

The history of the first 100 years of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076



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The ninety-nine volumes of *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* covering the period from the consecration of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, in 1886 to the celebration of its centenary in 1986, must represent the full history of that hundred years. For newer readers it would be a formidable task to make a full study and so this shortened history is intended, sometimes with additional information from outside sources, to cover the main events, trends and personalities of that period. Many have contributed, some a very great deal, to the life of the lodge but it is not possible to set out detailed biographies; in most cases reference must be had to an appropriate volume for greater detail. The circumstances of the original formation and the men concerned with it must preface the actual workings of the lodge and in recent years several contributors to the *Transactions* have touched on these aspects. Particularly there are detailed biographies of three of the founders, R. F. Gould by F. J. Cooper and Rev. A. F. A. Woodford by J. A. Seed (both in *AQC* 93) and General Sir Charles Warren, *GCMG, KCB*, the first Master, by A. C. F. Jackson, in *AQC* 99. John Cooper's inaugural address in *AQC* 91 also deals with some of the founders and circumstances leading up to the formation. In the lodge archives there is little dealing with matters before the actual consecration and in the *Transactions* themselves there are only occasional isolated references. Information contained in the four papers mentioned has therefore been freely used with other matter to attempt to build up a record of the moves which led to the formation of the lodge and the circumstances both in English Freemasonry at the time and of the men concerned.

The Masonic Climate

Freemasonry in England in the 1800s tended to ebb and flow in popularity. Following the Union of Grand Lodges in 1813 there was, for a time, some increase in interest and those actively involved in the Craft had much to occupy them, with the changes of ritual and practice which resulted from the Union. However, changed circumstances meant changed requirements in lodges and with lodges emanating from both former Grand Lodges attempting to continue, it soon became clear that there were too many lodges for the existing membership and for the number of men seeking to join. Thus,

with a national financial recession after 1826 tending to decrease interest in the Craft, there was a considerable thinning out, and by 1839 Freemasonry in England had reached a low ebb. The 1840s showed a moderate revival which was continued, rather spasmodically, for some time. The Prince of Wales became Grand Master in 1874 and this caused a great surge of interest, outside the Craft as well as within it.

When the United Grand Lodge of England emerged from the 1813 Union it was necessary to settle a new *Book of Constitutions*. This was intended to be in two parts, following, to some degree, the precedent of Anderson's original *Constitutions* of 1723, one part containing the regulations by which the Grand Lodge, its subordinate lodges and the members were to be governed, the other setting out the history of Freemasonry. That part containing the regulations appeared in 1815; that dealing with the history was never published. While formal records of English Freemasonry were then available from 1723, the only story of the Craft prior to that date was that contained in Anderson's *Constitutions*. This story traced Freemasonry by devious means virtually back to Adam and, to the intelligent Freemasons in high places following 1813, there must have been some doubt as to the authenticity of some parts of the story. As there was nothing else as an alternative, Anderson's version (also reflected in the writings of William Preston, which were still being published) was, to the average Freemason, as true as the Bible. The factual truth of the Bible as an actual historical record, particularly so far as the Creation was concerned, was never challenged until the 1850s, when Charles Darwin raised doubts as to the origin of man and certainly to the chronology of Ussher which had been accepted, especially in Freemasonry, since Anderson. By the 1860s—or even the late 1850s—with the long period of post-union ritual settlement out of the way and new events in the historical field, some were ready to challenge the Anderson mythical record and to put forward alternative theories on the origin of Freemasonry, based on more solid ground.

The *Regius MS* or poem is a medieval manuscript (c. 1400) concerned with the trade of building in stone. The history of its more recent ownership, through the Theyer family, addition to the Royal library by Charles II, and ultimate transfer to the British Museum in 1757 is well known. It was first noticed by J. O. Helliwell (later known as Helliwell-Phillips) who, in 1839, presented a paper on it, 'On the Antiquity of Free Masonry in England', before the Society of Antiquaries. He considered the manuscript to have reference to the origins of English Freemasonry and in 1840 published a reprint with introduction and transcript under the title *The Early History of Freemasonry in England*. There was a German translation (1842) and a second edition (1844) but interest was not maintained. This *Helliwell MS* was, however, taken up by masonic students later in the century with tacit acceptance of Helliwell's views on its significance, and it was given the name

by which it is now known at the suggestion of R. F. Gould. The *Cooke MS*, also a medieval manuscript, c. 1400 but considered later than the *Regius*, and also dealing with the mason trade, was purchased from private hands by the British Museum in 1859. It was first noticed by Matthew Cooke, a masonic collector, in a facsimile with transcript published in 1861 under the title, *The History and Articles of Masonry (now first published from a MS in the British Museum)*. Although the *Regius* and *Cooke MSS* both relate to the mason trade, they are very different in style and there are substantial differences in content.

In the 1738 edition of Anderson's *Constitutions* the author makes reference to the fact that there existed copies of 'the old Gothic Constitutions' which formed the basis of part of Anderson's book. These documents, now known as copies of the Old Charges, had been known, mainly as curiosities, for some time, and in 1860 some twenty examples were known. Those interested soon saw the startling similarities between the style and content of the *Cooke MS* and the general style and content of existing copies of the Old Charges. There were also material differences, but the similarities were sufficiently great to cause serious consideration that there was a connection between the medieval manuscript and the later, mainly seventeenth century, copies of the Old Charges. As these more modern documents could be shown through Anderson's comments to be definitely connected with Freemasonry, it was a natural step to formulate a theory that English Freemasonry had descended directly, by some means, from the operative Craft of the middle ages. Most regarded this as a tenable theory, not yet proven, as is evidenced, for example, by remarks by Sir Charles Warren at the dinner following the consecration of the lodge. In any case this increased interest from that time in what was at first called Masonic Archaeology—from the dictionary definition of the second word, 'Study of antiquities, esp. of the prehistoric period' (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 5th ed.). This was not the only theory put forward, as early papers given in *AQC* show, but there were now alternatives to Anderson's myths with what seemed to be firm supporting evidence. The 'authentic' school of masonic historians thus appeared, prepared only to accept what could be supported by proper evidence.

Another feature in the second half of the 1800s was the increased interest in masonic journalism. Robert Crucefix had blazed the trail in the 1830s with the *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*; by the 1880s there were three masonic periodicals at least being published. This gave great opportunity for writers on masonic subjects to spring into print and for comment and argument to develop. This was not quite as stimulating as face to face confrontation, but that required organised meetings and a minimum of interested people.

Rev. A. F. A. Woodford is stated to have given lectures on masonic archaeology in the late 1850s. Sir Charles Warren referred to an attempt he made with others in 1861 to form a lodge for military personnel where such

discussion might be held, but he was dissuaded by the then Grand Secretary. He also mentioned an attempt to form a Masonic Discussion Society in 1869. William Simpson referred to the Masonic Archaeological Institute, formed in 1871; details of this were published in *AQC* 2. Walter Besant, Warren and Simpson were associated with this and were advertised to present papers. The Institute faded out after about two years. Warren also said that, with Besant, he had in 1873 attempted to set up a masonic literary society, but without success. There may well have been other attempts as well, but the one that was finally successful was that which ultimately resulted in the consecration of Quatuor Coronati Lodge in January 1886.

Successful Arrangements

Records in the possession of the lodge dealing with the period before submission of the petition are few—just five pieces of paper with notes in the writing of W. H. (Harry) Rylands. Two small sheets of these five give the estimated cost of formation and of running expenses, etc., and of providing the necessary furniture. One foolscap sheet is a draft of the objects of the lodge (the final version of which accompanied the petition). The other two, foolscap sheets, contain draft by-laws which include proposals for filling some of the offices for the first year. Only seven names are mentioned in this draft, so that it may be reasonable to assume that those seven were the moving spirits behind the idea of the lodge. They are, Sir Charles Warren as Master, W. H. Rylands as Senior Warden, R. F. Gould as Junior Warden, Walter Besant as Treasurer, Rev. A. F. A Woodford as IPM, W. J. Hughan as a Deacon and G. W. Speth as Inner Guard. Against 'Secretary' Harry Rylands has twice written 'W.H.R. pro tem' so that it would appear from this that he was the organising secretary. The note endorsed on the papers in connection with the petition, which are in the Grand Lodge archives, that correspondence should addressed to Rylands, seems to confirm this.

John Cooper states that 'In 1882 . . . Hughan, Gould and William Harry Rylands, together with Woodford, formed the original group who discussed the idea of a students' lodge but this did not materialise. This group was later to be joined by Speth, and Rylands was instrumental in the introduction of Sir Charles Warren and Walter Besant to their numbers.' Cooper further says, 'Woodford, Hughan and Gould were enthusiastic but were disinclined to take action in spite of the more virile approach being advocated by G. W. Speth and W. H. Rylands. It was only when Rylands invited Gould to meet Sir Charles Warren and Walter Besant at his chambers that sufficient enthusiasm was generated to establish Quatuor Coronati Lodge'. This confirms the seven involved and the nature of their early interest.

In 1884, when the petition for the lodge was submitted, Sir Charles Warren was forty-four years of age, a highly intelligent, efficient and successful soldier, a Brevet Colonel in the Royal Engineers. He had earlier acquired a

national reputation for his archaeological work in Jerusalem when seconded, in 1867–69, for service under the Palestine Exploration Fund. In 1882 his reputation had been enhanced by a successful expedition to Egypt following the murder there of Professor Palmer and he had been made *KCMG* in 1883. Walter Besant (later, Sir Walter) also had a good reputation in the archaeological field and had been secretary of the Palestine Exploration Fund at the time Warren was connected with it. He had been associated with Warren also in two of the earlier ventures in search of such a masonic association and had been both honorary secretary and honorary treasurer at different times of the Masonic Archaeological Institute already mentioned.

R. F. Gould, when speaking about the death of Woodford, stated that Woodford, Gould and Hughan formed 'a kind of triad, having been fellow labourers in the field of Masonic literature, a little before we were joined by various other brethren in this lodge'. All three were well-known writers and commentators on masonic matters and Woodford had been, since 1872, editor of the *Freemason*. He had, for twenty-five years before that, been Rector of Swillington, near Leeds, and had during that period involved himself very much, not only in the masonry of Yorkshire, West Riding, but also in more general research and comment. While editor of the *Freemason* he himself regularly contributed articles on 'Masonic History and Historians' and on masonic notes and queries. He worked a great deal with Hughan, co-operating with him on two books and writing the preface to Hughan's *Old Charges of British Freemasons*, published in 1872. Hughan, up to 1880, was probably the best known masonic writer of his time and was the principal proponent of the theory that the Old Charges were directly descended from manuscripts of the nature of the *Cooke* and so, Freemasonry from medieval operative masonry. The problem was, proving an actual transition from 'operative' to 'speculative', which Woodford deals with in this Preface in stating his belief that the Old Charges witnessed 'the change from actual operative to a speculative and accepted Brotherhood'. Hughan, who was also in his forties at this time, lived in the west country and settled in Torquay. Hughan underwent a period of poor health about this time and he describes himself in 1884 as 'late warehouse manager', indicating that he had given up his employment. He wrote the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry for Freemasonry and assisted Woodford with his *Cyclopaedia of Freemasonry* published in 1878. In this book Woodford examined sixteen possible alternative origins of modern Freemasonry. Hughan was originally offered the task of preparing the *History of Freemasonry* which became Gould's great work, but he declined, mainly on health grounds. For this work Gould also had to be interested in masonic origins and with these three men so strongly involved at this time in this subject and also in the formation of what became Quatuor Coronati Lodge, it might be fair to say that the lodge is based on the question of the origins of Freemasonry, arising from the interest engendered

by the *Regius MS*, the *Cooke MS* and copies of the Old Charges. By the time Gould's *History* started to be published in 1882, determined searching had produced a further 31 copies of the Old Charges in the last twenty-two years, making a total known at that time of 51. Woodford was in his early sixties; Gould was much younger, in his middle forties. His *History* was not all his own unaided work, he received considerable help, mainly in the form of substantial articles which could be incorporated with little alteration. In this the main contributors were Hughan, Harry Rylands and G. W. Speth. Rylands and Speth were in much the same age group as Gould and Hughan, both being only thirty-five in 1882. Thus, this mainly young group of five became very closely associated in the very early 1880s over the compilation of Gould's great work which was published in parts between 1882-87. Perhaps this close association helped to foster the idea which resulted in Quatuor Coronati Lodge.

The Name

The *Regius MS* refers to the craft of a stonemason as *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (lines 497-534); this reflects a legend of certain craftsmen put to death in Rome and known as the *Quatuor Coronati*. The first volume of *AQC* contains two notes on the nature of the Quatuor Coronati. The first, by Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, deals with the legends as found in several ancient manuscripts and indicates that there were two quite separate groups of four along with one other person who was grouped with one of the fours to make them five. He points out the confusion which this causes to those attempting to arrive at what the real original story might have been, when the various examples of the legend are compared. This confusion is also referred to by Knoop, Jones and Hamer in their book on the *Regius and Cooke MSS, The Two Earliest Masonic MSS* (1938). The second note was contributed by S. Russell Forbes, living in Rome. Forbes provides a clear and simple (perhaps oversimplified) story of the legend and accounts for two separate incidents, one dealing with four, the other with five, making a total of nine. The relevant parts of Forbes's article are:

When in 298 A.D. the Emperor Diocletian was building his baths on the necks of the Quirinal and Viriminal hills he included within its vast circuit a temple to Æsculapius, the god of health. He ordered five sculptors, Claudius, Nicostratus, Sinforianus, Castorinus, and Simplicius to execute the decorative work and make the statue of Æsculapius. Being Christians they refused to fashion the statue of a pagan god, and in consequence they were put to death on the 8th November 298. Three were beheaded and two were scourged to death. Other artists were found who executed the work for the Emperor. On the return of Diocletian to Rome in 300, finding the works completed, he issued an order for their

dedication, and commanded that all the soldiers in Rome should be present, who, as they marched past, were to throw incense over the altar of Æsculapius. As soon as this command was propagated, four brothers, who were master masons, and held the position of *Corniculari*, or wing-leaders of the city militia, met to decide what they should do under the circumstances. These brothers were named Severus, Severianus, Carporferus, and Victorianus, who, besides being masons, had embraced the christian faith. They all agreed to abstain from throwing the incense over the altar, it being against their principles to assist in any way at pagan ceremonies of a religious nature. This determination they made known to their centurion, who communicated it to the tribune Lampadius, who reported the matter to Diocletian. The emperor ordered them either to sacrifice or suffer death. They, steadfast to their faith, suffered death by being scourged with leaden thongs. Their bodies were then enclosed in leaden cases and thrown into the river Tiber. A brother, Nicodemus, recovered their bodies from the river, and they were interred by the side of the five sculptors previously martyred, and other saints, in the catacombs on the Via Labricana, which from the four master masons are to this day known as the Catacombs of the Quattro Coronati. The five suffered on the 8th November, 298, and the four on the same day in 300, and their memory is still honoured in the church of the Quattro Incononati, on the Cælian Hill, in Rome.

During the dark and middle ages the Latin language underwent some curious changes in evolving the Italian, and it seems to me that the Italian title of these four mason saints, "*Incononati*," is really a corruption of their military rank, "*Corniculari*," which was brought back into the Latin from the Italian as *Coronati*.

Harry Rylands's first draft of the statement in support of the petition to form the lodge states; 'The Lodge is founded in commemoration of the Quatuor Coronati, or Four Crowned Martyrs, stated to have been masons, and referred to in our earliest Masonic Manuscript'.

The Petition

The wording for a petition to form a new lodge was contained in the *Book of Constitutions* (as in the present rule 96). Instead of using the printed form which would normally be supplied on application to the Grand Secretary, the petition for Quatuor Coronati Lodge was written out by Harry Rylands in the wording of the *Constitutions*. It was signed by nine petitioners in the following order—Warren, Harry Rylands, Gould, Woodford, Besant, J. P. (Paul) Rylands, Major S. C. Pratt, Hughan and Speth. The petition was recommended by Moira Lodge, No. 92, and is signed by the Master and Wardens of that lodge, of which Gould was then a member and Pratt had formerly been.

Gould delivered the petition to the Grand Secretary with a covering note on 3 November 1884, along with a memorandum 'explaining the scope and design of proposed new lodge'. It is marked 'Recommended to G.M. Council' and initialled by the Grand Secretary and dated 12 November 1884, and further marked 'Approved' on 28 November with the initial of the Earl of Carnarvon, Pro Grand Master. The Grand Secretary wrote to Gould informing him that the petition had been granted and the number 2076 allotted and also handed to Harry Rylands a copy of the usual printed form asking that fuller particulars of the petitioners should be given. The Warrant is dated 28 November 1884 and, as is customary, only the first seven petitioners (in the order in which they signed) are named in it. Thus, the names of two of the original prime movers, Hughan and Speth, do not appear on the Warrant. The cost was £15.15s. plus 5s. for each of nine petitioners, making a total of £18. This cost was notified to Harry Rylands on 13 January 1885 and paid on 15 January; later records show that, the lodge having no funds at that time, Warren provided the money as a donation to the lodge.

The *Freemason* made no comment on the issue of the Warrant but the *Freemasons' Chronicle* did publish a short note, part of which read:

We understand that a Warrant of Constitution for a new Lodge, to be named the Lodge of the "Quatuor Coronati, No. 2076" has been granted by the M.W. the Grand Master. The founders are nine in number, which correspond with that of the *five* sculptors and the *four* Officers who, together, make up the group of Christians massacred for their faith in Christianity in the time of Diocletian, and are now commonly described as the "Four Holy" or "Four Crowned Martyrs", and also as the "Quatuor Coronati". The "Four Martyrs", as the generality of our readers will be aware, were the earliest patron Saints of the Masons.

Major General Sir Charles Warren is the W.M. designate, and the absence of this distinguished brother in South Africa will temporarily postpone the ceremony of consecration.

In his speech at the consecration a year later, the Master explained that the signing of the petition by nine men, no less and no more, had indeed been intended as a reference to the total of nine in the legend. The four soldiers ('Officers') were Sir Charles Warren and Major Pratt, both serving officers, Rev. A. F. A. Woodford who, before taking Orders, had served as Ensign and Lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards, 1838-41, and R. F. Gould who served, 1855-63, first as Ensign, 86th Foot, and then as Lieutenant, 31st Foot. The other five, all civilians, were to represent the five sculptors. This explains why the original seven—a sufficient number to petition—found two others from among the several who might be willing to join in forming such a lodge. Pratt, as a soldier, was probably an obvious choice, while asking Paul Rylands,

Belton

Harry Rylands's brother and at that time in London as a law student in the Middle Temple, may also appear as reasonable. Warren had been suddenly ordered to Bechuanaland in command of an expedition and the founders agreed that, although he was willing to surrender the office of Master to prevent delay, the consecration would await his return so that he could be the first Master.

The memorandum which accompanied the petition read;

The Lodge petitioned for, which it is proposed to call that of The Quatuor Coronati, or Four Crowned Martyrs, the legendary Saints of the Masons, mentioned in the earliest Masonic Manuscript, is designed to promote the study of Masonic Archaeology.

The Founders comprise Brethren who have written on masonic and other subjects; and it is intended besides the ordinary purposes of Freemasonry to gather together brethren connected by similar tastes, and thus devote the energies of the Lodge to a consideration of papers and other communications calculated to throw light upon the History, Antiquities and peculiar customs of the Craft.

It is believed by carrying out this purpose the general knowledge of these subjects will be extended, and that the members of the proposed new Lodge will take an intelligent interest in the History and Antiquities as well as the Ritual of the Fraternity.

This was a period when there was great controversy over the various ritual workings which were emerging and Harry Rylands appears to have thought that that subject received too much attention. One feature brought out by notes placed on the petition papers in the Grand Secretary's office is the effect of inaccurate lodge returns. It was necessary by 1884 to show that the proposed Master had served as a Warden. Warren was included in the 1863 return of the Lodge of Friendship, No. 278, Gibraltar, his mother lodge, as a Past Master but no earlier return had shown him either as Master or Warden. The Grand Secretary later found that he had, in 1862, been a Warden of Inhabitants Lodge, No. 178. The later completion of the printed petition form showed in Warren's own hand that he had been a Warden in No. 178 and had also served as Master of 278 (from December 1862, according to the lodge minutes). Three of the nine were still Master Masons, Harry and Paul Rylands and Pratt—in fact neither of the Rylands had much actual lodge experience, as both remained Entered Apprentices for some time unattached after their initiation together in 1872. When the petition was signed in 1884 Paul had been a Master Mason for five years and Harry for three. It is also strange to see from the printed form, that three of the founders stated that they were not, at that time, members of any lodge, Besant, Paul Rylands and Pratt. Three others were already Grand Officers, Woodford, PGCh, and Hughan and Gould both PSGD.

The lodge was warranted to meet at Freemasons' Hall in London and has always done so. The petition had asked for monthly meetings and the Warrant states that the lodge was to meet on the first Wednesday in every month—twelve times a year. This was considered by some to be too frequent and in the interval between the granting of the Warrant and the actual consecration just over a year later, other counsels appear to have prevailed as the first by-laws made provision for five meetings a year. These first by-laws, approved at the consecration meeting, were short and very much of a trial and error nature:

First By-Law.—The regular Meetings of the Lodge shall be held at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London, on the Eighth day of November, which shall be the Anniversary Festival, and on the first Thursday (after the Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge) in the months of December, March, June, and September.

Second By-Law.—At the regular Meeting of the Lodge held in September, the Master and Treasurer shall be elected by ballot, and a Tyler by a show of hands.

Third By-Law.—At the regular Meeting of the Lodge in November—held on the Day of the *Quatuor Coronati* or *Four Crowned Martyrs*, the Master Elect shall be duly installed, and shall afterwards appoint and invest the Officers.

Fourth By-Law.—The following Fees and Dues shall be payable:—

Initiation	20 guineas.
Passing (initiated elsewhere)	5 guineas.
Raising	5 guineas.
Joining (including first year's Subscription).....	5 guineas.
Annual Subscription	1 guinea.

Fifth By-Law.—The Annual Subscription shall be paid to the Treasurer at the regular meeting in December.

Sixth By-Law.—A Permanent Committee, consisting of the Founders, the Worshipful Master, Wardens, and Past-Masters of this Lodge, shall have the superintendence of the funds and property of the Lodge, and the consideration of all special matters connected with its welfare. The members of this Committee shall be convened annually to audit the Treasurer's accounts, and at other times as often as occasion shall require.

Seventh By-Law.—In all cases where a Ballot is taken for approval of a Candidate for Initiation, or for the election of a Joining Member, one negative vote shall exclude.

Eighth By-Law.—The Lodge shall at no time consist of more than forty members.

Although not primarily intended for masonic degree ceremonies, the Warrant, being in standard form, gave the same power to initiate pass and raise as existed in any other lodge. The Fourth by-law seems to imply a willingness to initiate and to confer other degrees if circumstances required. The initiation fee was high for 1886, but by the time it was changed some eighty years later it was on the low side compared with most London lodges. The limitation on numbers in the Eighth by-law would not now be permitted; the restriction would have to be exercised by decision of the members.

The Consecration

The lodge was consecrated and constituted on Tuesday, 12 January 1886, at Freemasons' Hall, London, starting at 5 pm. The Consecrating Officer was the Grand Secretary, Colonel Shadwell H. Clerke, and he was assisted by Thomas Fenn, President of the Board of General Purposes, as Senior Warden, Ralph Gooding, MD, PSGD, as Junior Warden, Frank Richardson, PSGD, as Director of Ceremonies, and Henry Sadler, Grand Tyler. Only five of the nine founders were present for the ceremony, Warren, Harry Rylands, Gould, Woodford and Speth. The last two named also doubled as part of the consecrating team, Woodford as Chaplain and Speth as Inner Guard. Rylands did not stay to dine but Pratt, although not at the ceremony, was present at the dinner.

After commendably brief opening remarks by the Grand Secretary, Woodford delivered a long, and some might consider, controversial Oration. At that time Grand Lodge did not provide all of the necessary furniture at Freemasons' Hall and the founders had not provided any of the other necessities for a lodge; both the required furniture and the officers' collars and jewels for the occasion were borrowed from the Emulation Lodge of Improvement, of which Thomas Fenn was the leading light at that time. Besant was elected Treasurer and Speth was appointed Secretary. The latter was a significant appointment in view of the organising, writing and editorial work which was to be carried out over the next fifteen years, for it was the work of Speth which laid the solid foundations on which the lodge was built.

~~Six joining members were proposed~~ (and elected at the next meeting), William Simpson, who had been involved in earlier attempts to form such an organisation, Witham M. Bywater, who had been a member of the Masonic Archaeological Institute in the 1870s, Francis G. Irwin, who had been associated with Gould in Gibraltar twenty-five years earlier, Thomas B. Whytehead, a prominent writer, including masonic subjects, active in North and East Yorkshire, John Ramsden Riley, writer and Past Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies of Yorkshire, West Riding, and Edward L. Hawkins, Provincial Grand Secretary of Oxfordshire. Hawkins never took up his membership and so there were now fourteen involved in the lodge including the symbolic nine who had signed the petition. They were not all London

based and of the nine founders, Hughan lived in Torquay in Devonshire and Paul Rylands, having been called to the Bar, now practised and lived in the north of England. Most of these fourteen were well travelled although some were quite clearly lacking in what might be considered basic masonic experience in lodges. Some held strong views; in some cases there were strongly opposed views to be found even in this small group, and at the consecration banquet at the Holborn Restaurant (and not, as might have been expected, at Freemasons' Tavern), Thomas Fenn made jocular comments regarding these known and expressed differences. It is such differences of views, experienced not only then but in later years also, which have made debates in the lodge of particular interest.

The Master, in addressing the Consecrating Officers, made comments on how he saw the functions of the lodge:

The Lodges under our constitutional law are admirable organisations, and our charities are fully developed, but every Mason has a craving to know something definite about the Craft, and this has never yet been properly grappled with. This lodge will be the platform where literary Masons can meet together to assist each other in developing the history of the Craft; much has already been done by the brethren in this way individually, but we can confidently expect more when they can work together. I am only a novice in such matters, but I can believe that when the brethren here present have rolled away the mist that now surrounds the subject we shall be astonished at the result obtained. I am a strong believer in the antiquity of Freemasonry, and I can conceive that when the mediaeval basis is fully ascertained we shall find that it rests upon a more antique foundation.

Unfortunately Sir Charles Warren was unable to take much part in the immediate development of the lodge as he was again ordered abroad almost immediately, to Egypt in command of a force with the rank of Major-General, and the future was in the hands of the remaining thirteen.