

IRISH LODGES IN NEW ZEALAND

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On 31st July, 1841, the New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette printed a report on the laying of the foundation stone of St Paul's Church: "The gentlemen of Auckland who were Freemasons appeared with the decorations and insignia of their Order." This appears to be the first published record of the presence of Masons in Auckland. How they came to be there we can only guess; whether an open invitation was made or whether they simply appeared we can only surmise.

No doubt however their meeting together fired them with a desire to 'form a regular Lodge for the development of the craft. A period of eighteen months elapsed between this event and the first meeting of the lodge yet this delay can be easily accounted for by the delay in obtaining the necessary authority for opening a lodge.

In those days Freemasons in the colony desirous of forming a lodge could either petition a Grand Lodge for a Warrant or apply to the nearest Craft Lodge for a Dispensation. In 1841, and for many subsequent years, communication with the Mother Country was very irregular. There were long intervals between the arrival of vessels from England. We can therefore conclude that an application to a Grand Lodge for a Warrant would not appeal to brethren keen to start a lodge. Application for authority to constitute a Lodge in Auckland was forwarded to the Social Lodge, No. 260, I.C., in Sydney, which had been in existence for twenty years. The Dispensation was dated 5th September, 1842, and was brought to Auckland by a brother from Australia but it did not arrive till 9th February, 1843. The lodge was formed on 9th February, 1843. It was opened in the First Degree, when Bro. Moses then presented to the officers and members of the lodge a Dispensation granted by Lodge 260 in Sydney; also five jewels and a printed code of by-laws being a loan from the above mentioned lodge to their brethren in Auckland. The Dispensation was for two years or until the pleasure of the Grand Lodge was known. During the first two years 26 meetings were held at which there were twenty brethren initiated and six affiliated. For the next few years there was very little progress but during this time land was bought on which the Masonic Hotel was subsequently erected.

From 1847-49 no meetings were held, but on 8th January, 1848, the Warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland was handed over to Bro. Leech who was then installed into the chair and the foundation of the Lodge was complete. Under the Warrant the lodge had no name, simply a number: 348. During the first seven years all records are headed "Minutes of a Masonic Lodge held in Auckland". In two instances the name "Auckland Social Lodge" was used, evidently adopted from the Mother Lodge in Sydney, but no, other was used until the name "Ara". Unfortunately there is no record of the origin of the word, which began to be used in 1850 but several theories have been put forward -

1. From the constellation 'Ara consisting of twenty stars 40° from the South Pole and visible in New Zealand.
2. From the Latin Ara signifying altar or "refuge", "sanctuary".
3. From the Maori "Ara", The verb signifies "arise" or "awaken" and the noun means "road" or "pathway". From these we can deduce Ara was an emblem of light communicated around the altar whence the candidate is awakened from darkness and guided along the pathway leading to Masonic Light.

On 2nd August, 1858, Bro. Stark brought forward a motion of which he had given notice at the last meeting and read a petition to the Most Worshipful the Grand Lodge of Ireland on the necessity of

the appointment of a Provincial Grand Master for New Zealand. It was moved and "seconded that W. Bro. C. P. O'Rafferty be recommended for the office of Prov. G.M. Some of the reasons given for the need of a Prov. G.M. were:-

1. That in this colony of New Zealand there are 50,000 European inhabitants and twelve towns containing from 400 to 4,000 Europeans each.
2. That those towns are all connected by the postal service, and that there is constant communication, commercial and other, between them. That so far as we know there is only one Lodge of Freemasons under the Irish Constitution in the whole Colony.
3. That there are many brethren desirous of forming themselves into Lodges in different parts of these Islands, but that owing to the uncertainty and delays incident to communication with Ireland, they are deterred from petitioning the Grand Lodge for Warrants.
4. That this circumstance is very detrimental to the interests of Freemasonry in New Zealand, amounting almost to a practical prohibition of the extension of the Order.
5. That if the brethren had the same facility for obtaining warrants here that they have at home, in Canada, or other places, the number of Lodges would immediately increase, the Craft would gain valuable accession of respectable and influential members, and the brethren, already belonging to it would enjoy those advantages of the Order which every good Mason feels it a hardship to be deprived of.
6. That in order to remove the disabilities which Masons labour under, we pray the Most Worshipful the Grand Master will be pleased to recognise the Islands of New Zealand as a Masonic province, and appoint a Provincial Grand Master to rule over it.
7. For diverse good reasons, we unanimously recommend to the favourable consideration of the Most Worshipful the Grand Master and Grand Lodge of Ireland our worthy and Worshipful Master, Brother Cormack Patrick O'Rafferty, C.E., and pray that he may be appointed our first Prov. Grand Master. Grand Lodge appointed W. Bro. C. P. O'Rafferty as Prov. G.M. on 24th June, 1859, but by this time he had moved to Melbourne and W. Bro. Henry De Burgh Adams was appointed Deputy Prov. G.M. in his stead. Henry De Burgh Adams was Principal Purveyor to the Army and carried the rank of Major. (In modern times he would probably be a Quartermaster-General.) Born in Canada, he took part in the Crimean War and was at Sebastopol. He was a member of the Victoria Lodge, No. 4, Dublin, having been registered a M.M. In 1852. Coming to New Zealand in 1857 he affiliated with Lodge Ara. He was four years in New Zealand before taking office in Lodge Ara, due no doubt to being in different parts of the country on army duties. On being stationed eventually at Auckland he became Secretary of Ara for two and a half years, Master in 1861 and Treasurer in 1864-65. He was partly responsible for the founding of Scinde Lodge; founded, and was first Master of Lodge Onehunga, founder and first Master of United Services and is also credited with forming Lodge 480, at Hamilton and Alpha Cambridge, No. 449. On the formation of Prov. G.L. he was appointed Dep. Prov. G.M. and on the resignation of Patrick O'Rafferty took over the ruling of Prov. G.L. After eleven years in New Zealand he left with the troops and died in London three years later at the age of 39. The Irish Lodge in New Plymouth was formed in his honour but the records show that he never visited the Lodge although he assisted it financially both whilst in New Zealand and after leaving for London.

In 1889 a circular was read on the subject of forming a United Grand Lodge of New Zealand. This was in March, but the matter was deferred, until May of the same year, when after much debate a motion to join the proposed union was carried by one vote. Opposition was very strong and attempts were made to rescind the motion. In August a motion to that end was defeated by a majority of seven. In May the following year another attempt was made to rescind the previous motion but after a long discussion this was defeated by two votes.

Before the date of the next meeting the Dispensation from the G.L. of N.Z. had been received. Upon the announcement being made that the lodge was now under the G.L. of N.Z. those brethren who were desirous of continuing their allegiance to G.L. of Ireland retired from the room and

Lodge Ara No. 1 was duly established. The brethren who remained loyal to the Irish Constitution reformed Ara 348¹ and duly installed a Master in September of that year, 1890. After the break the lodge had rather a difficult time but gradually recovered, and today is one of the foremost Lodges in the country. They have a magnificent Temple right in the heart of Auckland which is used exclusively by themselves and Ara Chapter. They are either half or one-third owners of another Masonic Temple and up to ten years ago were owners of the Grand Hotel. As the new Intercontinental Hotel was built practically opposite, the lodge decided to change the building over to office accommodation. They raised a loan (of six figures) to carry out those alterations and today they now have an even better income than before, thanks to the wisdom and far-sightedness of the founders away back in 1843. As far as I can ascertain twenty-one Irish Lodges were formed in New Zealand. Of these seven lapsed, ten surrendered their Charters and joined the G.L. of N.Z. leaving four remaining, which are: Ara, 348; De Burgh Adams, 446; Lodge of Light, 454; St. Patrick, 468. [to be continued]

DE BURGH ADAMS

The first lodge in New Plymouth was Mt. Egmont, which was originally Irish but changed over to the English Constitution. After some years of heavy fighting in Taranaki, some of the officers of the large contingent of Imperial troops stationed at New Plymouth considered that a lodge under the Irish Constitution should be formed, and in January, 1865, -formal application was made to the Dep. Prov. G.M. (R.W. Bro. Henry De Burgh Adams) for a dispensation to, open a lodge. In February of the same year an assemblage of brethren met at the Masonic Hotel where the new lodge was duly constituted and founded. At high noon the brethren of the English lodge met the intending members of the Irish lodge. The W.M. was installed, the Wardens and other officers were invested, and Lodge De Burgh Adams was declared open. After this the brethren formed in procession, led by the Tyler with drawn sword and the D.C. with the W.M. at the rear supported by the Installing P.M.s., and marched to the porch of St. Mary's Church, where Divine Service was held. After the service the procession marched back to the Lodge Room. At 6.30 that evening a banquet was held in the Masonic Hotel, and it is recorded that "The enjoyment of the brethren was much enhanced by the delightful performance of the Band of the 43rd Light Infantry kindly lent by the Commanding Officer and Officers".

About the same time a third lodge was formed in New Plymouth under the Scottish Constitution (Southern Kilwinning) but it soon became apparent that there was not room for three lodges. When most of the troops departed in 1867 a meeting was held to consider amalgamating the three Lodges but no satisfactory scheme could be agreed on. A year later the regalia and furniture of Southern Kilwinning was disposed of to the best advantage and eventually the funds of that lodge were handed over to De Burgh Adams as a contribution to the building fund. From this time on there was little to report. The district was in a depression after the native wars and the lodges struggled desperately to survive. Amalgamation was again broached but the discussion always broke down as to which lodge should surrender its Warrant. Neither would say die, and to that circumstance De Burgh Adams owes its existence. Today the lodge holds an honoured position among the lodges in Taranaki and after more than a century is a very active and progressive lodge.

¹ LODGE ARA, No. 348. **Ara Lodge** No 348 (IC) was one of the sixty-five lodges that in 1889 agreed to the formation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand, but when this fact was reported back to the lodge some of the brethren disagreed and resolved to continue to hold and use the Irish charter. Thus "half" of Ara Lodge became Ara Lodge No 1 (N.Z.C.) and the other "half" remained as Ara Lodge No 348 (IC). *According to Masonic Law any three persons may hold a warrant in the event of a lodge intending to divest itself of Irish heritage* (Cam). Ara Lodge No. 348 (I.C.) has the distinction of being the oldest Masonic Lodge in New Zealand, its date of foundation being September, 1842 and it is still at Labour.

LIGHT

The Thames goldfield was opened in 1867, and after a few years, the town being then firmly established, a move was started to form a masonic lodge. Those trying to form the lodge met in the Salutation Hotel, and decided to apply to the Prov. G.M. of the Irish Constitution for a Dispensation and Charter.

On 27th April, 1870, the lodge was consecrated and dedicated by the Prov. G.M. who visited Thames for that purpose. The records of the lodge report "A large number of members from other lodges in Auckland attended and the ceremonies were carried out with great strictness according to ancient usage. After the Installation the brethren marched to St. George's Church where a service was conducted by Rev. Dr Kidd, Prov. Grand Chap. The offertory was donated to the Thames Hospital. After the service the brethren marched back to the Lodge Room where three candidates were proposed." After the lodge was opened dissatisfaction with the Lodge Room was voiced and on 25th September, 1872, a Bro. Graham offered a section as a gift. This was accepted and Bro. Graham was made a Life Member of the lodge. To build a hall a public company was formed and shares issued to secure the necessary capital. For the use of the hall, on each Wednesday night, the Lodge of Light paid a rent of \$30 per annum. The laying of the foundation stone was a most impressive ceremony and in accordance with masonic custom. The brethren formed in procession and marched to the site. A full choral service was held and great interest was taken by the citizens of Thames who witnessed for the first time such a service. About a year after the hall was built the members of the lodge determined to assume the liabilities of the company, and eventually became the sole owners of the property. The lodge had been launched under favourable circumstances and progressed satisfactorily, with a large membership and a hall of its own. It has continued to prosper and in February, 1970, celebrated its centenary at which the GM. was present. Lodge Ara and Lodge of Light, being close geographically, have also become very friendly, holding many interchanges of visits. Especially so at installation meetings. In earlier years the most convenient means of transport between Auckland and Thames was by steamer, and after enjoying each other's company in the lodge room there was a restful - sometimes not so restful - sea journey home. The arrival of the ferries was one of the events of the day and long before they had tied up at the wharf cabbies would be there in force to convey to 'their homes anyone with unsteady legs or who found the turbulent waters too much to cope with.

ST. PATRICK

The youngest, and to us the most important of the four Irish lodges in New Zealand, is Lodge St. Patrick. Irish freemasonry came into existence in Otago on 29th March, 1866, when the Shamrock Lodge, No. 448, was opened in the Masonic Hall, Princes Street, Dunedin, under Dispensation from the Prov. G.L. Prominent among those promoting Irish freemasonry in Dunedin were Bro. T. S. Graham, of Lodge St. Patrick, Cork, and Bro. C. White, of Lodge 424; Belfast. Bro. White was installed as first Master of Shamrock, with Bro. Graham as Senior Warden. With the discovery of gold in Otago round about that time, the population of Dunedin fluctuated, this no doubt having an influence on activities outside of business and after five years Lodge Shamrock ceased to function. For ten years no Irish lodge met in Dunedin but on 21st September, 1881, a preliminary meeting was held for the purpose of forming a lodge under the Irish Constitution. W. Bro. Graham, who had been one of the founders of Shamrock, was chairman for this meeting. It was resolved that a lodge bearing the name "St. Patrick's Lodge" be formed and also that of W. Bro. Graham be first Master; W. Bro. Kerr, Senior Warden; and Bro. Blanchard, Junior Warden. The Dispensation issued by Prov. G.L. under the hand of R.W. Bro. Pierce, Prov. G.M., shows that Bros. Graham and Kerr were members of Shamrock 448 and Bro. Blanchard a member of the Dunedin Lodge, No. 931, E.C. In the first minute book there is a letter from the Prov. G. Sec. to Bro. Graham pointing out that all Chartered Members must be registered and financial in their respective Grand Lodges. Both Graham and Kerr were members of the old Shamrock Lodge which

was in considerable arrears to Grand Lodge. There is no record to show how, this was overcome but everything must have been fixed up satisfactorily because on 3rd November, 1881, the members assembled at 7.15 and were introduced to a lodge in the First Degree presided over by Bro. Julius Hyman, P. Prov. G.S.W. Bro. Harvey, D.G.M., S.C., consecrated the lodge by sprinkling corn and oil, Bro. Nathan, P.D.S.W. E.C., wine, Bro. Caldwell, G.S. S.C., salt. The brethren then saluted the lodge after which Bro. Graham was installed as the first Master and Officers were invested. After being Master for three months, W. Bro. Graham resigned his position as Master to take up the appointment of District Grand Master, English Constitution, despite the fact that he had never held office in an English lodge. Originally named "St. Patrick's Lodge" the minutes of 1884 are headed "Lodge of St. Patrick" although the monthly circular was still headed "St. Patrick's Lodge". With a change of Secretary the minutes were headed minutes of "Lodge St. Patrick". There is no record to show that the name was officially altered but just appeared to be the choice of the then Secretary, so the title- of Lodge St. Patrick has been used from 1885 until today. The early minutes show that the brethren endeavoured to put into practice many of the tenets of the Craft. As far back as 1885 a series of lectures on freemasonry was given. Requests for assistance from needy brethren of any Constitution were frequent, there being no Benevolent Funds, and the records show that deserving cases were always assisted either by grant from the lodge funds or by a special collection amongst the members.

Around about 1888 there was a move to form another Irish lodge in North-East Valley, but after careful study it was decided not to. It is interesting to note that the Master of St. John Kilwinning, No 662 which at that time met in North-East Valley, took part in the final discussion and was very much against it (In those days visiting lodges were admitted before the correspondence was read and often took part in the discussions of the lodge.)

On 8th February, 1899, a special meeting was held and it was announced that that G.L. of N.Z. was recognised by the G.L. of Ireland. This meant that members of Lodge St. Patrick could receive and visit lodges of the N.Z. Constitution. On that night a vote was taken whether to remain Irish or change over and it was decided unanimously to remain under the G.L. of Ireland. At the installation of 1900, for the first time all Constitutions were represented, by Prov. and Dist. Grand Masters. This custom continued up to the end of World War II for all installations of all Constitutions. Over the years we have had many keen and loyal members. Men like , the late W. Bro. Deane Sharp who walked from Carey's Bay (some 14 miles) to attend his lodge, or W. Bro. Alex Clark who when during World War II St. Patrick's found. going hard, took office and became Master in his eighty-first year Men, who in good times and difficult, remained loyal to all that freemasonry stood for so that today, after nearly a hundred years, Lodge St. Patrick is still a force in this district.

