individuals, three brethren have given extraordinary service to the LOI; W. Bro. Bert Milner was Preceptor for no less than 25 years (1952-77), W. Bro. Bob Harper was Secretary for 22 years (1937 to 1959) and W. Bro. Cyril Self, assisting Bob Harper from 1952 to 1959, has been Secretary for 24 years (1960 to the present).

Officers of the St Laurence School and Lodge of Instruction

Preceptors

W. Foster 1935-36
V. Wallace 1937-39
W. Bunch elected in 1940
V. Wallace 1946-51
H. Milner 1952-77
F. Lodge 1978-present

Secretaries

E. West 1935
V. Bunch 1936
It Harper 1937-40 & 1946-59
(C. Self assisting from 1952)
C. Self 1960-present

Deputy Preceptors

V. Wallace 1935-36
W. Bunch 1937-39
E. West elected in 1940
E. West 1946
H. Milner 1947-51
T. Hutchinson 1949
W. Drew 1951-52
A. Dowding snr 1953-54
R. Ames 1956-57
A. Presslie 1958-67
A. Claxton 1959-66
E.H. Pryer 1967-75
F. Lodge 1969-77
G. Dowding 1973-present
T. Larkin 1976-present

Treasurers

P. Wheatley 1935-40
W. Foster 1946-48
C. Claxton 1949
T. Hutchinson 1950-58

Russell Hill 1959-61
E.H. Pryer 1962-66
F. Thurlow 1967-81
D. Rawson 1982-present

Members of St Laurence Lodge, No 5511.

Note: * indicates present member. For details on *founders* see pages 5 to 7.

Ames, R.	Initiated 1946, Master 1955, died 1973.
*Andrews, F.	Initiated 1938, war service, Steward 1956-57, regular officer RAF.
Armstrong, N.C.	Initiated 1969, died 1972.
*Ball, H.R.	Son of R.A., initiated 1961, Secretary 1965-68, Master 1976.
Ball, R.A.	<i>Founder</i>
Ball, R.E.	Son of R.A., initiated 1963, Master 1978, Charity Steward 1982 until his death in 1983.
*Banks, G.J.	Initiated 1957, Master 1973, moved to Suffolk, country member 1978.
Barker, F.E.	Joined 1965 from the Iguaddad Lodge, No. 653 (of which he was a PM) and the Philbrick Lodge, No. 2255, (Aged 68) Chaplain 1968, died 1968.
*Barrell, A	Initiated 1935, Master 1944, ADC 1959-1966, country member 1967, acting ADC 1967, Chaplain 1978 to present.
Bassett, J.	Initiated 1939, Master 1950, Treasurer 1964-65, died 1965.
Benfield, C.C.	Initiated 1956, Steward 1964-68, country member 1973, left lodge 1977.
*Berry, L.	Son of R., initiated 1981.
*Berry, R.	Initiated 1972, Master 1983, Provincial Grand Steward 1984.
Blanche, A.E.	Initiated 1938, Master 1947, (lived Brighton), acting IPM 1949, virtually constant attendance until his death in 1959.
Bingham, W.	Initiated 1944, Master 1954, ever present until his death in 1971.
Bridger, J.R.	Son-in-law C.T. King, initiated 1958, moved to Yorkshire, country member 1968, attended 1975, resigned 1978.
*Brown, A.	Initiated 1951, Master 1967, Asst Sec. 1970-77, ADC 1979 to present.
Bull (Brunell), R.D.	Initiated 1959, Steward 1966-69, resigned 1972.
Bunney, J.E.	Son of P.J., initiated 1970, Steward 1975-1977, moved to Norfolk, country member 1978, died 1980.
Bunney, P.J.	Initiated 1936, Master 1945, (lived Sussex), country member 1958, died 1967.
Butler, A.	Initiated 1948, Master 1961, country member 1972, died 1981.
Campion, H.	Joined from Hope Lodge, No. 413 (of which he was a PM) in 1952, aged 50, IG 1963, country member 1966, moved to Dorset, resigned 1975.
Chamberlain, H.T.	Initiated 1951, country member 1956, Master of the Vigilantes Lodge, No. 7264 (Cleethorpes) 1981, resigned St Laurence 1982.
Charles, R.C.	Joined 1965, from the Magnum Opus Lodge, No. 5641 (aged 63), lived I.O.W., country member 1973, resigned 1981.
Chitty, E.G.	Initiated 1952 (age 55), moved to Glos., country member 1956, died 1966.
Claxton, C.	Joined 1935, Master 1943, Steward 1947-1950, ADC 1958, DC 1959-1963. Treasurer 1965-1966, Acting IPM and DC 1967-1968, country member 1970, founder member of Upminster Hall Lodge, died 1973.
*Cook, G.	Initiated 1947, Master 1958, Asst Sec. 1961-1964, Secretary 1964, Almoner 1967, country member 1971.
Cook, C.A.	Initiated 1967, moved to Croydon, country member 1970, left lodge 1973.
Cooper, W.	Initiated 1948, country member 1958, a bank manager, his job took him to Crawley, Hayes and thence to Bognor Regis, resigned 1969.
*Cornish, K.C.	Joined 1976 from Beehive Lodge, No. 2809, country member 1978.
*Cownden, K.L.	Initiated 1980, J D in 1985.
Crabtree, R.N.	Joined 1967 from Victoria Falls Lodge. No. 5327 (Northern Rhodesia), country member 1977, died 1979.
*Cracknell, P.V.	Initiated 1977, Steward 1980 to present.

Cumming, GA.	Joined 1952 from Perseverance Lodge, No. 1643, country member 1969, died 1977.
Dell. K.	Initiated 1936, left lodge around 1939.
Dimmack, A.	Joined 1947 (age 65) from Neptune Lodge, No. 419 (Scottish Constitution), died 1956.
Dowding, A.V. (Snr)	<i>Founder</i>
*Dowding, A.V. (Jnr)	Son of A.V. (Snr), initiated 1954, emigrated to Canada 1957, country member, Master of Westminster Lodge No. 174, British Columbia.
*Dowding, G.J.	Son of A.V. (Snr), initiated 1954, Master 1969, ADC 1973-75, Treasurer 1976 to present
*Dowling, P.G.	Initiated 1951, Master 1966.
*Draffan, G.E.	Initiated 1964, Almoner 1979 to present.
Drew. W.	Joined 1939 from St Columbia Lodge, No. 729, Master 1949, country member 1962, constant attendance 1974-81, 60 years in masonry 1978, died 1981.
Edwards, A.	<i>Founder</i>
Edwards, J. S.	Brother of A., initiated 1935, war service, Master 1951, founder Upminster Hall Lodge, No. 7573, 1958, its secretary to 1964, died 1975.
Elliott, C.	Joined 1935, Steward 1935, resigned 1937.
*Farrow, A.C.	Joined 1978 from Onward and Invicta Lodge, No. 2912, SD in 1985.
Foster. W.H.	<i>Founder</i>
Gibbons, L.F.J.	Initiated 1957, died 1968.
*Gillam, A.W.J.	Initiated 1976, SW in 1985.
Goodchild, I.	Initiated 1953, lived Beckenham, Kent, resigned 1976.
Cover, E.	Initiated 1950, Master 1963, died 1977.
Hall, A.J.	Initiated 1965, country member 1971, resigned 1976.
Halliday, J.	Initiated 1947, Master 1959, country member 1965, left lodge 1972.
Harper, R.	<i>Founder</i>
Harrison, E.	<i>Founder</i>
*Hill, J.D.	Initiated 1955, Master 1972, country member.
Hill, L.A.	Initiated 1951, left lodge 1974.
Hill, R.E.	Initiated 1950, Master 1964, Asst. Sec. 1968, Secretary 1969-1978, died 1980.
Hill, R.H.	Initiated 1957, Chaplain 1964-67 (churchwarden at All Saints Church, Cranham for 14 years), PM of Holland-on-sea Lodge, No. 6639.
Hobbs, C.	Initiated 1937, left the lodge around 1942. Letter from his family on his death in 1958.
Holden, H. H.	<i>Founder</i>
Holden, H. R.	Son of H.H., joined 1946 from Ingrebourne Lodge, No. 3345, Chaplain 1946, honorary member 1952.
Horne, L4.	Initiated 1956, left lodge 1972.
Howe, D.C.	Joined 1956 from the Maritime Lodge, No. 569, Victoria, Australia, (age 28), died 1969.
Hutchinson. T.C.	Initiated 1936, Master 1946, Organist 1954, Treasurer 1959-1963, country member 1966, Chaplain 1969-1970. died 1972.
*Hutchinson, R.	Son of T.C., initiated 1954, Master 1970, Asst Sec. 1979 to present.
Ingle, W.	Initiated 1940, Master 1952, Almoner 1968-1973, died 1978.
Jackson, J. H.	Initiated 1951, (age 22) country member 1960, lives Lincolnshire, founder of the Lodge of Old Clee, No. 8697, (warranted 11 Feb 1976).
Keating, J.	Joined 1945 from Doric Lodge, No. 3672, Steward 1948, resigned 1951.
Kemp, C.	Initiated 1939, Steward 1946-1947, country member 1954, resigned 1976.
King, C.T.W.	Son-in-law of R. Harper, joined 1948 from Walthamstow Lodge, No. 2472, Master 1962, country member 1978.
King, C.W.	Joined 1940 from Priory Lodge, No. 1000, country member 1949, left lodge around 1955.
*King. G.C.	Son of C.T.W., initiated 1971.

*Larkin, T.C.	Joined 1961 from the Martello Lodge, No. 7121, Master 1975, Almoner 1977, Asst Sec. 1978, Secretary 1979 to present.
Linstead, R.H.	Initiated 1962, left lodge 1977.
Livy, L.A.J.	Initiated 1956, country member, left lodge 1974.
*Lodge, F.L.	Joined 1952 from Norman Lodge, No.3502, Master 1968, ADC 1970-1972, DC 1972 to present.
Lovell, A.F.	Joined 1955 from Layton Lodge, No. 2626, resigned 1972.
*Lovell, R.F.	Son of A.F., initiated 1967, Steward 1965-67, country member 1971.
Lowe, F.J.	Initiated 1960, Master 1974, ADC 1976-78, died 1978.
*Lowe, L.V.	Joined 1950 from Beach Lodge, No. 2622, Steward 1957-1959, country member 1960.
*Mackenzie, T.G.	Initiated 1981, IG in 1985.
*McKerrow, J.G.	Joined 1983 from Barking Abbey Lodge, No.4542.
Mali, C.	Initiated 1941, country member 1957 (lived South London, then Perthshire), resigned 1974.
Milner, H.	<i>Founder</i>
Mitchell, W.	Initiated 1939, Master 1953, died 1975.
*Morgan, M.	Son-in-law of P. Rose, initiated 1984.
Morrish, P	Initiated 1935, Steward 1938, resigned 1943.
Nield, N.J.F.	Joined 1967 from the Royal Victorian Jubilee Lodge, No. 2184, SD 1977, Steward 1978-1981, resigned 1982.
*Parker, F.	Initiated 1970, Master 1981.
*Parrish, A.G.	Initiated 1949, Steward 1954-56, country member 1967.
Peacock.W.	Joined 1962 from the Rosemary Lodge, No. 6421 (Newcastle upon Tyne), moved to Bury St Edmunds, country member 1970, resigned 1980.
*Powell, S.R.	Initiated 1980, country member 1982, moved to Australia.
Prater,W.	Joined 1935, war service, Master 1948, died 1966.
Presslie, B.E.B.	Joined 1946 from the Eagle Lodge, No. 19 (Mexico), Master 1956, DC 1964 until his death in 1968.
*Pryer. E.	Initiated 1950, Master 1965, Treasurer 1967-1975, country member 1979.
Purnell, A.	Initiated 1942, IG 1948, resigned 1948.
*Pyne, C.J.	Initiated 1978, JW in 1985.
Ramsay, D.	<i>Founder</i>
*Rawlings, D.	Initiated 1955, Master 1971, Chief Steward 1976 to present.
*Rawson, D.S.	Initiated 1968, Master 1980.
Reader, W.R.	<i>Founder</i>
Roast, R.	Initiated 1963, Steward 1969, Moved to Western Australia, 1970, resigned 1977, Master of United Press Lodge, No. 134, Western Australia 1983.
Roberts, F.	Initiated 1946, Steward 1950-1951,died 1952.
*Rose. D.P.	Son of P., initiated 1979, Steward 1981 to present.
*Rose, P.	Initiated 1973, Master 1984.
*Self, C. E. R.	Son-in-law of R. Harper, joined 1948 from Walthamstow Lodge, No. 2472, Master 1961, Almoner 1963-66 and 1974-76, DC 1969-72.
*Self, R. H.	Son of C.E.R., initiated 1974, Master 1985.
Shingler, P.	Joined 1939 from Equator Lodge, No. 4337, Kisumu, Kenya (English Constitution) country member 1950, resigned 1960.
Smith, D.	Initiated 1945, emigrated to Canada in 1947, resigned 1949.
*Stammers, D.1.	Initiated 1966, Steward 1972.
Stannard, E.C.	Initiated 1952, country member 1956, moved to Norwich, resigned 1979.
Stokes. W.	Initiated 1941, resigned 1947.
Thomas, David	Initiated 1945, Master 1957, Organist without equal, died 1984.

*Thorp, J.	Initiated 1977, Steward 1980-1981, country member 1984.
*Thurlow, F.V.C.	Initiated 1961, Master 1977, Charity Steward 1978-81, moved to Australia.
Tidbury, H.	Initiated 1946, resigned 1948.
*Trytel, V.L.	Joined 1966 from Brixistone Lodge, No.7069, Master 1979, Charity Steward 1983 to present.
Upton, A.V.	Brother of E.W.J., Steward 1938, country member 1951, moved to Torquay, resigned 1962.
Upton, E.W.J.	<i>Founder</i>
Vaughan, L.E.	Initiated 1966 (age 54), IG 1976, country member 1976, moved away and resigned 1979.
Walker, J.	Initiated 1946, country member 1957, resigned 1962.
*Waite, J.	Initiated 1983.
Wallace, V.	<i>Founder</i>
Watkins, F.	Initiated 1943, Steward 1948-1949, died 1969.
*West, D.J.	Son of W.D., son-in-law of R.E. Ball, initiated 1982.
West, E.A.	<i>Founder</i> . Also maker and donor of Deacons, DC's and ADC's wands and the rough and perfect ashlar's still in use.
*West, L.F.	Nephew of W.D., cousin of D.J., initiated 1983.
*West, W.D.	Initiated 1971, Master 1982.
Wheatley, P	<i>Founder</i>
*Wilks, J.C.	Initiated 1975, Steward 1979 to present.
Willis, J.	Joined 1938 from Tynemouth Abbey Lodge, No. 2971, country member for some years, moved to Cheshire, resigned 1950.
Willoughby, F.	Initiated 1946, Steward 1951, 1956-1957, country member 1961, resigned 1977.
Wingate, B.G.	Initiated 1961, Steward 1968-1974, died 1978.
Young, H.	Joined 1941 from Temperance in the East Lodge, No.898, died 1966.

Notes

- (1) The railway in 1885 was the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway Co. In 1912 it became the Midland Railway and the L.M.S. in 1923.
- (2) See Appendix 1 for details of our ancestry.
- (3) The commencement of the Upminster Garden Suburb in 1905 has been mentioned and many of the central domestic roads of Upminster were built about the same time. Choosing, once more, a road with a masonic connection. Engayne Gardens was built in 1907, with the same title as a later Upminster lodge, taking its name from the family of those who held Gaines Manor between 1208 and 1367. Deyncourt Gardens was built in the same year, taking its name from a later family who held the same manor from the 14th to the 16th centuries.
- (4) Quotation from the petition of the Ingrebourne Lodge. W. Bro. Hill, the Secretary of the Ingrebourne Lodge, remembers that this hall was in Hill House which became the Minster House School on what was then known as Upminster Hill (now St Mary's Lane), opposite the windmill. Later, in 1909, the Chapel was referred to as the Masonic Hall. Apparently, Ingrebourne Lodge had the opportunity to purchase the building in 1909 but declined, it being agreed "that the financial circumstances of the lodge did not merit such action being taken." There is now an empty patch of land where it stood. (Details from the souvenir booklet of the Ingrebourne Lodge on their 50th anniversary.) The school was still active as such in 1959.
- (5) W. Bro. Hill speaks of a wait to pass through the chair of up to nearly twenty years in the 1930's. In 1927, Ingrebourne Lodge, having reached 70 members, decided to initiate only 2 candidates per year. In October 1930, it discussed the idea of raising the initiation fee to 20 guineas when membership reached 75. The proposition was deferred.
- (6) It may be that this establishment was located in what is now London Road, close to the western end of the High Street in Romford. A public house known to have been called the Sunn was established there in 1667. The Sun which once stood next to the Romford Station was a much younger establishment. A rummer is a drinking glass and there are several splendid examples on display in the museum at Freemasons' Hall.
- (7) Because of the re-numbering in 1813, when the Grand Lodges of the Antients and Moderns finally were reconciled, Hope and Unity is now shown as third on the list of Essex Lodges. In fact, the Lodge of Good Fellowship, No. 276, which appears fourth is older, warranted in 1789. Hope and Unity would have been an Antient lodge and Good Fellowship, a Modern lodge.
- (8) *Provincial Grand Lodge of Essex. 1776-1976*, W.Bro. Keith S. Buck, PAGDC, PPSGW, *passim*.
- (9) One must be careful with dates. Data in the *Masonic Year Book* and the *Essex Freemasons' Handbook* is always date of warrant. Consecration can often be the following year. Centenaries are calculated from consecration and not from warrant.
- (10) The Chafford Lodge draws its name from the Chafford Hundred, the area east of the Liberty of Havering, across the Ingrebourne River, which stretched roughly from South Weald to the Thames and included Bentham, Grays, Upminster, Ockendon, Cranham, Warley and Brentwood.
- (11) Gibbon, in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, reports that Valerian himself suffered an equally ghastly fate, almost as if in retribution. He was perhaps the only Roman Emperor to surrender to a barbarian invader and the legend of his treatment by Sapor, the conquering Persian monarch, is that his neck was used as a footstall each time that Sapor wished to mount his horse. The further details need not be described here.
- (12) Taped conversation 14 January 1984.
- (13) "In replying to the toast of the Consecrating Officers, Bro. Col. J.I. French Prov. S.G.W. congratulated the founders for their souvenir which took the form of a pocket wallet. He added that as it was empty at the moment he personally would endeavour to fill it." *The Freemason's Chronicle*, 16 February 1935.
- (14) W. Bro. Cyril was a visitor. Had he been in masonry one year more, he would have been a founder. Having been in the craft for only two years however, he could not do so. W. Bro. Bob Harper, his father-in-law and he were members of the Walthamstow Lodge, No. 2472 which is therefore a sort of "Aunt" lodge. Bob Harper was Master of Walthamstow in 1929 and Cyril Self, Master in 1949. Bob's grandson, Cyril's son, Bob Self was installed as Master of Walthamstow Lodge on 27 March 1982.
- (15) "The practice by the Master of 'taking wine' at dinner becomes detrimental to congenial conversation unless kept to a minimum, and should be confined to Brethren in their Masonic status ... Challenging and cross toasting should not be permitted." *Report of the Board of General Purposes*. 6 June 1956.
- (16) G. Richards, *Ordeal in Romford*.
- (17) A.J.P. Taylor. *History of Britain, 1914 - 1945* Oxford University Press and Pelican Books. 1975- from which most of the historical data in this section is taken.
- (18) Taped conversation 14 January 1984.
- (19) Ditto

- (20) W. Bro. Frank Lodge describes it as looking rather like a scout hut - no proper ceiling and asbestos sheets on the roof.
- (21) Taped conversation 14 January 1984.
- (22) *England in the Twentieth Century*, David Thomson, second edition ed. Geoffrey Warner, Pelican Books, p 257. Much of the historical data in this section is from this book.
- (23) *Upminster Hall Lodge, No. 7573, The first twenty-five years, 1958-83*, W. Bro. John F. Helliard, PPJD.
- (24) As reported in the 1960-61 *Essex Freemasons' Handbook*, there were 10 lodges meeting in Upminster with an average membership of 48.2. The largest lodge was Ingrebourne (79) and the smallest, and youngest, the Lodge of Remembrance, No. 7674 (14). In Romford, there were 19 lodges (average membership 68.7) and in Hornchurch a further 9 mainly more mature lodges (average membership 77.1).
- (25) W. Bro. Buck, *op. cit.*
- (26) 'External Influences on the Evolution of English Masonry, in *The Collected Prestonian Lectures, 1961 - 1974*, published for Quatuor Coronati Lodge by Lewis Masonic. pp 113.116.
- (27) That this was not an empty piece of legislation may be shown by the expulsion of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, six labourers who were "charged ... for administering and causing to be administered ... a certain unlawful oath and engagement ..." and sentenced to transportation for seven years. However, a general petition brought their release and return two years later. This famous conviction was brought in 1834, under the Act mentioned. *The Illustrated History of Britain*, Sir George Clark (ed. by Dr J.N. Westwood) published by Octopus Books, 1982, which reprints the record of the assizes, p 218.
- (28) Grateful thanks are extended to W. Bro. D.O. Smoothery, PPSGD. Secretary and PM of The Lodge of True Friendship, who kindly allowed the present writer to examine the minute books and gave much helpful advice.

General Note: Much of the historical data on Romford and Upminster in general is taken from E.G. (Ted) Ballard. *Our Old Romford and District* and *Our Old Upminster and District*, published by Swan Libraries, Upminster and from *The Victoria History of the County of Essex*, Vole VII and VIII, Oxford University Press.

Mottos: that on the dedication page is from Ruth 1:16; that on page 21 is from a sonnet by Shakespeare and that which closes the history, page 28. is from Arthur Hugh Clough, *Say not the struggle naught availeth*.

Postscript

Writing this history has been a most enjoyable experience. Not only has it taught me a great deal about St Laurence Lodge, No. 5511, it has also taught me a great deal about masonry in general. The research has taken me into subjects that perhaps I would not otherwise have discovered both in the history of the craft and perhaps more importantly into the meaning of the ritual. If this volume has sometimes seemed overlong or has brought in details that may seem to be of only tangential interest to St Laurence Lodge itself, then the blame must lie in the fascination that the research into such a subject exerts upon the author. I have sometimes had to stop myself from turning into a particular avenue because exploring it would have meant that the history would never have been finished and I have sometimes had more of a problem with what to leave out than with what to include. I hope that the lodge will accept and approve of my work.

Of course, no history of this kind is the work of one man. Not only did I have the notes of W. Bro. Ralph Ball to work from but I have been helped enormously by brethren of St Laurence Lodge. I would like to give a special mention to W. Bros Arthur Barrell, Cyril Self and Ron Hutchinson as well as to the members of the St Laurence Lodge Fiftieth Anniversary Committee, W. Bros Trevor Larkin, Geoff Dowding, Frank Lodge and Bob Self.

David West
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