

The Gazette and News 7 May 1898

Memorial Tablet unveiled and Foundation Stones Laid”

It is a long time since there was anything like so large a gathering of Masonic Brethren in Blackpool as was the case on Saturday, when the visit of Lord Skelmersdale, P.G.W., P.Pr.G.W. to take the leading part in three interesting ceremonials, was accorded all the honours of the Masonic Craft. The proceedings were arranged jointly by the W.M.'s of the seven Lodges in Blackpool, Poulton and Fleetwood, and not only were these particular Lodges well represented but there was a large attendance from other Masonic bodies in the Fylde and other parts of Lancashire. The three hundred or more brethren who attended certainly made a fine display. They were uniformly attired in dark morning clothes and silk hats... though we would not be so bold as to say that all the “toppers” were of this century’s make... with Craft insignia, and Craft or Royal Arch jewels only. Fortunately, the weather was more favourable, and Barnum and Bailey’s “greatest show on earth” could hardly have attracted more attention than did the Masons in their procession to and from St. Paul’s Church and the site of the new Masonic Hall. Who will number themselves among the detractors of Freemasonry when the Craft can turn out such a gathering of good looking, prosperous, and paunchy gentlemen as promenaded our streets on Saturday afternoon? The principle figure in the ceremonials was Lord Skelmersdale, son of the Earl of Lathom, Provincial Grand Master, and her Majesty’s Lord Chamberlain.

He is a noble looking gentleman, standing at least six feet high, and carries himself in a manner that impresses one that he has military training. His age we would take to be about 36, his complexion is light, a handsome moustache adding to attractive and clear-cut features. He possesses a rich baritone voice, clear and distinct, and the manner in which he performed the various ceremonies was most pleasing

After the ceremony was completed, the procession went by way of Warbreck Road, and Topping Street, to the site of the Masonic Hall, in Upper Adelaide Street, when the foundation stone was laid. The proceedings were similar to those at St. Paul’s Church hymn being sung with the National Anthem.

In a recess covered over with a brass plate, and bearing an inscription to that on the stone, were placed copies of the papers and coins of the current year, after which the stone was placed in position with Masonic formalities. The inscription on the stone was:-

“This foundation stone was laid by Right Hon. Lord Skelmersdale, P.G.W., P.Pr.G.W., West Lancashire

May 7th 1898”

He was also presented with a mallet by Bro. John Wray, P.M., chairman of the directors of the Masonic Hall, and a trowel by Mr Nuttall, on the latter of which was the inscription similar to that on the trowel which he received at the ceremony at St. Paul’s Church. The procession was then formed in inverted order, the Heralds, the Provincial G. Standard Bearers taking the lead, followed by the Provincial Grand Master, and others according to rank, back to Christ Church Schools, when the Provincial Grand Lodge was closed.

There was a good attendance of the general public.

After the ceremonials of the day had been completed a number of the brethren sat down to a splendid dinner at the Lane’s End Hotel, an appropriate toast list afterwards being honoured. Bro. John Wray presided, and among those present were:-

The Right Hon. Lord Skelmersdale P.G.W., P.Pr.G.W., W.Bro Goodacre, Pr.G.S., W. Bro. Boardbent, Prov.G.D.S., Bro. Slyman, Prov. G. S., W. Bro. Burrows, W. Bro. E. Taylor, W. Bro. Longbottom, W. Bro. S. Wolstenholme, Bro. T. W. Kay, Bro. R. Escolme, Bro. John Cardwell, Bro. T. Blacow, Bro. J. W. Coop, Bro. T. Marsden, Bro. McKinell, Bro. W. Templar P.M., Bro. E. Henthorne, Bro. G. Ashworth, Bro J. H. Martin, Bro. T. Rhodes, W. Bro. Price, W. Bro. Barrow, Bro. Davies (Hull), Bro. Turner, Bro. W. Holland, W. Bro. Brandwood, W.M. 1303, Lancaster, W. Bro. Parker, W.Bro. Jackson, W. Bro. M. Barlow, Bro. Adkins (Preston), Bro. F. J. Thompson, Bro. Dryden, Bro. Lomax, Bro. Gilbertson, Bro. Catterall, Tyler, Bro. Leigh, Bro. Lingard, Bro. T. Ethell, Bro. W. H. Fox, Bro. Roe, W. Bro. A. P. Frith, W. Bro. J. Anderson, W. Bro. W. Bond, W. Bro. T. Lofthouse, W. Bro. Clayton, Bro. J. Kay, Bro. C. E. Hindle, Bro. C. Noden, Bro. E. Whiteside, Bro. J. Monk, Bro. Jowett, Bro. E. Hargreaves, Bro.H. Hall, Bro. J. I. Booth, Bro. R. Hull, Bro. T. Sankey, Bro. R. S. H. Butterworth, Bro. Dr. Dunderdale, Bro. R. O. Brierley, Bro. A Taylor, Bro. J. Whitehead, Bro W. Nuttall, Bro. C. W. Callis, Bro. A. J. Nuttall, Bro. Dr. Buxton, W. Bro. Watson, Prov. G. Treasurer, W.Bro. T. Forrester, W.Bro. J. Murray, and many others.