

260 years of Irish Freemasonry in India, 1754-2014

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The Grand Lodge of Ireland is the world's second oldest Masonic Grand Lodge; its first known meeting occurred on 24th June 1725. The history of the Grand Lodge of Ireland in Ireland is well documented; also it is not the focus of this essay. The first Warrant creating a travelling Lodge of Freemasons; to which the number 11 was subsequently assigned was issued to the 1st Foot, then the "Royal Regiment" now the "Royal Scots" by the Grand Lodge of Ireland in 1732.

Other Military regiments at this time carried Irish Freemasonry around the world, establishing Lodges and creating fraternal ties that last to this day. The Grand Lodge of Ireland warranted 190 Military (Travelling) Lodges between 1732 and 1813, a few of which were in India. A few examples are illustrative. Lodge No. 218, attached to the 48th Foot, brought Freemasonry to Cuba in 1763. Similarly Irish Masonic lodges were chartered in Jamaica in 1767.

Irish Freemasonry came to Light in India much before it reached the New World. Early Irish Masonic Lodges in India were travelling Military Lodges, attached to various Regiments, as detailed below. The Lodges came to India when the Regiments they were attached to were active in India, and left with the Regiment. In those days, Irish Freemasons in India were "Travelling Men" in more than one sense.

Lodges moved with Regiments wherever they were stationed; thus covered a wide area from Haserabad on the North-west Frontier (present day Hazirabad in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan) to Rangoon and Thayethmo, Burma (present-day Yangon, Myanmar). A distance of 4,000 km geographically; or a 3,000 mile march starting from the Khyber Pass, over the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalayas, Thar Desert, Gangetic Plains, Sunderbans and the forests of Burma.

During the expeditions of the British East India Company in India, the officials of the Company had their own battery of firepower, provided by the British Armed Forces. A number of regiments had soldiers who were Masons from all the three Constitutions – English (pre-United Grand Lodge of England), Scottish and Irish. We concentrate our attention on the Brethren of the Irish Constitution. They assembled under regular travelling warrants from the Grand Lodge of Ireland; and while on military campaign in India carried out Masonic Rituals and Meetings in full and proper Irish manner.

Warrant no. 244 was granted to the 2nd Foot Regiment in 1754. This Lodge, however, broke up before reaching India.

The first Lodge to be warranted by the Grand Lodge of Ireland that arrived in India, was attached to the 39th Regiment and arrived in Madras in 1754. We may consider that as the first Irish Lodge in India. It was warranted in 1742. The Lodge in question was Lodge No. 128 and was known as 'Primus in India'.

Another Lodge to be travelling in India, warranted earlier than 1742 by the Grand Lodge of Ireland was Lodge Minden no. 63 I.C.; for which Lodge more information is available.

Lodge Minden no. 63 I.C. was warranted by the Grand Lodge of Ireland on 12th January 1737 to work in India. It was attached to the 20th Foot Lancashire Fusiliers, Light Infantry. Records state "warrant and jewels lost in India 1812". This Lodge used to meet in Poona (now Pune) Cantonment.

It may be noted that 1812 in Poona were troubled times, with the Anglo-Maratha wars raging away. The last Peshwa of the Maratha Confederacy, Bajirao II, capitulated to the British East India Company in 1818, and was exiled to Bithoor in present day Uttar Pradesh. The Anglo-Maratha Wars were fought between 1775-1818. It is not clear when exactly the battalion or the Lodge came to India, and hence, we go by the date of its Warrant. British Military Forces have been in India since the 17th Century, and were engaged in war in Western India by

Chhatrapati Shivaji (1627-1680), and it is possible that an Irish Lodge was attached to one of the Regiments in those battles, but we do not include that for lack of records.

Since, prior to 1818, the Maratha Confederation armies repeatedly defeated the British, we may, therefore, assume that the Brethren of Lodge Minden no. 63 I.C. perished in battle, and the Lodge Warrant, Jewels and Furniture were thus lost.

However, considering the life and tenure of the Lodge, the period 1737-1812 encompasses a full 75 years, and is by no means a short duration. The oldest Warranted Irish Lodge in India lasted 75 years, and its existence was terminated by war. Warrant 63b was re-issued by the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the revived Lodge again became defunct in 1868. Records again state "warrant and jewels lost in India". Thus ended the turbulent history of Lodge Minden no. 63 I.C. The Lodge worked for over a Century, a substantial part of which was in India; it must be noted.

The Lodge of Social and Military Virtues no. 227 I.C. was warranted in 1752, attached to the 46th Regiment of Foot. It principally served in North America and later in Australia, but was briefly in Southern India, where it lost most of its members in a cholera outbreak in 1817. It may be noted that British Military presence was more in Bengal and the Coromandel in the 18th Century, the Maratha Confederacy having kept the British successfully away from their territories till the beginning of the 19th Century; and consequently, the early Lodges worked in Bengal and the Coromandel.

In a Talk given by V.W. Bro. J. W. V. Cumming whilst Master of the Gibraltar Masters Lodge No. 3825 E. C., Gibraltar in 1946, he said:

"A famous Irish Lodge No. 128 in the 39th Regiment of Foot was the second founded in Gibraltar. This was in 1742. It departed in due course when the Regiment moved on and continued in existence until 1872, during which time it was issued with duplicate warrants on no less than three occasions. It is said that the first Freemason to be initiated in India was made in this Irish Lodge."

On 3rd May 1759, Warrant no. 322 was issued to the Masons in the 29th Regiment of Foot (now known as the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regt.), who formed the Glittering Star Lodge No. 322 I.C. The Regiment was in Ireland, North America, India and Burma, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Palestine, Germany and South Africa over the next 200 years. The Lodge was in Fort William, Calcutta, via Rangoon. It moved along with the Regiment, passing through Thyayethmyo, Burma.

The Lodge travelled with the Regiment to Dinapore, 10 km North-west of Patna (now Danapur in the Patna Metropolitan Region) in 1853. While in Dinapore, a certain Captain H. G. Colville presumably came across an old Warrant in an old chest, that of Glittering Star Lodge No. 322 I.C., and went about reviving this Lodge. A new Warrant was obtained in 1854, by which time the Regiment and Lodge were in Naulmain, Burma.

The Regiment and the Lodge were again in Haserabad, North-west Frontier Province, India in 1920. This occasion was the first meeting of the Lodge since 1914. On 10th February 1923, the Lodge met in Meerut and worked two Degrees, to the great interest of the local Brethren of the English and Scottish Constitutions.

The Himalayan Brotherhood Lodge no. 459 E.C. was consecrated in 1773 in Fort William, Calcutta, India, when Lodge No. 459 was formed with a warrant from the Premier (Moderns) Grand Lodge of England. Mainly made up of Irish Freemasons in the Royal Artillery, it was also given the local number of Bengal Lodge No. 14.

Lodge Social Friendship no. 863 I.C. was consecrated as a travelling Lodge on 5th April 1798, for the 89th Foot Infantry Division of the Army (East India Company). On 4th March 1822, they exchanged this warrant for a local warrant from the then Provincial Grand Lodge of the Coromandel Coast (E.C.). This local warrant no. 11 was eventually confirmed by the Grand Lodge of England (pre-UGLE) as no. 497 E.C. This was the first Irish Lodge in India that ultimately went over to the English Constitution, which for many decades was the dominant Constitution in India.

The Earl of Moira was the Governor-General of India between 1813-1823. He was probably initiated in an Army Lodge under the Irish Constitution; either in No. 83 attached to 8th Foot in which he served as a

subaltern from 1773-1775; or in No. 512 in the 63rd Regiment, to which he was transferred as Captain after the fight at Bunker's Hill. He was acting Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge of England between 1790-1812 and acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland between 1806-1808.

Lodge Star of the East no. 292 I.C. was attached to 103rd Foot Regiment, East India Company, Bombay. Warrant was cancelled in 1854.

Lodge 390 I.C. was attached to West India Regiment, was consecrated on 27th October 1805. The warrant was surrendered after the Lodge was disbanded in 1927.

St. John's Lodge no. 13 I.C. was consecrated on 16th August 1822 as a Joint Lodge of 30th Foot East Lancashire Regiment and 73rd Foot Perthshire Light Infantry. Further information is not available about where it met, duration of its existence and what ultimately happened to it. It is not an active Lodge in India at the present time.

In 1826, it was reported in the United Grand Lodge of England that there existed a certain lack of communication between them and the Provincial Grand Lodge in Calcutta; and that a certain Lodge Union no. 432 E.C. in Calcutta on their Register (338 on the Atholl Constitution) also held a Warrant on the Register of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. This situation arose due to large distances and delays in communication. In those days, it was entirely common for the local Provincial Grand Lodge to issue a Provisional Warrant, which would, after some delay, be confirmed by the parent Grand Lodge. There were thus cases of Lodges having multiple warrants; it was also not uncommon for the Grand Lodge Warrant to arrive after the Lodge had been consecrated. Some Lodges, therefore, had their Consecration date well before the date of Warrant. In 1826, the Military Lodge Union, when stationed at Meerut, returned as one of its members, A. J. Colvin, Judge and Magistrate.

The first Irish Lodge to be warranted as a non-Military Lodge under the Irish Constitution in India was The Light of the North No. 357 I.C. at Kernaul (now Karnal) Consecrated in 1835. This Lodge survived for three years only. Some Brethren, mostly hailing from Lodge Humility with Fortitude no. 229 E.C., a Military Lodge of the English Constitution from Fort William, Calcutta, established Lodge Light of the North at Kernaul. On St. John's Day they marched in procession to the Church Bungalow where they were addressed by the Rev. W. Parish. Early in 1838, The Himalayan Brotherhood Lodge no. 459 E.C. commenced working at Simla under a dispensation from the Lodge Light of the North at Kernaul. The Lodge Light of the North succumbed to the ravages of Malaria, and ultimately became defunct. Apparently, the Lodge Light of the North had a dual Warrant; being Warranted 648 E.C. on 23rd June 1837. The same is corroborated in Lane's Masonic Records.

In 1838, the Cameronian Lodge (number unavailable), an Irish Lodge attached to the 26th Foot Regiment was working on close terms of friendship with Lodge Humility with Fortitude no. 229 E.C. at Fort William, Calcutta. The Lodge moved away along with the Regiment. As the 26th Foot Regiment was known as the Cameronians, the Cameronian Lodge may be taken to mean the Lodge warranted 309 I.C. on 7th December 1748. The 26th Foot Regiment served in India between 1828-1840.

The 26th Foot Regiment had arrived in Madras in May 1828. It spent two years in peace in Madras; and was ordered to move to Calcutta in 1830; and subsequently to Karnal (then Kernaul). At Chinsurah, near Calcutta, the Regiment lost thirteen men to cholera, and arrived in Meerut after marching 900 miles over 80 days. From Meerut, they moved to Ghazipur, and returned to Calcutta on 17th January 1838. It departed for China in 1840.

In 1848, while on Home Duty in Ireland, they struck a medal to celebrate the Centenary of their Warrant. In 1823, Lodge 309 applied to Grand Lodge to change its Warrant for a higher number, and was issued No 26, tying in with its honorable position on the roll of Foot Regiments within the British Army. By this time, the Lodge had decided to adopt the name Minden, and became the Minden Lodge no. 26 I.C.

The Brethren of Minden determined that their medal should be given to all twenty members of the Lodge, and after much consideration they decided to adopt a wooden wheel as their background with the name of one of their members on all sixteen of the staves. The centerpiece of the design was an "All Seeing Eye" with a circular hub around and on this hub was the legend "C. South. PM and WM Elect". From this hub emanated sixteen separate staves and on each staff was the name of a Lodge member: "M. Kane, D. Bilham, P.

Gerachtys, T. McMullan, T. Peden, J. Clarke, J. Matherson, J.D.G. Kilhourn, J Balme, H. Gibson, T.J. Waring, I.G.T. Higgins, W. Harris, J. Shaddock, R. Perkins and J. McGee." On the outer band of the wheel were the three final Lodge Officers: "F. Oliver WM" at the top, "W. Robertson JW" on the right and "J. Clarke SW" on the left. This medal can claim to be the first Centenary Medal in the Irish Constitution. It was issued just one year ahead of The Grand Master's Lodge, which was not issued until 1849.

Over the preceding one hundred years the Minden Lodge, had survived many tribulations in postings across the British Empire of the day. All of its Lodge records up until the year 1802 have been lost as a result of these travails. The Lodge continued to work right up to the start of the First World War in 1914. However on the bloody fields of France the regiment was decimated losing most of its Officers, NCO's and men. The Lodge never recovered and the Warrant was returned to Grand Lodge in 1922.

Lodge Sphinx no. 263 I.C., attached to 20th Foot Lancashire Regiment was consecrated in Ahmednagar (a city and District Headquarters 120 km from Pune) on 6th October 1860. Its Warrant was suspended on 5th February 1863 and restored in 1866. It worked as the sole Masonic Lodge in Ahmednagar till 1890, when the Lodge Royal Connaught no. 2377 E.C., which is still an active Lodge under the District Grand Lodge of Bombay, E.C. at the present time; and was consecrated with the help of the Brethren of Lodge Sphinx.

The Regiment served in Ahmednagar till 1891; and when it moved away, the Lodge Sphinx moved away along with it. The only reminder of the contribution of Irish Brethren to the Lodge Royal Connaught no. 2377 E.C. is the item "Collections for St. John's Box" on the agenda of the Lodge Summons, unique to an English Lodge; and the original manuscript By-laws.

More information is available about Lodge Sphinx no. 263 I.C., Brethren initiated in Lodge Sphinx were Bros. Campbell, Crisp, Dhunjishaw Framjee Mehta, Sgt. Maj. Murray, Ruddock, Shepherd, Sorabjee Manockjee, Wood and others (names not available).

Lodge Sphinx had some problem in acquiring a suitable building in which to hold their meetings but they managed to obtain the 'old Gymkhana shed', which the 'Station Social Club' had abandoned and which for some years was in the possession of M/s. Cursetjee and Sons who were using it as a Store Room. Mr. Cursetjee had it suitably altered and with necessary furniture rented it to Lodge "Sphinx" for Rs. 18/- per mensem. For one year, Lodge Sphinx occupied it; and had to vacate it since the Social Club wanted it back. Immediately an application was made duly recommended by Bro. Watson to allow the use of the 'Fort Armoury' now vacated by the 'Social Club' and in 1889. Lodge "Sphinx" held their meetings in the Armoury.

Masonic Lodge 263 I.C. made its reappearance in India in 1909, when the Lodge Sunut no. 263 I.C. was consecrated in Calcutta. An earlier Irish Lodge existed in Calcutta at the time, so Lodge Sunut no. 263 I.C. was not the oldest Irish Lodge in India. It was Warranted on 11th October 1909. This Lodge joined the Grand Lodge of India, when it was founded in 1961 as Founder Lodge no. 80; subsequently relocated to Varanasi. It is currently inactive.

Lodge Duke of Abercorn no. 382 I.C., named after the Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, was consecrated in Calcutta. It was Warranted on 3rd March 1905 and Consecrated 3rd June 1905. This Lodge joined the Grand Lodge of India, when it was founded in 1961 as Founder Lodge no. 67; it is currently inactive.

Available with the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India is a Master Mason Certificate issued to a Brother in Rangoon in 1907.

There was no Irish Lodge Consecrated in Burma, which was part of British India till 1937; we therefore conclude that the Brother received his Degrees in a Travelling Military Lodge, held in a garrison or barracks. The Freemasons' Hall in Rangoon, opened a year later in 1908; and was the exclusive property of the Star of Burma Lodge no. 604 E.C.

Subsequently, there were several English and Scottish Lodges in Burma, including a District Grand Lodge of Burma (E.C.) having 9 Lodges, but no Irish Lodge.

Lodge St. Patrick no. 319 I.C. was consecrated in Bombay (now Mumbai) on 8th May 1911. It is the oldest and continuously active Irish Lodge in India, and celebrated its Centenary in 2011. On the occasion of its Centenary, the Lodge received a Bible as a present from Lodge St. Patrick no. 199 I.C., Cape Town.

The R. A. Chapter St. Patrick no. 27 I.C. was Consecrated in the 50th year of the Lodge, and the Chapter celebrated 50 years on the Centenary of the Lodge.

Warrant no. 319 was issued and cancelled thrice, the first occasion being when the warrant was issued to Brethren in Dublin on 3rd May 1769 and cancelled on 2nd February 1786, and Lodge 319 I.C. was removed from the rolls of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. It was reissued in Carrareagh, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim on 1st June 1809 and cancelled 4th February 1836, when it was returned by the Brethren. The third occasion was when 12 Brethren from Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia petitioned to form Valley St. John Lodge no. 319 I.C. Warrant was issued 11th December 1884 and surrendered 25th April 1904.

On 3rd April 1911, Warrant was issued for Lodge St. Patrick no. 319 I.C. following application by 30 Petitioners; the Lodge was Consecrated on 8th May 1911. The Brethren of Lodge St. Patrick have assiduously maintained every bit of their history and records, starting from the very first Summons and Minutes. Also interesting is to observe Summons over the years, including hand-written Summons, Summons on note paper and so on, giving an idea about how Lodge Secretaries operated over the years.

The Minutes of the Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes of the Grand Lodge of Ireland record that on 29th June 1913, a Memorial from Bros. Gunn, Sullivan, Stephens and thirty-two others praying for a warrant to establish a Lodge in Bombay, India to be called the "Shamrock"; recommended by Lodge St. Patrick No. 319 I.C., Bombay. The same was confirmed as per Grand Lodge Minutes of 2nd October 1913.

Accordingly, Lodge Shamrock no. 408 I.C. was Warranted on 6th October 1913. The Lodge continued its existence till 1929, and a total of 114 Brethren were registered on the Rolls of the Lodge between 1913-1929. As of October 1929, Lodge Shamrock was in touch with Grand Lodge in Dublin to have a Royal Arch Chapter attached to the Lodge. However, the same did not come to fruition; and the Lodge returned the Warrant to Grand Lodge around this time. Grand Lodge records mention correspondence that the Warrant was returned in 1928.

After this instance, the first Irish Royal Arch Chapter to be Consecrated in Bombay would be the Royal Arch Chapter St. Patrick, more than three decades later.

While being returned, the Warrant was lost in transit, and was never received by Grand Lodge; and the Grand Secretary reported to the Board of General Purposes of the Grand Lodge of Ireland that he "had not received any Returns or Payments for the past four years from Lodge No. 408 Bombay and that the Lodge reported that the Warrant had been returned to Dublin two years ago. After considerable correspondence, no trace could be found of the document and it was assumed that it had been lost in transit; the remaining members of the Lodge stated that there was no chance of resuming work. The Board note that the Warrant is lost and recommend that the Lodge be erased from the list and from the Calendar."

The same was confirmed as per Grand Lodge Minutes of 4th June 1931, and thus the Lodge Shamrock no. 408 I.C. was removed from the Rolls of the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

During its existence, members of Lodge Shamrock, along with members of Lodge St. Patrick were Founder Members of the Tara Lodge of Installed Masters no. 419 I.C., which was Warranted on 5th June 1915 and Consecrated on 29th June 1915; it continues to work in Mumbai at the present time. Names of the Brethren of Lodge Shamrock, who were Founder Members of the Tara Lodge of Installed Masters, are W. Bro. J. F. Pennock, W. Bro. C. J. W. Cunningham and W. Bro. J. A. Gunn.

Lodge Emerald Isle no. 19 I.C. (written as XIX) was moved to Ambala from Senglea, Malta on 4th March 1920 with the 1st Battalion, Connaught Rangers (formerly 88th Foot). Being a travelling Military Lodge, it meant that the Lodge travelled with the Regiment, and that the Regiment travelled from Malta to Ambala. The activities of the Regiment during World War I are not documented, and no returns were filed between 1914-18.

The history of Warranted Lodge no. 19 I.C. is much older than the Ambala period, dating back to 10th October 1733. This history has been well documented by the Grand Lodge, and is not being covered here. In the period 1920-1947, Lodge Emerald Isle no. 19 I.C. was active in India, first in Ambala till it was moved to Dehra Doon on 1st February 1921; and to Lahore on 5th April 1922.

The Lodge worked in Lahore (part of Pakistan after 1947) till Freemasonry was proscribed in Pakistan in 1973. This Lodge was under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Ireland's Inspectorate of Northern India and Pakistan, till the formation of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India. This Lodge is now in Dublin.

R. W. Bro. C. K. Maarfatia, Past Provincial Deputy Grand Master, on the occasion of the Constitution of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India in May 1983 noted the following about the origins of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India:

"The Irish Lodges in India were originally directly under the Grand Lodge of Ireland in Dublin. They were later formed into the Inspectorates of Western India, Eastern India and {Northern India and Pakistan}.

"The Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India was constituted on 1st May 1957 and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India on 11th May 1957. The Lodges in New Delhi and Pakistan were under the Inspectorate of Northern India and Pakistan.

"The Provincial Grand Lodges were very solemnly Consecrated by the late R. W. Bro. Maj. Gen. Harold Williams, the Grand Inspector of Northern India and Pakistan.

"The first Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India was R. W. Bro. William Charles Mason, and of the Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India was R. W. Bro. Ellis J. Samuel. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India reverted to being an Inspectorate in 1961."

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (I.C.) had under their jurisdiction:

Lodge St. Patrick no. 319, Mumbai, consecrated 1911 in Mumbai.
Tara Lodge of Installed Masters no. 419, consecrated 1915 in Mumbai
Bombay Lodge no. 648, Mumbai, consecrated in 1933 in Mumbai
Swastik Lodge no. 771, Mumbai, consecrated in 1955 in Mumbai
Lodge Matheran no. 792, Matheran, consecrated 1956 in Mumbai
Lodge Nowroze Wadia no. 804, consecrated in 1958 in Mumbai
Lodge Artificers no. 807, consecrated 1959 in Mumbai

The records of the Board of General Purposes of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (I.C.) state that memorials were received and Petitions were prepared for the following Lodges that did not make it to the Warrant stage:

On 25th February 1958, Brethren from Mumbai presented a Petition to form Lodge Engineers and Architects on the rolls of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. This Lodge did not take shape, but may have ultimately culminated as Lodge Artificers no. 807 I.C., Warranted 6th March 1959.

On 14th February 1959, 34 Brethren presented a Petition to form a Lodge Kirkee in Kirkee, present day Khadki, a Cantonment bordering Pune City. The Lodge was to meet at the Freemasons Bungalow at Kirkee, owned by Lodge Level no. 702 S.C., Kirkee.

The Board of General Purposes of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (I.C.) requested the Grand Lodge of Ireland to not grant the Warrant for the time being because of absence of clearance from the District Grand Lodge of Bombay (E.C.), vide Minutes of the Board of General Purposes of 4th August 1959.

Brethren of Belgaum, then a part of Bombay State, now in present day Karnataka, presented a Petition to form a Lodge Sawantwadi on the rolls of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. It was to be named after H.H. Raja Bahadur Shivram S. Bhosale of Sawantwadi, a member of the "Swastik" Lodge no. 771 I.C.

The same was communicated by the then Provincial Grand Secretary, V. W. Bro. Framji Dinshaw Nasikwala to the Grand Inspector of Northern India and Pakistan, R. W. Bro. Lt. Gen. Sir Harold Williams, CB, KBE on 12th May 1959.

Warrant was not granted since none of the Petitioning Brethren were Past Masters or Past Wardens of the Irish Constitution, and belonged to the Sister Constitutions (English and Scottish), and the M. W. Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ireland did not grant dispensation to them.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India (I.C.) had under their jurisdiction:

Lodge Sunut no. 263, Calcutta, consecrated 1909 in Calcutta
Lodge Duke of Abercorn no. 382, consecrated 1905 in Calcutta
Lodge Minden no. 464, consecrated 1920 in Calcutta
Lodge Hely Hutchinson no. 465, consecrated 1920 in Calcutta
Lodge Jagat Banerjee no. 490, consecrated 1921 in Calcutta
Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567, consecrated 1924 in Calcutta
Lodge Saxena no. 815, consecrated 1960 in Calcutta

Though it was stated that the Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India (I.C.) reverted to being an Inspectorate in 1961, there are Summons for the Provincial Grand Lodge Meetings, even in subsequent years.

The Minden Lodge no. 464 I.C. was an Installed Masters Lodge during its lifetime in Calcutta.

The Brethren of Minden Lodge no. 464 I.C. and Lodge Hely Hutchinson no. 465 I.C., along with Brethren of the English Constitution in Calcutta Petitioned for the Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. in 1924. The Ceremony of Dedication and Constitution was held on 10th December 1924. The Constituting Officer was W. Bro. A. F. Wyatt.

It was suggested in Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. that the Meeting of the Lodge in November each year, the toast of "The Founders" be given at the Refreshment Board.

The Minutes of Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. of January 1926 record that a Jewel be presented to W. Bro. Edwin A. Rodgers (later V. W. Bro. E. A. Rodgers, Senior Assistant Grand Inspector for Bengal) for his good work before and after the formation of the Lodge. He was also subsequently honoured when the Rodgers Memorial R. A. Chapter no. 567 I.C., named after him, was Consecrated in 1949; to mark the Silver Jubilee of Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C.

The Indian Army requisitioned the original Masonic Temple in Fort William, Calcutta, and the new Freemasons Hall at 19, Park Street, Calcutta was opened on 1st January 1950. The old Masonic Temple was briefly reopened on 7th July 1951 for Masonic interaction. The Freemasons' Hall in Park Street has continued to be the home of Freemasonry in Bengal, right up to the present time.

Lodge Saxena no. 815 I.C., Consecrated in Calcutta in 1960, was named in honour of V. W. Bro. R. D. Saxena, Past Provincial Grand Secretary of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India (I.C.), who was called to the Grand Lodge above in 1959. This was the last Irish Lodge to be Consecrated in India.

Under the Inspectorate of Northern India and Pakistan were:

Lodge Donoughmore no. 458, New Delhi, consecrated in 1919 in Simla
Lodge Irish Friendship no. 768, New Delhi, consecrated in 1954
Lodge Emerald Isle no. XIX, Lahore, Pakistan

Lodge Donoughmore no. 458 I.C. and Lodge Hely Hutchinson no. 465 I.C. were named after the Earls of Donoughmore.

The following Irish Lodges joined the Grand Lodge of India when it was constituted in 1961:

Lodge Duke of Abercorn no. 382 I.C., Kolkata as Lodge 67 GLI
Lodge Sunut no. 263 I.C., Kolkata as Lodge 80 GLI
Lodge Jagat Banerjee no. 490 I.C, Kolkata as lodge 98 GLI
Lodge Irish Friendship no. 768 I.C., New Delhi as Lodge 128 GLI
Lodge Matheran no. 792 I.C., Matheran as Lodge 135 GLI
The Artificers Lodge no. 807, Mumbai as Lodge 138 GLI

Apart from these Craft Lodges, Chapter Shamrock, Rose and Thistle United no. 382 I.C., Calcutta; and The Irish Royal Arch Chapter no. 768 I.C., New Delhi joined the newly formed Grand Chapter of India, along with the Lodges they were attached to.

In 1983, the four remaining Calcutta Lodges of the Irish Constitution, which were facing troubled times and dwindling numbers, were relocated to other cities in India.

The first Lodge to be successfully relocated was Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C., which was moved to Chennai, where it now works at the present time; along with The Rodgers Memorial Royal Chapter no. 567 I.C. attached to it and The Madras Millennium Council of Knight Masons no. 98. It was followed in quick succession by Lodge Hely Hutchinson no. 465 I.C., relocated to Pune. The remaining Lodges followed suit subsequently.

The Active Irish Lodges in India at this time are:

Lodge St. Patrick no. 319, Mumbai
Tara Lodge of Installed Masters no. 419
Lodge Donoughmore no. 458, New Delhi
Lodge Minden no. 464, Kollam, Kerala
Lodge Hely Hutchinson no. 465, Pune
Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567, Chennai
Bombay Lodge no. 648, Mumbai
Swastik Lodge no. 771, Mumbai
Lodge Nowroze Wadia no. 804, Mumbai
Lodge Saxena no. 815, Calicut (Kozhikode)

R. W. Bro. Capt. Sam Behram Aga, Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India was the first Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India, a post he graced till November 2001. R. W. Bro. Capt. Sam Behram Aga was called to the Grand Lodge above in March 2002. He was succeeded by R. W. Bro. Lahu Chandrakant Chogle (2001-2009) and R. W. Bro. Ardeshir Sam Aga (2009 onwards).

Beyond Irish Craft Lodges in India:

For many years, there was only one Irish Royal Arch Chapter in India; the R. A. Chapter Shamrock, Rose and Thistle United no. 382 I.C., attached to the Lodge Duke of Abercorn no. 382 I.C. It was Warranted on 7th May 1907 and Consecrated 31st August 1907 in Calcutta. It joined the newly formed Grand Chapter of India in 1961 as Founder Chapter no. 19.

In 1928-29, the Lodge Shamrock no. 408 I.C. were in talks with Grand Lodge to have a Royal Arch Chapter attached to the Lodge; this would have been the second Irish Chapter in India, and the first in Bombay. However, the Lodge returned their Warrant to Grand Lodge before the Chapter could take shape. There was no Irish Chapter in Bombay for the next three decades.

The Rodgers Memorial R. A. Chapter no. 567 I.C. was the second Irish Chapter consecrated in 1949, attached to the Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. in Calcutta, on the Silver Jubilee of Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. The Chapter moved to Mumbai with the Lodge Harp of Erin in 1983; the Lodge was relocated to Chennai in 1986; the Chapter was repatriated with the Lodge in November 2011.

The third Irish R. A. Chapter formed in India was eponymously called "The Irish R. A. Chapter no. 768 I.C.", attached to Lodge Irish Friendship no. 768 I.C. Warranted 4th November 1959 and consecrated 18th January 1960 in New Delhi. It joined the Grand Chapter of India on its formation as Chapter 38 GCI.

The fourth Irish R. A. Chapter in India was the R. A. Chapter St. Patrick no. 27 I.C., consecrated in November 1961 in Mumbai. It was the first Irish R. A. Chapter to be Consecrated in Mumbai.

The Chapter celebrated 50 years in November 2011, 6 months after the Centenary Meeting of Lodge St. Patrick no. 319 I.C. It holds the distinction of being the (oldest) continuously working R. A. Chapter in India. For some years, between 1983 to 1989, it was the only working Irish R. A. Chapter in India till the Rodgers Memorial R. A. Chapter was reopened in Mumbai, prior to being repatriated to its parent Lodge, now in Chennai. Chapter St. Patrick has been working continuously since its Consecration, even when the Rodgers Memorial R. A. Chapter was inactive.

The Chapter was a product of the initiative taken by the then Provincial Grand Master, R. W. Bro. Maneckji Dossabhoy Bharucha, the Provincial Grand Secretary, V. W. Bro. N. R. Ferguson and several senior Officers of the then Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India. The first Excellent King of the Chapter was E. Comp. H. C. Sarkar.

Subsequently, two more Irish R. A. Chapters were consecrated in 1996 and 2003 respectively: R. A. Chapter Nowroze Wadia no. 804 I.C., attached to Lodge Nowroze Wadia no. 804 I.C. in Mumbai and the R. A. Chapter Sahadevan no. 815 I.C. attached to Lodge Saxena no. 815 I.C. in Calicut.

It is interesting to note that with the exception of Chapter St. Patrick no. 27 I.C., all Irish Royal Arch Chapters in India have carried the number of the Craft Lodge they have been attached to.

The District Grand R. A. Chapter of Ireland in India was consecrated in February 2004 by M. E. Comp. Charles Knipe, M. E. and S. Grand King of the Supreme Grand R. A. Chapter of Ireland and the Deputy Grand King R. E. Comp. Michael J. Ward (who is also the R. W. Grand Secretary of Instruction of the Grand Lodge of Ireland). M. E. Comp. Burjor Nariman Gimi was installed as the first District Grand King. On his demise in August 2009, he was succeeded by M. E. Comp. Rajiv Devendra Dave.

M. E. Comp. Burjor Nariman Gimi was previously Grand Superintendent, a post previously held by M. E. Comp. Sam Behram Aga.

The first R. A. Chapter to be consecrated after the formation of the District Grand R. A. Chapter of Ireland in India was the Bombay Chapter no. 648 I.C., attached to the Bombay Lodge no. 648 I.C., bringing the number of Chapters in the District to five.

The first Council of Knight Masons in India was the Capt. Sam B. Aga Knight Masons Council no. 87 in Mumbai in 2005. The Madras Millennium Council no. 98 was consecrated in February 2011 in Chennai.

Timeline of Irish Freemasonry in India

Year	Milestone
1725	Grand Lodge of Ireland founded in Dublin.
1754-1905	Irish Freemasonry in India principally composed of Lodges with Travelling Warrants attached to Regiments and Battalions. Members mainly consisted of Military personnel and Lodges met in Cantonments or Barracks. Lodges moved with Regiments wherever they were stationed; thus covered a wide area from Haserabad on the North-west Frontier (present day Hazirabad in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan) to Rangoon and Thayethmo, Burma (present-day Yangon, Myanmar). A distance of 4,000 km.
1754	Warrant granted to Lodge 244. Lodge broke up before reaching India.
	Lodge attached to the 39 th Regiment comes to Madras (now Chennai).
1812	Lodge Minden no. 63 I.C., Warranted in 1737, reports "Warrant and Jewels lost in India", presumably casualty of the Anglo-Maratha Wars in Poona (now Pune).
1817	Lodge of Social and Military Virtues no. 227 I.C., warranted in 1752, attached to the 46th Regiment of Foot loses most of its members to a cholera epidemic in the Coromandel.
1822	Lodge Social Friendship no. 863 I.C., consecrated as a travelling Lodge on 5th April 1798, exchanges this Warrant for an English Warrant no. 497 in Fort William, Calcutta (now Kolkata).
1826	The UGLE discovers the Lodge Union no. 432 E.C. also holds a Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland, the first documented instance of a Lodge in Fort William, Calcutta having dual warrants.
1828-1840	The Cameronian Lodge, an Irish Lodge attached to the 26 th Foot Regiment works in Madras, Calcutta and Meerut, moving with the Regiment. Originally Warranted 309 I.C., it ultimately applied for a new Warrant and became Lodge Minden no. 26 I.C.
1835	Lodge Light of the North no. 357 I.C. Consecrated in Kernaul (now Karnal, Haryana). This is the first Irish Lodge Warranted and Consecrated in India. The Lodge acquired a dual Warrant from UGLE in 1837, and ultimately became defunct within 3 years of Consecration, losing members to a Malaria epidemic.
1860-1891	Lodge Sphinx no. 263 I.C., attached to 20th Foot Lancastershire Regiment was consecrated in Ahmednagar on 6th October 1860. It moved away with the Regiment in 1891.
1905	Lodge Duke of Abercorn no. 382 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta.
1907	R. A. Chapter Shamrock, Rose and Thistle United no. 382 I.C., attached to the Lodge Duke of Abercorn no. 382 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta.
1909	Lodge Sunut no. 263 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta.
1911	Lodge St. Patrick no. 319 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
1913	Lodge Shamrock no. 408 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
1915	The Tara Lodge of Installed Masters no. 419 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
1919	Lodge Donoughmore no. 458 I.C. Consecrated in Simla.
1920-1961	The peak of Irish Freemasonry in Bengal. There were 7 Craft Lodges and 2 Royal Arch Chapters in Calcutta at the time of formation of the Grand Lodge of India.
1920	Lodge Emerald Isle no. XIX (19 I.C.) moves to Umballa (now Ambala, Haryana) from Senglea, Malta.
	Lodge Minden no. 464 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta as a Lodge of Installed Masters.
	Lodge Hely-Hutchinson no. 465 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta
1921	Lodge Emerald Isle no. XIX moves to Dehra Doon.
	Lodge Jagat Banerjee no. 490 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta
1922	Lodge Emerald Isle no. XIX moves to Lahore.
1924	Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta.
1928	Lodge Shamrock no. 408 I.C. is in discussions with Grand Lodge to have an attached Royal Arch Chapter, which would be the first Irish Royal Chapter in Bombay.
	Lodge Shamrock no. 408 I.C. returns their Warrant. The Warrant is lost in transit, and is never received by Grand Lodge.
1931	Lodge Shamrock no. 408 I.C. erased from the Rolls of the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

- 1933 The Bombay Lodge no. 648 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
- 1947 Independence and Partition of India. Lodge Emerald Isle no. XIX becomes the only Irish Lodge in newly formed Pakistan.
- 1949 The Rodgers Memorial R. A. Chapter no. 567 I.C., attached to Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta
- 1954 Lodge Irish Friendship no. 768 I.C. Consecrated in New Delhi.
- 1955 The "Swastik" Lodge no. 771 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
- 1956 Lodge Matheran no. 792 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay. It worked in Matheran, Bombay State.
- 1957 The Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (I.C.) formed with 4 Craft Lodges in their jurisdiction. 3 more Craft Lodges were Consecrated under the Provincial Grand Lodge of Western India (I.C.)
The Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India (I.C.) formed with 6 Craft Lodges in their jurisdiction. One more Craft Lodge was Consecrated under the Provincial Grand Lodge of Eastern India (I.C.)
- 1958 Lodge Nowroze Wadia no. 804 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
- 1958 Brethren from Mumbai presented a Petition to form Lodge Engineers and Architects on the rolls of the Grand Lodge of Ireland.
- 1959 Lodge Artificers no. 807 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
34 Brethren presented a Petition to form a Lodge Kirkee in Kirkee (now Khadki), a Military Cantonment bordering present day Pune. The Lodge was not warranted.
Brethren of Belgaum, then a part of Bombay State, now in present day Karnataka, presented a Petition to form a Lodge Sawantwadi. The Lodge was not warranted.
- 1960 The Irish Royal Arch Chapter no. 768 I.C. attached to Lodge Irish Friendship no. 768 I.C. Consecrated in New Delhi.
Lodge Saxena no. 815 I.C. Consecrated in Calcutta. This was the last Irish Craft Lodge to be Consecrated in India.
- 1961 Lodge St. Patrick completes 50 years.
The Grand Lodge of India formed. 6 Irish Craft Lodges join the newly formed Grand Lodge of India.
Grand Chapter of India formed along with the Grand Lodge of India. 2 Irish R. A. Chapters join the newly formed Grand Chapter of India.
R. A. Chapter St. Patrick no. 27 I.C. Consecrated in Bombay.
- 1962-1983 Irish Freemasonry in Bengal declines in membership.
- 1983 The Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland in India Constituted and all Irish Lodges in India come under its jurisdiction.
All Irish Lodges in Bengal relocated to Bombay.
- 1986 Lodge St. Patrick no. 319 I.C. completes 75 years. Commemorative Silver Coins struck by the Lodge.
- 1987 Lodge Harp of Erin no. 567 I.C. relocated to Madras.
- 1989 The Rodgers Memorial R. A. Chapter no. 567 I.C. relocated to Bombay.
- 1992 Lodge Hely Hutchinson no. 465 I.C. relocated to Pune.
- 1993 Lodge Minden no. 464 I.C. relocated to Kanpur.
- 1995 Lodge Saxena no. 815 I.C. relocated to Kozhikode (Calicut).
- 1996 R. A. Chapter Nowroze Wadia no. 804 I.C. Consecrated in Mumbai.
- 2003 R. A. Chapter Sahadevan no. 815 I.C. Consecrated in Calicut.
- 2004 The District Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Ireland in India Constituted in Mumbai.
- 2005 The Capt. Sam B. Aga Council of Knight Masons no. 87 Consecrated in Mumbai.
- 2009 The Bombay R. A. Chapter no. 648 I.C. Consecrated in Mumbai.
- 2011 The Madras Millennium Council of Knight Masons no. 98 Consecrated in Chennai.
Lodge St. Patrick no. 319 I.C. celebrates Centenary and gives Centenary Jewels to members.
Chapter St. Patrick no. 27 I.C. celebrates 50 years and gives 50 year Jewels to members.
- 2014 The "Swastik" Lodge no. 771 I.C. hold their first open air meeting in Kolad, about 120 km from Mumbai.
Lodge Minden no. 464 I.C. relocated to Kollam (Quilon), Kerala.

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