

History of the David Bonner Lodge No. 9678

The David Bonner Lodge No. 9678 (for thus it was consecrated, the "of Music & Harmony" being a subsequent affectation) evolved from the Middlesex Masonic Choir such having been created by the ordinance of the (then) Pro Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Gordon Lionel Bourne.

With the choir being required to sing at the Annual Provincial Service (such alternating between Guildford Cathedral & St. Alban's Abbey) and at every consecration that took place within the Province they rapidly gained a high profile and speculation mounted that they would in due course look to form a lodge.

In the best of Masonic traditions this was formally mooted within a Tavern (the Red Lion at St. Alban's) during a break between rehearsal and the Annual Provincial Service in 1997. Then started the hardwork of bringing the proposal to fruition.

In recognition of all of the support afforded both to the choir and to the Petitioners by the new Pro Provincial Grand Master it was decided that this new lodge was to be called the David Bonner Lodge.

Much debate surrounded the choice of ritual that the lodge would practise with the majority of the Petitioners expressing a preference for either Taylor's or Universal working. In this we were thwarted with it being made clear to us that as a) our sponsoring lodge were Emulation, b) the Province was Emulation & c) we were seeking permission to be named after the Pro Provincial Grand Master we would have to be an Emulation Lodge.

To this we reluctantly agreed, at least "on paper" with the caveat that all of the brethren would continue to use the ritual of their respective Mother Lodges.

Following the Consecration of the David Bonner Lodge by R.W. Bro. the Rev'd David Bonner in the Rose Room at Twickenham Rugby Stadium in October 1998 this "tradition" was zealously maintained often raising the question by a visitor "What ritual do you use?".

During its early days the lodge was frequently very well attended with guests/visitors being treated to a brass fanfare as the W.M. entered in procession. As would be expected of a choristers lodge singing featured prominently within our ceremonies particularly so at our Installation meetings when traditional Masonic songs were performed both on the opening of all three degrees and on the Installation of the new Master.

The David Bonner Lodge was also noted for its Festive Board which, with the exception of Installations, were invariably "White Table" and always featured musical entertainment. This of course varied and have included a truly outstanding rendition of the "Post Horn Gallop" by a member of the Household Division and the haunting music of the Harp by a player just returned from performing at Broadway. There was also, on one occasion, some somewhat risqué dancing by a highly respected member of the lodge to First & Second World War accordion music but maybe it would be better to draw a veil over that!

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the David Bonner Lodge was that of its hosting the

European Masonic Meeting on the first occasion that it met on .British soil. The main Temple was filled to capacity with Freemasons from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal & Romania all in their respective regalia together with a large German contingent in impeccable evening dress complete with tailcoats and their distinctive white aprons. There was even a Brother from New Zealand!

As their wives and partners accompanied them this required sole use of Cole Court and its grounds. It was a true example of Brotherly Love, Peace and Harmony. It was just a pity that nobody from the Province was able to join us.

Sadly, in latter years and with so many of our brethren having been called to the Grand Lodge Above, membership fell to a level whereby we had insufficient active members to fill the offices. We therefore had no option other than to return our Warrant to the Grand Master secure in the knowledge that there is no such thing as a "failed" lodge, merely one whose work has been concluded.

Happy have we met, happy have we been. Happy may we part and happy meet again. It's been a blast!