



**A CONCISE HISTORY OF
WORCESTER LODGE No 280
1790-1990**

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INTRODUCTION

In compiling this Concise History of the Worcester Lodge No 280, which is always referred to by its members as “Two-Eighty”, I am conscious of the debt that I owe to several brethren who in the past gave papers on various aspects of the Lodge History, which have been preserved attached to the Minute Books. The first eighty years of the Lodge were amply and expertly covered by W.Bro. C C Whitney Griffiths in his “Reminiscences of Worcester Lodge of Freemasons, No 280 and of other Masonic Institutions in the Province and City of Worcester”, which was published by the Lodge for presentation only in 1870. He followed this two years later by publishing a Supplement, which among other Rolls, includes a complete list of members from 1791 to 1872 with details of their professions, Masonic history or remarks where available. The extensive history published in the newspaper at the Centenary Celebrations was brought up to date by W.Bro F G Underwood, but it is a sad omission that the history commissioned by the Lodge in the Nineteen Thirties from his son, W.Bro F J Underwood, was never published, although he reported that it had taken him 30 years to write it!

I have thought it proper to call this a concise History, as by its brevity it may serve to be at once rather more interesting for general use and at the same time draw the attention of brethren with a historical interest to some of the events in the last 200 years which have merited studies in depth or which may in the future warrant further investigation.

In an attempt to relieve the boredom that would be inevitable from the monthly records of the Ceremonies or other standard business of the Lodge, I have tried to show how valuable our Minutes are as an unbroken record of 200 years of Masonic, Social and Charitable history in the City of Worcester. It is a record to be proud of and brethren of the lodge, may be gratified with the labours herein recorded, the Ceremonies, the Traditions, and the Customs with which are familiar today have been passed down to us, virtually unaltered, and it should likewise our duty to pass them to future members of ‘280’.

There is, for me, no more fitting way to conclude this Introduction of the Concise History of the first two hundred years of the Lodge than closing words of Whitney Griffith’s Reminiscences:-

“Esto Perpetua”

J L Talbot P.A.G.D.C., P.P.S.G.W.

Lodge Historian

1990.

IN THE BEGINNING, 1790-1840

Preserved in the records of Worcester Lodge is the first authority for its foundation. This an interim warrant, number 573, dated 2nd October 1790 and is signed by William White, the Grand Secretary of the Most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons (The “Moderns”). Attached to it is a letter from Bro. W Lingham dated London October 3, 1790 stating that he had obtained this Warrant “with some difficulty in consequence of the Deputy grand master being out of town, and the Grand Master having paid the debt of nature”. Within a week the D.G.M. had obviously returned , for on 9th October 1790, the Warrant number 574 was signed by P.Parker, D.G.M. and witnessed by William White. Nine Brethren are named therein as follows:

Richard Harris, Moses Leviston, Daniel Brookholding Curwen, Thomas Smith, Joseph Dillon, Richard Hill, John Barnesley, Edward Connop and John Whitaker.

W.Bro C.C.W. Griffiths, writing in his ‘Reminiscences of Worcester Lodge’ (1870), and who carried out the most detailed researches on the early history of the Lodge, states that “only three can be traced as resident in Worcester, viz., Joseph Dillon, Gentleman, the reprobate John Barnesley (his name was struck from the Warrant) and the Land Lord of the Rein Deer Inn, Brother John Whittaker”. He believed that W.Bro Richard Harris was one of two brothers practising as Solicitors in Stourbridge. Daniel Curwen was also a Solicitor in Kidderminster.

Unfortunately the first Minute Book of the Lodge proceedings was mislaid sometime in the middle of the last century (1800s), but Bro Griffiths was luckily able to preserve many manuscripts, lists and accounts from his early period, which together with other printed sources, do allow us to reconstruct some of the Lodge’s business up to 1820, when the first surviving Minute book commences.

The Consecration meeting was fixed for Thursday 19th May 1791 and the Bromsgrove Lodge, St Johns, No 397, WM Richard Wattel, sent their Tyler, Bro Court with “jewels etc.” On loan. They were also able to advise on a Preacher, suitable Sermons and Hymns.

The Lodge also began to acquire its own furniture. In March it bought pedestals, columns and wands For £9,5s1d and later a bible for £2,2s (still in use today), Secretary’s books etc and a pair of globes for £4,4s.

The Consecration was reported in the Worcester Journal (25 May, 1791) as follows: “The Worcester Lodge of Free and Accepted Mason, No 574 held at the Rein Deer Inn, in this City, was regularly consecrated on Thursday 19th instant, after which, the Members in regular order proceeded to St Martins Church, when an excellent Sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. Bro. T Heynes from the 10th Chapter of St Pauls Epistle to the Hebrews and 24th Verse: ‘And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good Works’. They afterwards returned to the Rein Deer Inn, where they dined, and spent the evening with the utmost harmony and decorum, and many local and constitutional toasts were drunk”.

In June, Bro Moses Leviston was elected WM and he was succeeded Bro Richard Mugg Mence, a Barrister, in December. Bro Richard Moseley (He was a Hop Merchant and died in July 1842, only two years before Bro C.C.W. Griffiths was initiated) was installed in June 1792 and again in December. This was probably the last time that the installations of WMs took place at six monthly intervals (a custom common among 'Ancient' Lodges) and may have been a contributing factor towards the sudden dormancy of the Lodge for four years due to the lack of suitably qualified brethren who were local residents.

However by May 1797, Bro Rev T Heynes, who had preached the Sermon at the Consecration, was elected WM and on 23 December 1797 the Grand Secretary, W.Bro. William White wrote the WM of the Lodge (since 1792 renumbered 483) "I am happy to find you have a prospect of your Lodge increasing and hope that will be able to contribute to the Funds by this time twelve-months". John Collinwood, a Surveyor, was WM in 1798 (joined 1791) and in 1799 William Thomson was installed for the first time. He lived at Henwick and already being D.P.G.M. of Worcestershire occupied the Master's Chair from 1799 to 1806, again in 1809/10 and 1814 to 1817. Under his steady rule and that of John Collingwood (1811), John Allen (1807/8,1812) and John Bennett (1813) the Lodge flourished. In 1801 there were 19 members, by July 1803 the returns show 46 members and at December 1814 there were 37.

The Lodge was renumbered 526 at the Union of the two Grand Lodges ('Ancient' and 'Modern') in 1813. Our records show many interesting examples of Ancients workings and customs both before and after this Union, even though Worcester Lodge was a Moderns Lodge. This was quite common at the time. Among the charges laid against the Moderns by the Ancients were that they disliked Royal Arch and the other Higher Degrees, and they ignored the festivals of the two St. Johns. The Ancients regarded the working of the Lectures as essential and used the esoteric form of installation of a Master. The Moderns generally had no Deacons (until 1809), but if they did, it was due to the Ancients influence. The Worcester Lodge certainly respected the Festivals of St John from the beginning (it still celebrates in December at the installation meeting).

On 31st December 1800, Edward Harper receipted an account to W.Bro Collingwood for a 'handsome Past Masters jewel, both sides engraved' for 3 Guineas. Bro Harper was Deputy Secretary of the Ancients and became a joint Grand Secretary after the Union. A list of officers and members dated April 1801 gives no Deacons and in the first surviving Minute Book from 1820 onwards there are several records of working of the Lectures.

W.Bro. C.C.W. Griffiths states that W.Bro. John Allen, who was initiated in 1802 and first became WM in 1807, opened the first Royal Arch Chapter in May 1808. There are no surviving records of this Chapter, but the Regalia and some furnishings, including tracing boards, were purchased by the Lodge in February 1828 from Bro J Dent of Sudeley Castle, who had acquired them from the widow of John Allen in 1819. (Bro J Allen had died in 1813). They are now in the Provincial Museum.

Copies of the notice of the Inaugural Meeting of United Grand Chapter and the Abstract of Laws and Regulations for the order of Royal Arch Masons were sent to the WM in 1817. Also preserved in the records is a letter from WM of the Lodge at Henley-in-Arden, St Johns, No 583, dated June 21, 1792 in the margins of which, in a different hand, are some sketches or “doodles” which include squares, diamonds, triangles, ovals etc and the letters S.I., H.K.T., and H.A.B.. Bro Griffiths concluded that the working of the Royal Arch ceased with the death of W.Bro. Allen and was not revived until the foundation of St Wulstan’s Chapter in 1844.

In April 1801, W.Bro Thomson’s portrait was painted at the expense of the Lodge from which it can be seen that at this time and until the Union in 1813, the brethren wore white aprons and the officers white sashes and collars. Bills for such items have been preserved.

Dues returned to Grand Lodge during this period were £10,1s in 1802, £8 in 1804, £8,14s6d in 1805,1807 and 1808, £7,5s in 1809.

In May 1809, the Lodge of Industry at Bridgnorth, with whom the Worcester Lodge appears to have had a close visiting terms, made all the members of the Lodge honorary members of their Lodge.

By 1815 patterns of the new light blue aprons had been obtained and material procured for the sashes and collars of the officers of the Lodge.

In May 1818 the Lodge of Mercy and Truth, No 703 was opened in Evesham. Bro John Emms Lane, a silversmith of Evesham, who had been initiated into the Worcester Lodge in 1813, was a signatory to the petition for this Lodge. This Lodge only survived until 1831, although Worcester Lodge later came into possession of some of its furnishings which were subsequently donated to the Abbot Lichfield Lodge No 3308.

In 1820 the Lodge numbered 27 members and from this time onwards we are able to follow the business of the lodge from the Minute Books. During the next eight years, the Lodge met thirteen to eighteen times annually, although on several occasions so few brethren were present that it was unable to open. Frequent mention is made of “Sections of the lecture of the first degree being worked and the ceremonies Passing and Raising were only performed after proposition, which was recorded in the Minutes, and at convenience of the Worshipful Master”.

The last record of attendance of W.Bro William Thomson is in March 1820, when he worked the Lecture. He had occupied the Chair from 1814-1817 and thereafter, the chair was occupied by 5 brethren, John Severn Ballard being WM on six occasions. He had been initiated in 1805 and was a local tea dealer and grocer, with premises opposite the Guildhall. In 1825 and 1826 Henry Deighton was WM. He was a bookseller, stationer and binder and co-proprietor of the Berrows Worcester Journal. Together with Bro Dr Adam Dods (WM 1819/20) and Thomas France, a Solicitor, these brethren governed the progress of the Lodge until the arrival of the imposing figure of John Brooke Hyde (initiated in 1827). He was an increasingly influential local Solicitor, later acting over the merger of the Royal Porcelain

Works with the Chamberlain Works in 1840 and was WM in 1830, 1831, 1834 and 1846. He died in 1855.

In 1820, under the Mastership of Dr Adam Dods (initiated in 1810 and raised in 1816 by W. Bro Thomson) began the long saga of the Lodge's efforts to secure the appointment of a Provincial Grand Master and to establish a Provincial Grand Lodge. The details of these more properly belong to the history of Provincial grand lodge, but since they lead to the near erasure of the Lodge in 1838, they have an important bearing on the Lodge history. The Minutes regretfully are often couched in a diplomatic form which inevitably raises more questions than they answer.

In December 1820 the Lodge being desirous of holding a Provincial Grand Lodge wrote to the Grand Secretary enquiring if the appointment of a D.P.G.M. was recorded, and if so his name. This proved to be the Lodge's own Past Master, Bro Thomson, who when approached, huffily replied that he had held the post for eighteen years. Had Dr Dods been doubtful of Bro Thomson's credentials? If so, the result was that Bro Thomson never attended the Lodge again.

In September 1822 Bro Dods, now styled D.P.G.M., called Provincial Grand Lodge to meet at the Rein Deer Inn, Worcester on 2 October. The three Lodges, Worcester, Faithfull (Kidderminster) and Mercy and Truth (Evesham) duly attended but Worcester refused to endorse proposals to pay into a Provincial fund for regalia. Their refusal at a second meeting in 1824 may have led to Bro Dods' resignation as D.P.G.M. in 1825, although he had retired from the Lodge in December 1823.

In 1826, the death of the Provincial Grand Master, John Dent, the Secretary had spotted the obituary in the newspaper, wrote again asking for a replacement for both the Prov. G.M. and the Dep. Prov. G.M.. Again the Lodge was frustrated and appears to have devised a method of demonstrating its annoyance by the drastic (and totally unconstitutional) step of intermittently withholding payment of its dues to Grand Lodge. Indeed in 1831, it paid over £19, 10s6d but by 1838, after prolonged correspondence, Grand Lodge lost patience and the Lodge was given until the next meeting of the Board of General Purposes to come into line, or be erased. The Lodge was well advised by a Bro. Henry Udall, a Barrister friend of WM Charles Bedford, a local Solicitor, who was a member of the Board, and after lengthy debate agreed to comply.

Having failed in its efforts, the Lodge made no further attempts to promote a Prov. G.L., but in 1843 co-operated with Harmonic Lodge (Dudley) in that Lodge's efforts, which eventually led to opening of Provincial Grand Lodge in 1847.

THE FIRST GOLDEN AGE, 1840 – 1890

During the nine years between 1836 and 1844, the Lodge experienced a remarkable expansion. 60 brethren were initiated and 7 became joining members. The period of over twenty years of peace since the end of the Napoleonic Wars had permitted an unparalleled development in the economy of the kingdom, which was to continue during the reign of Queen Victoria. The City of Worcester witnessed extensive new building schemes and its population grew steadily. Communications, which had improved with the coaching system, were to be greatly enhanced by the arrival of the railways.

Even before it had finally made its peace with Grand Lodge over the dues issue, the Lodge had become more active. Although this cannot be attributed to the efforts of any one brother, it is probable that it was the effect of the influx of a number of brethren whose business talents and social connections were of great importance locally, coupled with their more than average abilities in matters Masonic. Foremost among these brethren must have been John B Hyde, a prominent Solicitor, who was initiated in 1827. He served as Worshipful Master in 1830 and 1831 (and was elected again in 1834, but apparently not installed). He was called upon during the next few years to assist in the ceremonies. His rapid progress to the Chair was typical of his successors. Thus it took 3 years for Thomas Gwinnell, Solicitor (WM 1832 and 1833), 4 years for Charles Bedford, Solicitor (WM 1837), 5 years for Harvey Shelton, Banker's Clerk (WM 1839), 3 years for Henry Eginton, Architect (WM 1842), 3 years for Joseph Bennett, Hosier (WM 1840) and 4 years for C C W Griffiths, Silk Merchant (WM 1848).

With such an expansion of membership, the Lodge was forced to find new premises and on 24 June 1842 it held its first meeting at the Bell Hotel (Bro Webb, Proprietor). At the October meeting, Past Master Charles Bedford passed ten apprentices and assisted in initiating two other brethren. In December, the Worshipful Master signed the petition for a new Lodge in the City. (To become in 1846 Semper Fidelis Lodge No 529). At the installation meeting there were forty four members and seventeen visiting brethren present.

During 1844, Bro C C W Griffiths presented "a new set of Hiram's" and there is a delightful tongue-in-cheek minute recorded for 3 October 1844:-

"The WM (Joseph Bennett) announced that a deputation had waited upon him, with a request that he as Master of the Lodge would lay or fix the Corinthian Capital which surmounts the spire of Saint Andrew's Church in this City, the repairs and part rebuilding of which had just been completed by our brother Stephens – in his official capacity as Master, he was aware that he could not comply with their request without obtaining a Dispensation for that purpose, the propriety of which he much doubted as he must request the attendance of the Brethren, and the great height of the spire, and the peculiar nature of the scaffolding would have been attended with considerable danger from the number of persons collecting upon it- it was therefore in his private capacity that he had performed the Ceremony, in which he was assisted by the Senior Warden,

the Secretary and Master of Ceremonies, the attendance of the Junior Warden being unavoidable absence from Worcester”.

Among the records of the Lodge, there is a slim volume entitled “The Worcester Lodge No 349 Relief Book”, which commences in March 1844 and records details of small sums of money dispensed to poor or distressed itinerant Masons, together with details of their Lodges, their circumstances and their destinations. There were about 30 applications a year to the Receiving Officer for such relief. He was authorised to give up to 3s at his discretion and his records give an interesting glimpse into the sadder side of life. Many applications were for ship-wrecked mariners on their way back to their home port, others for unemployed brethren in search of work, sometimes travelling with their entire families. An entry for 2 January 1858 reads “John Stirling, “Smith”, St Johns Lodge No 230, Coldstream, Scotland, from Scotland to Bristol, in search of employment Lord Frederick Fitz-Clarence, initiated in the above Lodge and became GM of Scotland, 1s”. Refugee ex-soldiers from the Polish or Hungarian armies appear from 1850 onwards (after the failure of the Hungarian rising), indigent Americans ruined by the “Recent war” in 1862 and 1864.

Some brethren appeared so frequently that the Receiving Officer eventually refused to relieve them further and with foreigners he clearly had great difficulty in understanding their English or was suspicious of their integrity. Our present Tyler says that he still has the same problem and is occasionally is faced with imposters!

In 1835 and again in 1838 the Lodge had continued to correspond with Grand Lodge in its efforts to obtain a Provincial Grand Lodge for the Province. These again failed, but an initiative begun in 1843 by the brethren of Harmonic Lodge then No 313, Dudley, reached fruition by the opening of a Provincial Grand Lodge with WBro W Roden, of that Lodge, as Deputy Provincial Grand Master on 17 August 1847. At the first meeting, the following members of Worcester Lodge were appointed: WBro Harvey Eginton, Prov J.G.W.; Bro Rev WL Isaac, Prov G. Chaplain; Bro FT Elgie, Prov Grand Treasurer; Bro C C Whitney Griffiths, Prov Grand Secretary; Bro RR Harris, Prov G.D.C.; Bro BL Stable, Prov A.G.D.C.; Bro WD Lingham Prov G.Sw.B.; WBro H Shelton, Prov G. Organist; and WBro WH Davies, Prov G. Tyler.

In 1848, WBro Bennett was appointed Provincial Senior Grand Warden and in 1851, WBro JB Hyde became Deputy Provincial Grand Master at the same that WBro HC Vernon, P.S.G.W., P.D.P.G.M. of Staffordshire as Provincial Grand Master. He had become a joining member of the Lodge in May 1850, having recently moved to Malvern.

Thus were the desires of the brethren of the Lodge, which had been frustrated over a period of nearly twenty five years, finally realised and the Lodge is justly proud of its record of service to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcestershire of so many its members from 1847 to the present day.

Even while all this activity was going on, the brethren still found time to extend their efforts to the social scene. On 10 February 1846 the Lodge held the first Masonic Ball at the

Guildhall. This glittering event was attended by nearly four hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen of the City and County. Further Masonic Balls were held in 1851, 1859 and 1865.

A report of the 1851 Ball was printed in the Illustrate London News (8 March 1851) as follows:

**GRAND FREEMASONS' BALL
GIVEN BY WORCESTER LODGE No 349**

On the night of Tuesday Week, a splendid reunion of the Freemasons of Worcester, and their friends, took place in the TOWN HALL; and when we say that at least 560 cards were issued and accepted, whilst a greater number was eagerly sought for, and the Ball was of a strictly private character, we shall perhaps convey some idea of the extent to which the Brethren of Worcester Lodge carried their hospitality. The arrangements were excellent. The company continued to arrive from 9 to 11 o'clock. The space between the High Street and the Town Hall was enclosed by a decorated passage. From the door of the Hall this enclosed passage was continued through the Supper Room, and up the staircase to the Ball Room. The effect upon first entering this elebrated room was very striking. The room was brilliantly illuminated with wax lights. Of the jewels worn by the ladies, as well as those of the Brethren who were present in their costumes, there was a superb display. Cox's fine band from Cheltenham was stationed in the Orchestras; and the South Ante Room, in addition to the Ball Room, was devoted to Quadrilles, Polkas, Waltzes, Schottisches, etc. At about 12.30 the company descended to the Hall, where an elegant supper was served by Mr Mountford of the High Street.

The wines, which were of the finest quality, were supplied by "Brother Read" and comprised Champagne, Moselle, Sherry, etc. We should mention that the walls of the Hall were hung most tastefully under the supervision of Mr Freame, with drapery, in broad stripes of blue, pink and white. At the south end a brilliant gas illumination represented the letters W.L. (Worcester Lodge) No 349. With a splendid star between the two letters, on either side of which were hung Union Jacks. At the other end of the noble apartment, another illumination of gas displayed the letters V.R. surmounted by a Crown, underneath which was another magnificent star, likewise supported on either side by similar flags. The seat of the Worshipful Master, F.T. ELGIE, Esq., was placed under a canopy. Opposite were suspended portraits of several eminent masons of the Lodge No. 349.

The Worship Master presided, assisted by the Wardens, and Past Masters, and Officers of the Lodge. At the North End the Senior Warden's Chair was filled by H.G. Goldingham Esq. At the South End, the Junior Warden's by E.G. Stone Esq.

The guests having taken their places, the "HIRAM" of the Worshipful Master arrested attention, and the Chaplain solemnly pronounced the following Masonic Grace:

“May the Grand architect of the Universe give us grateful hearts for his mercies, and make us mindful of the wants of others.”

To which the Immediate Past Master responded “So Mote It Be.”

After the supper The Worshipful Master rose and proposed the following toasts:

“To all poor and distressed masons, wherever dispersed over the face of land and water, wishing them a speedy deliverance from all their troubles, and a safe return to their native land if they desire it and DESERVE IT.”

“The health of Her Majesty with the usual Masonic addition...’and the craft’..”

“The High Sheriff of the County ... Sir TE Winnington, bart.”

The High Sheriff, in responding to the toast, offered a few well turned complements to Lodge No. 349, dwelling, in eulogistic terms, on the magnificence they had so generously provided. Sir Thomas concluded his observations by proposing the toast of

“The Worshipful Master and brethren of the Worcester Lodge No. 340.”

The Worshipful Master having acknowledged the compliment, called upon Past Master JB Hyde, who, in an excellent speech, proposed

“The health and happiness of the Ladies who have honoured us with their presence this evening.”

The Toast, as might be assumed, was received with the utmost enthusiasm.

The following toasts were afterwards given and acknowledged in suitable terms:

“Sir H Blount, Bart”

“The High Sheriff of Gloucestershire” – (W Dent Esq of Studeley Castle)

“The Mayor”

“J Best Esq. MP”

The company, shortly after the last toast, returned to the Ball Room, and dancing resumed with renewed spirit until 4 and 5 o’clock in the morning.

We regret we have not the space for the list of guests who had the high gratification of being present at this brilliant entertainment.

The words of the Tyler’s toast are interesting, being possibly the earliest record of the traditional form used in this Lodge.

The Minute Book of the Ball Committee for 1859 has some interesting details of the arrangements for these Balls. The ‘Gas’ devices were purchased in 1851 from Lingham Brothers, Furnishing Ironmongers, by Appointment to Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, of High

Street, Worcester for the sum of £17. (W.D. and J.Lingham were both members of the Lodge), but by 1859 these had been augmented to include the letters 'V.R.', 2 'rayed' stars, a double triangle within a circle, and a shield bearing a Maltese cross. These were on hire from the Gas Company. It is hardly surprising that, with 410 persons present, among the Secretary's "experiences" recorded afterwards is the following:

"The lighting by the aid of so many gas devices at supper is productive of great inconvenience from heat, and it would be well to devise some other mode of adding to the decoration and the lighting in a manner probably as effective and less expensive."

In the same year as the first Masonic Ball (1846), WBro Bennett was installed as the first Worshipful Master of Semper Fidelis Lodge No. 772. The Lodge was presented with eight very beautiful china jugs emblazoned with the Masonic and City Arms by the Worshipful Master, Wbro R. Rising. He was succeeded as WM by WBro. J.B. Hyde, the fourth and last time he held that office before his death in 1855.

In 1849, new by-laws were adopted and recorded in full after the Minutes of the October meeting. Fines for non-attendance were fixed as follows: SW 1s, JW 3s, SD 6s, JD 6s, MC 5s, IG 5s. By 1853 Semper Fidelis Lodge was writing with the suggestion that consideration should be given to building rooms for the common use of both Lodges but it took until 1876 for this to be realised.

In 1853, the sum of 20 guineas was granted from Lodge funds for some suitable testimonial to Bro W.D. Lingham Senior Steward "for great regard and high esteem entertained by the Lodge towards him".

In November the same year, Past Master Bennett was requested to sit for his portrait, which was presented to the Lodge the following March. (PM Bennett died in 1862, when the Lodge contributed jointly with Semper Fidelis Lodge towards a memorial window in the Cathedral).

Past Master C.C.W. Griffiths was presented with a silver inkstand in December 1858 "in recognition of his services as Treasurer" and in 1861 he presented an alms box for use in the Lodge, and the Lodge received a further present of "five handsome stone bottles for spirits" from WBro A, Powell, IPM.

In 1863 the Lodge was renumbered '280'.

On 20th April 1865, the fourth Masonic Invitation Ball was held. At the close of the year, WBro C.C.W. Griffiths recorded with pride in his reminiscences of the Worcester Lodge (1870) that there were seventy three subscribing, three honorary and four members abroad. There is no mention in the Minutes that this was the year of the Lodge's 75th Anniversary (nor was there in 1840 for its 50th).

At the Provincial Grand Lodge Meeting of June 1866, WBro A.H. Royds, DPGM (joined 1856) was installed as Provincial Grand Master. In December of the same year, Wbro C.C.W. Griffiths retired after serving as Treasurer for 10 years and was later presented with an illuminated address in appreciation of his work.

In March 1876, the Lodge purchased 50 firing glasses. (The custom of using these, which must have dated from the eighteenth Century, had lapsed by the mid-twentieth Century, and was only recently been revived in the Lodge following the inspired presentation of a new set of glasses by Wbro G.D.K. Woolrych in 1989).

On 5th October 1876, at a Lodge of Emergency, the brethren celebrated the opening of the new Masonic Hall at 95 High Street, Worcester, dedicatory prayer being offered by the Chaplain, Bro Rev J Bowstead Wilson and thanks were accorded to “Mr Alderman Stallard for his aid in meeting the wishes of the Lodge respecting the alteration of the building”. These premises were to remain the Lodge’s meeting place for the next twenty one years, when it moved to St Nicholas Street.

The death of Wbro C.C.W. Griffiths is recorded in a lengthy tribute at the February meeting in 1879 and it was reported that he had bequeathed his library of Masonic books to the Lodge.

Members of the Lodge attended the re-opening of St Helen’s Church, Worcester in Masonic clothing on 20th January 1880, and in March the Lodge was presented with a silver punch bowl by Bro A.C. Hooper and a silver toddy ladle from Wbro F.B. Marsh, Wbro T.H. Lewis (WM 1877) having expressed the opinion that the Lodge should possess its own plate, presented a silver fork and spoon and his proposition that each initiate and joining brother should do likewise was unanimously carried! Regretfully this custom appears to have lapsed.

On 20 December 1884 the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Worcestershire and a Masonic address was presented at Shrub Hill Station by the Freemasons of the Province. Although the Lodge was not apparently involved directly in this, it is minuted and a copy attached to the records.

By 1887, the Lodge was engaged in discussions with Semper Fidelis Lodge over the acquisition of new premises. (These discussions ultimately resulted in the move to St. Nicholas Hall in 1897). In June, the Lodge was issued with five tickets for the meeting at the Albert Hall to celebrate Queen Victoria’s jubilee, but there is no record of which particular brethren attended.

The menu card and toast list of the Installation Banquet of 1 December 1887 has survived and shows the meticulous attention to detail given to such matters at that time. It is printed in two shades of blue and silver and the design of two pillars on a chequered pavement with a view of the City behind, together with the City Arms within the square and compasses. The menu is memorable:-

Oysters
--
Mock Turtle Soup
St Julien
--
Turbot, Lobster Sauce
Stewed Lamprons

--
 Lobster Cutlets
 Sweetbreads with Mushrooms
 Mutton Cutlets and Piquante Sauce
 --
 Boiled Chicken and Tongue
 Roast Chicken and Sausage
 Roast Haunch Mutton
 Boiled Turkey and Ham
 --
 Pheasants
 Roast Hare
 --
 Jellies
 Creams
 Pastry
 --
 Ice Pudding
 --
 Cheese Fondau and Macaroni
 --
 Cheese
 --
 Dessert

In January 1890 a Committee was formed to make the arrangements for the Centenary celebrations and this was reported in March that Grand lodge would issue a Centenary Warrant (at a cost of five Guineas) and authorising the wearing of a Centenary jewel.

The celebrations were spread over three days from 7 to 9 October and included a meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge and a Provincial Grand Lodge Banquet on Wednesday 8th.

The festivities commenced with a Soiree or ‘Conversazione’ in the Guildhall on Tuesday evening, which was attended by over 400 people. The rooms were decorated with Lodge banners and the Royal Porcelain Works Company provided two cabinets filled with their products of the late eighteenth Century and the present time. There was also a display of old Masonic aprons, whilst in the old Council Chamber, the Taylor Collection of Masonic Jewels was on view. (This had recently been purchased from WBro George Taylor, Provincial Grand Secretary, for £500), together with an exhibition of the Lodge plate and other presentation pieces. According to the Herald (11 October 1890) which reported the celebrations at great length, “charming music was played during the evening by Bro A.W. Gilmer’s bijou orchestra”. The list of those invited (but not necessarily present) included WBro Sir E.A.H. Lechmere, Bart, M.P., PGM; WBro A.F. Godson M.P., DPGM; WBro J.D. Allcroft, PGT; WBro G. Taylor ProvGSec, GSwB; WBro Dean Spence of Gloucester, PGChaplian; WBro Col Thadwell H. Clarke, Grand Secretary; WBro J.M. McLeod, Sec of RMIB, and the Provincial Grand Masters of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Bristol.

The following day, the Lodge met in the Chapter House of the Cathedral when a Provincial Grand Lodge was opened. Immediately after this, the brethren attended a service in the Cathedral at which the speaker was WBro Rev W.K.R. Bedford, M.A., Rector of Coldfield, PGChaplain. He took as his text the 25th psalm, verse 14: “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him”.

The Provincial Banquet, which was arranged by Worcester Lodge, began at 5.15pm (in order that visiting brethren “Could catch the night trains”) and during the course of the evening, the Provisional Grand Master presented bibles to the four Lewises who had carried the VSL into the Cathedral. These were Masters F.J. Underwood, A.V. Rowe, H.B. Perrins and A.F. Dutton. The usual toast list was augmented by the special toast to the WM and brethren of Worcester Lodge. This was proposed by the Provincial Grand Master and the Worshipful Master John Stallard replied.

On Thursday 9th, a special Centenary Lodge was held at 95 High Street. The Minute Book records the names of only 27 brethren present including visitors. The Provincial Grand Master took the Chair and the Warrant of 9 October 1790 and the Centenary Warrant were read. A special Centenary Jewel was presented to WBro S. Southall, Secretary (he was also Town Clerk) and WBro F.G. Underwood gave a paper on the history of the Lodge. The various visiting brethren gave their congratulations. The alms box collection realised £1,10s 6d.

In the evening, the Centenary Ball was held at the Guildhall which was attended by about 140 and thus drew the Lodge’s celebrations to a close.

At a regular meeting in December, the Junior Warden Bro Robert Clarke, gave a report of the celebrations as follows:-

“Receipts £398,7s8d, Payments £398,5s7d, balance 2s1d, which he suggested be given to the alms fund!”

The year closed with 59 subscribing members.

THE EDWARDIAN ERA AND THE GREAT WAR, 1890-1920

With the Centenary Celebrations successfully accomplished, the Lodge set off its second Century with accustomed vigour by attacking the problem of its premises once more. The lease on the High Street was due to end in 1902, but a proposal (1892) to lease the School of Art was deferred. Joint discussions took place with Semper Fidelis Lodge No 529 and in August 1897, the two Lodges moved into the Masonic Hall in St Nicholas Street, which was to remain their meeting place for the next 62 years.

The Lodge membership stood at 59 in January 1900 and its business continued in a normal and unruffled way for the next 14 years. In April, the WM reported sending a telegram of congratulations to Gen. Knollys on the escape of the MW the Grand Master, The Prince of Wales “from the most dastardly attempt on his life at Brussels”. At the same meeting, matters further afield raised their head, when it was decided to send 10 guineas to the Deputy Grand Master of Transvaal’s appeal for Relief to distress brethren in South Africa.

The death of Queen Victoria was duly recorded with a ‘profound’ feeling of sympathy and condolence felt with His Majesty King Edward VII (February 1901).

The November meeting (1902) witnessed one of those happy little Masonic events of which Lodges are proud. This was the occasion of the initiation of Alfred Rowe by his father WBro A.B. Rowe, and with HIS father, WBro Henry Rowe (ProSGW 1890) acting as Senior Warden. The Minutes states:

“Memorandum – the above is an event very rare indeed in the annals of Freemasonry and unprecedented in the records of the Lodge – three generations of the same family being represented and taking an important part in the ceremony”.

The initiate was also one of the Lewises who carried the Volume of Sacred Law into the Cathedral on the celebration of the Centenary of the Lodge in 1890.

WBro A.B. Rowe was shortly (April 1906) responsible for getting up a testimonial for Bro F.W. Knott, who served as Tyler for 27 years, was presented with a purse containing £14. At the October meeting, the death of the PGM, Sir A.F. Godson was recorded, he was a “highly esteemed member” and the Lodge was fortunate to be presented with his portrait by the kindness of his widow in February 1908.

In December 1908, the Lodge was able to send to “the newly forming Lodge in Evesham a pair of brass candlesticks and a Holy Bible which had been kept by the Lodge since Old Evesham Lodge had been dissolved”. This new Lodge is now Abbot Lichfield No 3308.

October 1912 saw members subscribing one Guinea towards the cost of a window in St Clement’s Church in memory of Bro A.W. Knott the “Father of the Lodge” and a member for 53 years and in November the Worshipful Master signed the petition for the Wyche Lodge No 3638. At the December Installation meeting, in spite of the presence of WBro W.T. Page, DPGM, the three addresses were given by three brethren of the Lodge and this occurred again in 1917. This followed the custom recorded in 1891 and 1896 when all three addresses were

given by one Past Master. Prior to this date, the Minute Books are silent as to who gave the addresses.

In January 1914, the Lodge moved firmly into the 20th Century by agreeing to contribute £1 towards the annual rental of a telephone (£6pa)!, but more serious events were about to infringe on the quiet business of the Lodge, for in September the Worshipful Master, WBro E. Franklin was called to the colours as '280' went to war.

By October the Secretary was proudly recording:

“European War

Special Note – (Brethren serving in the Army)

It is of interest to place on record, that in consequence of the European War, in which the Country is engaged, the following members of the Lodge are serving their King and Country:-

WBro Edward Franklin, WM
WBro Ernest W Larkworthy, Treasurer
Bro A Vernon Rowe, SD
Bro W.J. Hunt, IG
Bro H. Duncan Day
Bro The Lord Hindlip
Bro McClintock
Bro The Hon C.J. Coventry

And at this meeting several brethren appeared in military uniform”.

The Treasurer returned safely in 1916, the same year that Mr C.E.W. Simes aged 22, 2nd Lieut 7th Battn The Worcestershire Regiment was proposed by his father, WBro F.A.W. Simes, WM. This young man was destined for high office in Grand Lodge.

During the war, the Lodge only lost one member, Bro A.W. Isaac, who was killed in action in Picardy in September 1916, although the Senior warden, Bro J. Barnicott, lost a brother (March 1916) and WBro C.E. Moore a son (March 1918).

A directive from Grand Lodge (Sept 1915) required “all brethren of German, Austrian or Turkish birth to abstain during the continuance of the war from attending any Lodge or other Masonic meeting” seems to have had no effect in this Lodge, and domestic matters continued to keep brethren busy.

WBro C.E. Moore presented the fine silver Tyler’s cup (Feb 1915) which is used today for the Tyler’s toast, and in November, WBro C.B. Shuttleworth was appointed Prov SGW (the 18th member of the Lodge to serve te Province in that Office since 1847).

In 1917, four members attended the Bi-Centenary of Grand Lodge in the Albert Hall, whilst the Installation meeting raised 15 Guineas for the Worcestershire Prisoner of War Fund.

WBro C.B. Shuttleworth (DC) had to report his failure to trace the history of the Lodge tracing board but concluded “that in all probability the tracing board in question was one that formed part of the original furniture of the Lodge at its foundation”. This interesting little puzzle was not solved until 1977 when WBro John Brooke, PAGDC (and the 22nd member to act as Prov SGW) was able to crack the Masonic cipher which is written across the base of the board. This reads “Richard Harris, first presiding Master of Worcester Lodge No 574, dated 1790”.

1918 saw the appointment of WBro G.F. Hough as Assistant Grand Chaplain, and in October WBro J Barnicot was appointed Prov JGW (the 22nd member of the Lodge to hold tht Office). Curiously there is neither a Minute or Memorandum recording the Armistice in November, whereas in 1945 there was a special record of the end of the Second World War.

Two years later (May 1920), the first mention is made of the ‘Million Fund’ and the Lodge passed a resolution from Provincial Grand Lodge to “support the Masonic Million Memorial Fund with a view to raising of a sum equal to at least five Guineas per member, by subscription spread over five years”. There was a further poignant echo of the war in march 1921, when the Lodge approved the design of the Masonic War Memorial and gave permission for the tablet to be affixed to the North Wall of the Lodge Room. This was incidentally the first meeting described in the Minutes as a ‘Past Masters Night’.

THE SECOND GOLDEN AGE 1920-1939

After the war, '280' settled down again and enjoyed a period of almost twenty years of active Masonic business of the highest quality, enriched by the variety of its work and fortunate to have some outstanding new members who gradually took over the important Offices of the Lodge, with the accumulated knowledge of the older brethren, notably WBro C. B.

Shuttleworth, all of whom had joined or been initiated between 1878 and 1895. Of the new members, one in particular showed an outstanding example of the long established tradition of members for excellence of ritual and daily advancements both in general Masonic knowledge and a profound pride in the Lodge and its history. Such a brother was Frederick John Underwood, who was initiated in October 1919. Three years later, when he was SD, he presented the first of many papers on the History of the Lodge. He was in the Chair in 1926 and in December 1927 began his 'reign' as DC which lasted until December 1948. He was Provincial Senior Grand Warden in 1930 and was appointed to Grand Rank as PAGDC in 1934. He died in 1954.

In March 1923, the Worshipful Master signed the petition for the Service and Ex-Service Officers' Lodge (Fort Royal lodge No 4565).

In November 1925 J E Davies was initiated and elected Tyler of the Lodge, thus beginning an unbroken connection with the Lodge by his family through three generations to our present Tyler (his grandson) Bro J E Davies.*****

WBro G F Hough, PAG Chap, celebrated his 50th Anniversary in Masonry in January 1928, and was presented with a silver tray by the brethren. In February he presented a copy of the old workings of the Board of Installed Masters, stating that this had been worked by him for over 40 years. This was also the first year that the Provincial Grand Master a Provincial Visitor to the Lodge. This was WBro Col J H Thursfield, Provincial Grand Registrar.

The initiation of the Hon J B Coventry in September 1930 was a grand occasion with the PGM, General Sir Francis Davies, the Deputy PGM, WBro W T Page and 26 visitors attending. The charge to the initiate was given by the PGM.

In October of the next year, the senior member of the Lodge WBro A R Harrison, PAGReg, at the time of the bicentenary was initiated and in December, WBro Rev G F Hough relinquished the Office of Chaplain, to which office he had first been appointed in 1890!

At the Installation meeting in December 1922 (Bro H C J Shuttleworth-King, WM) a total of 72 brethren were present, including nine reigning Masters and 38 other visitors. The same year, WBro W T Page, DPGM, celebrated his 50th Anniversary in Masonry and was presented with a silver siphon holder by members of the Lodge. WBro G E Williamson (WM 1929) also presented 25 copies of the Installation Ceremony which he had compiled and had printed.

In 1934 WBro F J Underwood was appointed to the Grand Rank as PAGDC, but the Lodge suffered a double blow with the deaths of WBro Rev G F Hough PAGDC and WBro C B Shuttleworth PAGStB.

On 1 July 1936 members had an enjoyable trip down the Severn to Upton on Severn on the steamer 'Belle' and a year later attended a Masonic Coronation Celebration in the Cathedral.

1939 started well. The Provincial Grand Secretary, WBro H V Stanton became a joining member, but Gen Sir Robert Scallon, GCB, Past DDGM Burma (joined 1922) died. Plans were discussed in outline for the celebration of the Lodge's Sesquicentennial in October 1940. These were to include a Cathedral Service with lunch at the Guildhall afterwards; a Ceremony to be held in the Guildhall followed by a dinner for Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodge and other visitors and a further dance and supper with an entertainment at the Guildhall. These were to take place over two days. However events far away from Worcester, beyond even the control WBro F J Underwood, were to take a hand and the September meeting was cancelled by direction of Grand Lodge.

THE LODGE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Minute Books once again begin to record small items alluding to the momentous upheavals which affected the lives of the members during this period. Unlike the Great War, this time the enemy was not so much as 'at the door', but rather almost 'in the attic'. Plans were laid for the protection of Lodge valuables, the portraits were removed for safe keeping, the wearing of gloves was stopped 'until rationing of clothes is withdrawn'. Josiah Stallard & Co wrote to inform the Lodge its stock of port was 'not insured against loss or damage by King's enemy risks'. Visitors appeared from strange places and Grand Lodge continuously warned Lodges not to accept brethren from unrecognised jurisdictions. The alms collections once again began to go to victims of the war. The Lodge was fortunate that although many brethren were serving in the Forces. No member died in action, but two brethren lost sons in the RAF.

With the Battle of Britain at its height and the Provincial Grand Secretary writing to draw attention to the Grand secretary's suggestion that "Freemasons should contribute towards the Country's urgent needs by surrendering their Masonic jewels for the purpose of being melted down", the Lodge proceeded to tighten its belt and curtail celebrations in accordance with the Grand Master's wish "that refreshments provided after Lodge meetings should be as simple as possible, to conform with the need for National Economy".

On 9 October 1940, therefore, the Lodge members attended a special Service at the Cathedral at which one of the Lewises, who carried the Volume of Sacred Law, was Master P C Underwood, a nephew of WBro F J Underwood and son of WBro W F C Underwood, who was the Worshipful Master in the bi-centenary year. A light lunch was taken in the Guildhall. The evening meeting was presided over by the Worshipful Master, WBro John Stallard who had been in the Chair of the Lodge at the Centenary meeting in 1890. Of necessity, it turned out to be purely a 'family' affair as the Officers of Grand Lodge were unable to attend "under the present circumstances" and even the Provincial Grand Master was absent. The alms collected amounted to £20 and were sent to the Lord Mayor of London's Fund for the relief of air raid distress.

In 1941 a war relief fund was started to assist brethren of the Province which reached £50 within a year.

In May 1942, the Summons included the words "in uniform" under 'dress' for the first time and this continued until 1946.

An emergency meeting was held in May 1942 to initiate Surgeon Lieutenant J L Allington RNVR, the son of the WM, and he was passed at another emergency meeting in the January following, presumably while on leave.

Bro J A Smith, a medical practitioner of Barnsley Hall, became a joining member in 1943 after taking the oath of allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England, since he had been initiated in the Syrio-American Lodge No1 under the Grand Lodge of New York.

January 1945 records a letter of apology from Bro T R C Protheroe for not replying to the Summons because “all his papers had been destroyed by enemy action”.

In April, WBro F L Steward, PM, PPGD was appointed to Grand Rank as PAGReg. At the November meeting 1945, WBro E Lumley, PM, PPGChap, delivered an Oration of Thanksgiving followed by a prayer to commemorate the end of the war and the restoration of peace.

Immediately after this, the Lodge picked itself up and proceeded to dust off accumulated problems of the war by voting a sum of £59, 10s to be spent on cleaning, repairing and re-varnishing the portraits of Past Masters.

THE POST WAR YEARS TO THE BI-CENTENARY 1946-1990

In 1946, WBro L S Allington was appointed Provincial Junior Grand Warden (the 26th member of the Lodge to fill this Office) and in the following year the Tyler, Bro J E Davies retired, to be succeeded by his son Bro E G Davies.

WBro C E Simes was invested as Assistant Grand Registrar at the April meeting of grand Lodge in 1947 and advanced to Deputy Grand Registrar three years later. The summer outing of that year (1950) was to see 'Julius Ceasar' at Stratford upon Avon.

There is an interesting note in the Minutes of September 1951 which states that at the raising of Bro A D Clark "during the Ceremony, the Past Masters acting as Master and Wardens were three brethren who had entered the Lodge consecutively as initiates, all three were Lewises and all had since gained Grand Rank". (VWBro Erskine Simes, WBro F L Steward and WBro F J Underwood). The Traditional History was given by WBro M F Higgins PPSGW, the organist, who was himself later to attain Grand Rank.

The members were also trying to return to the high pre-war standards in their dress. "Dinner Dress" returned as an option for the Installation meetings in December 1950, but with a cautious note that "any brother who finds it inconvenient to wear dinner dress need not hesitate to attend in dark morning suit as it is known that there are some who will be so attired". The wearing of white gloves was resumed in 1952.

Members went on another summer outing in July 1954 this time to the Claerwen dam and Elan Valley.

The custom of reading the Minutes of 100 years ago is first mentioned at the September meeting, but this did not become a regular feature of business for some time. The death of WBro F J Underwood is also recorded at this meeting and in October 1955 a Tyler's sword was presented to the Lodge in his memory by WBro Will Underwood on behalf of his daughter.

In April 1954, WBro F L Steward was appointed a Past Grand Deacon and at the same time VWBro E F Bailey was appointed Grand Chaplain. He had joined the Lodge in 1947 and over the course of the next sixteen years gave many improving lectures to the brethren on a wide variety of Masonic topics.

In September 1957, several brethren attended on WBro J Stallard at his home and presented him with a fine Worcester porcelain Loving Cup, "inscribed with the crest of the Lodge" on the occasion of his 100th birthday. He had been initiated in 1884, and was worshipful master both at the 100th and 150th Anniversaries of the foundation of the Lodge. He died on 12 January 1961 aged 103. The Loving Cup was generously presented to the Lodge by his son WBro R H Stallard and his Grandson WBro J S Stallard; at the same time they presented his PM's jewel as 'the Stallard Heirloom Jewel' to be worn by the IPM for the time being.

In January 1958, J E Davies was initiated as a serving brother, the third generation of his family to become a member of the Lodge.

At the next meeting, WBro A R Harrison reported that the Masonic Buildings Company had purchased Grove House, Rainbow Hill, Worcester on the site of which a new Masonic Hall would be built. The Foundation Stone of the new temple was laid by the Provincial Grand Master, RWBro E L Bunting, on 30 October, when WBro A R Harrison assisted as worshipful Master. The last meeting in the St Nicholas Street Temple took place in May 1959, at the closing of which the WM, WBro H S Coverdale, was assisted by WBro P T Weeks, WM of Lodge Number 7458 – St John in Bedwardine (representing the youngest Lodge meeting in the building), and the Chaplain, Bro Rev P C Moore, read a most moving prayer, which he had composed for the occasion.

On 4 September, the Provincial Grand Master dedicated the new Temple and the Lodge immediately held a short emergency meeting at which the various Offices were filled by brethren representing the Lodges and Chapters meeting in Worcester. The dinner following the meeting was presided over by WBro A R Harrison, PM of 280, as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Worcester Masonic Buildings Company Limited.

1965 saw a number of alterations in the life and customs of the Lodge. The ceremony of Installation, first recorded by WBro G R Williamson in 1931, was revised by WBros S H Bate, A F Jones and A R Harrison and printed by WBro H D Littlebury. The permissive variations in the obligations were adopted and Grand Lodge Certificates ceased to be printed in Latin. In November, the post of Lodge Historian was created, Bro J C Brooke being the first holder. He had presented a talk on the history of the Lodge earlier in the year, the first of many interesting and detailed papers about the Lodge and its past.

1965 was also the 175th Anniversary of the Lodge's Foundation. An Anniversary meeting was held on 20 October at which representatives of five daughter Lodges were present. The Lodge was fortunate to receive a dozen bottles of Cockburn 1963 Vintage Port as the gift from WBro Frank Lofthouse, PM of St John in Bedwardine Lodge, which he hoped would be enjoyed on the occasion of the 200th Anniversary.

At the April meeting in 1966, RWBro Erskine Simes, PGW, G Reg, celebrated the 50th Anniversary of his initiation and assisted in the Ceremony of raising the author of this history. He afterwards presented the Lodge a pair of very fine cut-glass decanters together with two Sheffield=plate coasters.

At Grand Lodge Investiture in April 1967, WBro A R Harrison was appointed Assistant Grand Registrar.

WBro J Nott celebrated his 50th Anniversary in Freemasonry in November 1971 (he was a Past Master of St Michael's Lodge Number 1097 and had joined this Lodge 25 years ago).

In February 1972, the Lodge along with the rest of the Country, suffered a passing interruption to the order and tranquillity of its meetings, as a result of the effects of the coal strike. The Secretary, WBro L W Haines PPAGDC, was moved to record:

“ The dinner normally held after the Lodge was not taken on this occasion as it was decided that we should forego this traditionally very enjoyable function in order to

conserve electricity because of the coal strike. Instead, the brethren fortified themselves with an informal meal of bread, cheese and pickles and beer before making their way homeward in a black-out, which probably rivalled that which existed when the Lodge first met in 1790”.

In November of the same year, Bro J S Stallard, on behalf of his mother, presented to the Lodge an ashtray with Masonic markings, which had been a wedding present to his late father, WBro R H Stallard.

A few days before this, on 28 October, many members of the Lodge had attended the Bi-Centenary Service of Consecration of the present building of the Church of Old Saint Martins at the invitation of the Vicar, WBro Rev G W E Brooks, PPGChap(Shropshire), a member of 280. This was the Church that the founding brethren attended in 1791.

In April 1975 Bro J E Davies was elected Tyler, in succession to his late father, Bro E G Davies, and almost 50 years to the day after the election of his Grandfather, Bro J E Davies, as Tyler.

At the April meeting of the Lodge in 1976 RWBro Erskine Simes celebrated the 60th Anniversary of his initiation. This was attended by the Provincial Grand Master, RWBro F H Griffiths accompanied by the Provincial Senior Grand Warden, WBro J Brooke (member of 280) and WBro A F Jones (also a member of 280) acting as Provincial Junior Grand Warden. RWBro once more assisted in the Ceremony (of Raising) and gave the Traditional History “to a very attentive audience in a clear and eloquent manner”. He afterwards presented to the Lodge a Masonic tankard, which had been given to him by his sister.

RWBro C E W Simes, one of the most eminent members of the Lodge, died on 23 March 1978.

In the course of the next decade, three more brethren celebrated 50 years in Masonry, WBro A R Harrison (1981), WBro A F Jones (1988) and WBro G D K Woolrych (1989).

By 1983, the thoughts of the Lodge were already beginning to turn towards the approaching Bi-Centenary and a small Committee under the Chairmanship of WBro P C Underwood was formed.

In February 1988, the lodge elected as an honorary member, WBro T W Groundsell PGStB, a past Master of Wyche Lodge no 3638, who, as Chief Librarian of the Provincial Library and Museum, had presented many informative lectures to the Lodge over the course of the previous few years.

In April 1989, WBro J L Talbot, who had served in the Office of Provincial Senior Grand Warden in 1981 (the 23rd member of the Lodge to have this honour since the formation of Provincial Grand Lodge in 1847) was appointed to Grand Rank of PAGDC.

On the eve of its Bi-Centenary (December 1989), the brethren elected WBro P C Underwood as Worshipful Master (also WM in 1975). His family links with the Lodge stretched back to

the Centenary meeting at which his Grandfather, WBro F G Underwood, acted as DC. He himself, as a Lewis, carried the VSL at the Cathedral Service held for 150th Anniversary and his uncle, WBro F J Underwood, had performed The same duty at the Centenary celebrations. Two other members present, WBros J S Stallard and W B Stallard, were direct descendants of WBro John Stallard (WM 1889 and 1939).

It is interesting to reflect that John Stallard had been initiated in 1884, when the oldest member, WBro H Hill (WM 1856) had been a member since 1843. That Brother had sat in Lodge with WBro J B Hyde (WM 1830), who had been initiated in 1827 and the latter would have known WBro J S Ballard (WM 1818) whose initiation took place in 1805, only fifteen years after the foundation of the Lodge.

At the January meeting in 1990, WBro G D K Woolrych, who was emigrating to Australia, presented a fine set of firing glasses to the Lodge, thus providing the proper accessories necessary for the Fire which had probably not been available since the previous Century.

Members once again went on a Summer outing, this time to Clywedog dam on on Sunday 15 July the Worshipful Master held a luncheon party in the Garden of his home at Hanley Castle.

As for the Bi-Century celebrations themselves, unfortunately the Cathedral was undergoing an extensive programme of renovation and was unavailable for the Bi-Centenary Service. The celebrations on 9 October therefore included a Service, followed by a Lodge meeting in College Hall, after which there was a banquet in the Guildhall, the scene of many of the Lodge's past celebrations and Balls. A Grand Bi-Centenary Ball was held at the abbey Hotel, Malvern on 10 November.

The brethren wished that their special Bi-Centenary Charity Fund which amounted to some £10,000 should, if possible, be applied to some local fous and be of a permanent nature. This resulted in the eminently suited foundation of a charity to provide a Choral Scholarship at the Cathedral known as 'The Worcester Lodge No 280 Bi-Centenary Choral Foundation Scholarship'.

