

Lodge of Research 200
Stated Communication Saturday 22nd September 2018
Freemasons Hall, Tuckey Street, Cork

R W Bro Alan J Campbell
Presented this Paper on the 40th Anniversary
Shamrock Lodge No27 (Ancient & Modern)

Worshipful Master & Brethren, tonight we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the constitution of our Lodge or rather, as I would prefer to term it, the reconstitution of Lodge no.27.

Lodge 27 may have commenced its modern history in 1976 but it also has a long and chequered history dating back some 282 years at least.

Many of you will know that there was a Grand Lodge of Munster which was amalgamated into the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1733. It is, of course, because of this local Grand Lodge that the 13 Lodges in the Province of Munster have to this day a working which is quite different to that used in all the other Lodges in the Irish Constitution.

It is very significant that the first warrant issued to Cork numbered 27 was done between 4th.December 1733 and 27th.January, 1734. It is thought that no numbers were issued by the Grand Lodge of Munster, at least none have ever been discovered. Therefore, I think we can be quite sure that a Lodge existed in Cork before 1733 and it applied for a warrant to the amalgamated Grand Lodge as soon as that amalgamation took place. My contention is therefore that the Lodge which applied for and was granted warrant no 27 was a Lodge Immemorial. That is a Lodge stretching back in time to a date unknown in the dim and distant past.

There is no doubt that Lodge 27 considered itself to be a very important Cork institution since at a meeting held on 12th.May, 1759 the secretary referred to it as "the first and chiefest Lodge in Cork City". I wonder why? Well it may have had something to do with the happenings of 8 years previously.

At a meeting on 13th.February, 1751 the secretary was requested to draw up an address to be presented to the Grand Lodge and that same was to be read on the next Lodge night which was on 27th.February, 1751. The address is what we would today call a petition as it was signed by all the members of the Lodge. It was addressed to the Rt.Hon. the Grand Master, Wardens and the registered Lodges of Ancient and Rt. Worshipful Free and Accepted Masons in the Kingdom of Ireland and was stated to be the humble remonstrance of the Master, Wardens and Members of no.27 Lodge of the City of Cork.

Firstly, it praised, "that monument of zeal and love for the Craft left as an example to future ages by your intentions to erect a Grand Lodge Hall in the Metropolis of this Kingdom".

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The proposed building of this hall had greatly impressed the Brethren and they were obviously delighted at the revival of interest in Masonry which to use the secretary's words was being "restored from almost a state of oblivion of late". The petition goes on to beg leave for Lodge 27 to elect annually out of the Lodge a master and wardens with authority to preside over all the other Lodges in this City and Province.

They requested permission to call quarterly communications, collect Grand Lodge dues and also contributions towards the building of the Grand Lodge Hall. They advised that several Lodges in the Province, being remote from Dublin and not subject to any immediate authority were remiss in sending dues and there were irregularities and malpractices in their activities. They stated this was the reason for their request. They closed the address by requesting that a P.S. be added to Grand Lodge advertisements directing Munster Lodges to pay their Grand Lodge dues and voluntary contributions to the treasurer of Lodge no.27.

The address having been read was unanimously approved and the Master, Bro.David Fitzgerald was asked to lay same before Grand Lodge. It is a great anticlimax to find no further reference to this petition in the records. I cannot say whether it was ever laid before Grand Lodge, though so much care had been put into its preparation I feel it must have gone to Dublin. The outcome is, however not recorded in the Lodge minutes. The only piece of evidence to suggest that something did, in fact happen, is that on 15th April that same year, 1751, Bro David Fitzgerald is noted as Provincial Grand Master. We learn from the writings of the late R.W.Bro. Alec Day that Bro Fitzgerald was the first in the long line of Provincial Grand Masters of this the oldest Province of the Irish Constitution. Obviously 1751 was a good year for the Lodge - let us have a look in on their installation meeting on 24th June that year.

They met at 1pm in the Grand Jury Room of the County Courthouse. Having elected the officers for the ensuing six months they dined and we are told that a band of music played for the remainder of the evening. Every toast was proclaimed to the other Lodges of the City by a discharge of canon procured for that purpose. The secretary stated that "nothing could give a clearer idea of the happiness of our Society and the comforts accrued from so noble an institution than the harmony and affection which was so mutually defused through the whole Fraternity on this occasion". The members retired about 12 having each paid towards the bill 5 shillings and 5 pence.

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On 29th July that year the Masons of Cork met at the County Court House to form a procession and walk to the theatre to attend a benefit play. The order of the procession was as follows: Four armed grenadiers, 5 drums, 5 fifes, a military Lodge, a band, Lodge 27 as follows - the Senior & Junior Wardens, the Provincial Grand Master, the past and present Masters, the Senior & Junior Deacons, Past Masters, Senior Brethren, fellow crafts and entered apprentices. All the other Lodges observed the same order according to the seniority of their respective warrants. We are told nearly 200 masons assisted in this procession. You will note the position taken by Lodge 27 was first of the Lodges and therefore it was considered the oldest.

They were very charitable in those days as they are today. An example of this is to be found in the minutes of an "extraordinary Lodge appointed to consider the merits of several petitions presented by indigent Brethren for relief" It appears these poor Brethren were not members of Lodge 27 as their names are not recorded in any of the lists of members. One of them, a Bro Isaac Holland was stated to be confined in the City Gaol for debt. The Lodge decided to pay same, the amount being three pounds, four shillings and the Master and Wardens signed an order for the Treasurer to release the money.

The year 1798 brought rebellious unrest in Ireland and let me quote from the minutes of 6th. December that year "In consequence of the alarming state of public affairs in this country produced by an extensive and dangerous conspiracy to overturn the Government of this Country and which threatened the destruction of every regular establishment.

This Lodge suspended its meetings, called upon by the necessity of the times to step forward in defence of their lives and properties had individually joined different yeomanry corps, a duty which from the necessity of the case superseded the usual assembling of the Brethren of this Lodge"

Before leaving the 18th Century let me mention the names of some of the members of that time, well known merchants of Cork after whom lanes and streets are called to this day:

Henry Goold: Goold's Lane

Dominick Sarsfield; Sarsfield's Court Hospital

Daniel Gallway; Gallway's Lane

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Cont'd

Henry & Thomas Shears; Shears Street

J. Penrose; Penrose Quay

Wintrop; Wintrop Street

Fitton; Fitton Street

I must also refer to Alexander Deane, a member of a renowned Cork family of architects and builders. No less than 5 members of this family had the freedom of Cork conferred on them and of these 5 I have found reference to 3 in the minutes of Lodge 27

So, what happened Lodge 27 in the 19th century? Well, it is nothing as interesting as the previous century, at least the surviving records don't detail so much. We know that it merged with the First Lodge in about 1834 and the warrant was returned to Grand Lodge. In this connection it is interesting to note that the beautiful jewel on the collar of the Master of the First Lodge has Lodge 27 engraved on its reverses to this day. In 1835 it was reissued to Castle Townshend in lieu of their warrant number 167.

Whilst in Castle Townshend it is noted that they kept a pack of hounds known as the "Masonic Harriers" It is said that after a day chase the charter song would be called for and it went like this:

"Oh, the Shamrock, the green immortal Shamrock, chosen leaf of bard and chief, old Erin's native Shamrock" In 1858 the warrant was returned to Grand Lodge.

The number was again issued to a new Lodge in Dublin on 6th January 1876 and the name was changed from Shamrock to Abercorn in honour of James, 1st.Duke of Abercorn who was Grand Master from 1874 to 1886. This Lodge worked until 1st.March 1945 when the warrant was again returned to Grand Lodge. And so, we finally come to October 1976 when the number was sought and granted to 14 Cork Brethren. Named again Shamrock Lodge, number 27 was back in Cork after an absence of 118 years.

The 14 founders were; William Black, Paddy Wharton, Ernest Woollam, John Hornibrook, Bruce Aston, John Hay, Thomas Hanna, Robert Hanna, William McCarthy, Leslie Ross, George Kingston, Mervyn Black, Ben Hosford & Alan Campbell. The first W.M. was Paddy Wharton.

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Over the succeeding 40 years we have initiated, passed & raised many candidates and done our best to pass the Masonic ideals of fairness, honesty, decency & benevolence to many men. Today the original 14 has grown to 54 and at that we are the largest Lodge in the Province. A number of our members have held office in Provincial Grand Lodge and Grand Lodge in addition to those who have represented Munster on the various charity boards in Dublin. I think we can be very proud of our achievements over the years since 1976.

May I take this opportunity, W.M. & Brethren to wish Shamrock Lodge no 27 a happy birthday and much good fortune in the years to come.

Written by R.W. Bro. Alan J. Campbell, P.M. of Lodge 27, P.P.G.M. Munster & read by him at the Lodge's regular meeting on Thursday, 13th October, 2016.

References & sources.

1. The original minutes of Lodge 27.
2. R.W.Bro A.R. Day's draft of his "History of Munster Masonry"
3. Irish Masonic Records by Philip Crossle.
4. Calendar & Directory of the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

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