

**HIGHCLIFFE LODGE No. 8054**  
**Registered in October 1965 at the**  
**United Grand Lodge of England**

**THE FORMATION and EARLY YEARS**

In the early nineteen sixties a group of like-minded masons, who were in the habit of meeting socially at the Walkford Hotel in Highcliffe, decided to attempt the formation of their own Lodge, which they suggested be called 'Highcliffe Lodge'.

The principal players in this endeavour were W.Bro. Bill Slope and W.Bro. Pat Wyatt, not forgetting Bro.Percy Pinn, who had his own chair at this hostelry and woe betide anyone who dared sit in it!

These brethren therefore started by approaching Barton Court Lodge No. 5468 for sponsorship. This was duly forthcoming at an emergency meeting held on the 17th June 1965 and the efforts of the founders came to fruition when the Consecration Ceremony of the new Highcliffe Lodge took place on 15th October 1965 at the Masonic Hall, New Milton.

The ceremony that day was carried out by the then Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Major-General R.L.Bond.

W.Bro. Bill Slope was installed into the Chair by the then Assistant Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. P.E.Rowlinson PAGDC, and subsequently W.Bro. Bill installed his Officers, whose names and ranks may be seen in the Appendix.

All of the Founding Members who took office that day purchased their own collars and jewels, which they donated for the use of the Lodge, and these jewels are still in use, though the collars were later replaced.

On the 5th October 1966 W.Bro. Kirkman PADC presented a gavel for the use of the WM of the Lodge. All gifts to the new Lodge were thankfully received and faithfully applied.

It is worth noting at this point that the ritual working adopted by the Lodge was predominantly Emulation, but with a nod to Taylor's working, in consideration of some founders having come from Lodges using that working.

On 3rd November 1965 the Lodge performed its first Initiation Ceremony, when a Mr. Fred Needham was admitted to the Lodge. Bro.Needham subsequently attained the chair of King Solomon for the year 1973-4.

It is interesting to record that the annual subscription in those early days was 4 guineas and the fee for dining, initially at the East Close Hotel, was 15 shillings.

Haven't times changed? Fees in 2015 are £150 and £14 respectively!

As an interesting sideline, on Friday 21st October 1966, whilst at sea on board the Union Castle Line Ship SS Reina Del Mar, an informal gathering of Freemasons was convened at which W.Bro. Bill Slope, the founding master of the new Highcliffe Lodge, was offered, and took, the chair.

On 7th February 1968 Lodge dining, which had been held since the Consecration at the East Close Hotel, moved to the Highcliffe Hotel, Waterford Road, Highcliffe. This venue was short-lived however and, in October 1970, Lodge dining moved once again, this time to the Red House Hotel, Barton-on-Sea.

## THE SEVENTIES & EIGHTIES

On 5th May 1971, a proposal was made to Provincial Grand Lodge to move Highcliffe Lodge to Warren Avenue, Mudeford; this was granted, and the Lodge, along with its dining, has remained at Warren Avenue to the present day.

From 1st January 1970 Lodge fees were raised such that the annual subscriptions became £7, the initiates fee £25 and the joining fee £10 with a re-joining fee of £7.

In 1970/71 Highcliffe Lodge formed its own Lodge of Instruction and it is a source of pride that, as a 'Lodge of Instruction', it is still active today. An initial annual subscription of £1 for membership was levied, but this has since been dropped. Some things do perhaps get cheaper!

In February 1972 a Mr. Beresford was initiated into Highcliffe Lodge. Sadly in September 1972 he died leaving a wife, a son and twins, a boy and a girl. On 10th March 1976 the Lodge supported the elder son with financial assistance to attend King Edwards School, Bath and in March 1978, the twins, now aged 10, were sponsored by the Lodge to obtain help towards their education from the Royal Masonic Institute for Boys & the Royal Masonic Institute for Girls respectively.

On October 11th 1972 W.Bro. Sqn. Ldr. Allen W Green became the last of the founders to be installed as Worshipful Master.

On 8th November in that year he initiated his son-in-law, Malcolm Whiston, including in the ceremony a rendering of the 'Charge after Initiation', usually given by the Junior Warden. He also passed and raised Bro. Malcolm in the same Masonic year, on 10th January 1973 and 11th April 1973 respectively.

Curiously, Malcolm has since become the 'Father of the Lodge'; Tempus fugit.

As previously noted Bro. Fred Needham, the first initiate into The Lodge, attained the chair of Worshipful Master on the 10th October 1973.

On 12th June 1974 a special meeting was convened and authorised by Province to pass Bro. D E Moran to his Second Degree. The reason for the delay was that Bro. Moran had been working at sea since his Initiation on 10th May 1972 and consequently had been unavailable earlier.

On 11th February 1976 the dedication of the Lodge Banner was conducted by the then Provincial Grand Master R.W.Bro. Rt. Rev. Bishop John Phillips. Congratulations were offered to W.Bro. Bert Pearn who presented the banner, and also to Mrs. Phyllis Pearn, his wife, on the many hours of skill and devotion she had spent in making it. Interestingly, whilst the banner was being made by Phyllis Pearn, it was kept strictly out of view of any non-masonic friends by being carried across the road every night to the home of W.Bro. Bob Small for safe-keeping!

It is this banner which is to be re-dedicated in November 2015 in the fiftieth anniversary year of the Lodge.

On the 13th October 1976 Highcliffe Lodge sponsored the formation of a new Lodge, provisionally to be named The Lodge of Londinium. However this name had to be changed, by command of the Grand Secretary, to Jubilee Lodge. Someone's toes trodden on here perhaps? However, it was duly consecrated as such on 1st April 1977 at Knole Road, Bournemouth, where it has remained ever since.

In May 1980 Bro. Leslie Hale, always known as 'Bill', joined Highcliffe Lodge and in October of that year he became Lodge Organist, an office which he held until October 2012, excepting the years 1985-1991 during which he held the offices leading to the Worshipful Master's Chair, which he held in 1989/90. W.Bro.'Bill' Hale was a popular figure in Highcliffe Lodge, for which he wrote several pieces of organ music. He also served as organist in some other local Lodges, notably The Lodge of Expatiation 9290.

## THE NINETIES

In October 1992, two cushions were donated anonymously to the Lodge by a regular visiting brother, again thankfully received.

In that same month Highcliffe Lodge purchased new collars, donating their old collars to the Homefield Class of Instruction on its 50th anniversary.

On 14th November 1994 Highcliffe 1st Battalion of Girl Guides was presented with a donation, assisted by the Thomas Bennett Langton Fund, with which to purchase new tents. It is to be hoped that they afforded the Girl Guides the desired extra protection from the weather.

In October 1995 a Worshipful Master's Collar and Chain, along with new aprons for the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden & Junior Warden, carrying the Lodge name and number, were presented to the Lodge to commemorate its 30th anniversary, and dedicated by the then Deputy Provincial Grand Master, V.W. Bro. Ernest F. R. M. Moss. A prayer of thanksgiving was given by W.Bro. The Rev. Bill Aries, Past Assistant Grand Chaplain. The first Master of the Lodge to wear this new insignia was W.Bro. Paul Goodman.

On 25th October 1995, as part of our 30 year celebrations, two benches were purchased for the Temple for the use of the brethren through the good offices of the Christchurch Masonic Building Management Committee. Their increased comfort has been appreciated ever since, particularly during lengthy ceremonies.

By the 12th March 1997, W.Bro.'Bill' Hale, our Organist, had composed several musical scores which he collected together and published in a folio, copies of which he presented to the Worshipful Master and some other brethren. One particular composition, entitled 'The Highcliffe Lodge', was played by him at the retirement procession of the W.M., Wardens and visiting brethren for several years thereafter.

The New Forest Lodge of Installed Masters 9665 was consecrated on 25th February 1998 having been sponsored by Highcliffe Lodge on 8th October 1997. One of the principal instigators of this new Lodge, a founder member and its first Master was W.Bro. Jim Bennet, Secretary of Highcliffe Lodge at the time. Several members of Highcliffe Lodge have subsequently occupied the Master's chair of Lodge number 9665, amongst them Bros. Denis Nash, John Jenkins, Harold Birch, Bill Hale and Paul Goodman.

In December 1997 a Lectern was given to the Lodge by a grateful visitor who signed himself 'under the hoodwink', a masonic allusion to which W.Bro. Jim Bennet suitably replied.

Also in December 1997 W.Bro. Geoff Davis proposed that £1,000 be taken from Lodge funds and donated to the CMBMC Fund for the purpose of purchasing new seating in the dining room. This was approved by the Lodge and duly carried out. The new seats and the replacement of the original dreadful fluorescent strip lighting revolutionised the comfort and ambience of the dining room.

Then in May 1999 an interest-free loan of £5,000 was given to the Christchurch Masonic Building Management Committee Fund, towards the alterations to the building. In 2004, however, this loan was converted into a Donation.

## THE MILLENNIUM YEARS

The new millennium was ushered in by W. Bro. Denis Nash, as Worshipful Master of the Lodge. Bro. Denis subsequently became Lodge Treasurer, an office which he has held ever since, the Lodge having such faith in his abilities that it has so far been found impossible to find a volunteer to replace him.

It has been noted that Bro. Denis is in the habit of paying regular visits to the Balearic Isles, as a result of which he has become the butt of much teasing from some of the brethren, who willfully associate these visits with his collection of their annual dues!

During this period the Lodge adopted a candle lit Christmas meeting adorned with the usual festive dressings and begun with an appropriate Christian message composed by W.Bro. Harold Birch. After the meal comes the singing of carols during which the brethren are assisted by the Gilbert and Sullivan Singers, the monies raised being donated to Macmillan Cancer Support. The evening culminates in a rousing and athletic rendering of The Twelve Days of Christmas lead by W.Bro. Paul Goodman, who for the further instruction of the brethren occasionally substitutes an antipodean version involving a Kookaburra in a Gum Tree!

The Lodge has also adopted a Burns Night Celebration, complete with haggis, its address and a piper, to take place at the meeting nearest the birth of the bard, which as all Scots know is the 25th January.

More recently an Italian evening has been established, usually in April, when the Lodge is decorated with that country's flags hung about the dining room. Unfortunately it turned out that these flags were of the Republic of Eire rather than Italy - the two being fairly similar. Our Italian guests were highly amused at the Lodge's discomfiture, which was attributed to the flags having faded!

In October 2012 W.Bro. Bill Hale, who had been the Lodge's organist since joining Highcliffe Lodge in 1980, decided that, having reached his early nineties, it was time for him to retire. Sadly he passed to the Grand Lodge above in the early part of 2015. Having lived respected, he died regretted.

In October 2001, W.Bro. Mark Simmonds was installed as WM and during his year he had the pleasure of initiating into Freemasonry both his father, Richard Simmonds, and his brother, Julian Simmonds.

Bro. Richard Simmonds has occupied all the offices in the Lodge save that of Worshipful Master and there are still hopes of his taking this particular office, his performances in the other offices having been exemplary. Bro. Julian's attendance to date, however, has proved ephemeral, though hopes of his return are entertained.

In 2004 the Lodge, with the help of The Thomas Langton Fund, provided musical instruments for the Mudeford Junior School at a total cost around £2,300. Their presentation to the school was accompanied by a spontaneous concert in the temple when the instruments were delivered into the hands of their enthusiastic juvenile recipients, who proceeded to wring from them 'molto forte' those sounds for which they had been designed!

In 2006, two special orthopaedic chairs were purchased by the Lodge, with the assistance of a donation from the Thomas Langton Fund, and presented to the Silverways Nursing Home in Highcliffe. They were thankfully received as much-needed assistance in their care for the elderly. They can never really have enough of this type of equipment.

In October 2006 two new alms bags were purchased and given to the Lodge by W.Bro. John Sweeney, the retiring WM of that year. W.Bro. Sweeney subsequently became Lodge Almoner, an office which he filled with great distinction until early 2015, when his own health dictated withdrawal to the benches.

During the years 2007-8, the Lodge supported, financially, three worthy causes, Twynham Rangers Football Club, Rainbow Pre-School Nursery and Support for Children with Learning Difficulties at Mudeford Junior School. All the recipients expressed their thanks saying that the monies would be put to good use, as there is no doubt they were. These are simply examples of the many donations and assistance that Highcliffe Lodge has given to local charities.

In November 2008, W.Bros. Stuart McCall and Dr. Bill Hale were honoured in the Lodge room with Certificates marking their having achieved 50 years in masonry. The certificates were presented by W. Bro. Paul Goodman who congratulated the pair on their rare achievement and their contributions to masonry over so many years. The subsequent replies from the brethren concerned were received, by those present, with the acclamation befitting their arrival at such a praiseworthy landmark.

## THE RECENT YEARS

On 10th October 2012, a boxed set of working tools was given to the Lodge by the Worshipful Master and brethren of Victoria Park Lodge No. 1816, along with aprons and slipshods for the Apprentices & Fellowcrafts. Letters of thanks were sent to W.Bros. Kenneth Barnett and Vernon Elphick to be passed on to the WM & Brethren of Victoria Park Lodge. The set has, of course, been suitably engraved, and has been put to good use in the Lodge.

A month later in November 2012, W.Bro. Mike Harrold purchased and presented to the Lodge a suitably engraved poniard for use in our ceremonies. Happily, this weapon has not as yet drawn blood!

In October 2014, W.Bro. Laurie Harris, marking his accession to the Master's chair, generously donated six Past Masters Jewels to the Lodge, to be presented to each Master at the termination of his year in office. These beautifully enamelled jewels depict a crenelated tower atop a cliff, with a beach beneath, representing Highcliffe Castle and the cliff upon which it stands.

Up to the present time three members of the Lodge have been appointed as Provincial Grand Stewards, namely W.Bros. Harold Birch, Paul Goodman & Mark Werner. Additionally two members have been honoured by elevation to Grand Rank, in the persons of W.Bros. Eric Dixon and Paul Goodman.

## THE PRESENT

Under this heading are recorded some of the idiosyncrasies which were responsible for the formation of the Highcliffe Lodge of today. These idiosyncrasies derived largely from the fact that the Lodge, from a relatively early date, possessed many members keen to embrace some changes to the way in which the Lodge operated, based upon procedural variations which they had observed in their visits to other Lodges. They felt that, rather than the Lodge becoming immutably married to the past, these modifications could carry the Lodge forward and promote an increase in interest and enthusiasm amongst the brethren.

In the early nineties, therefore, the Lodge, largely under the influence of W. Bro. James Bennet as its Secretary and W. Bro. Harold Birch as its Master, examined the founders writings and wishes, interpreting them as intending a daily advancement in masonic knowledge rather than a rigid adherence to it.

With this in view it became possible to incorporate into what was to become known as 'Highcliffe Working' many pieces of ritual which had previously been unknown to the membership, these both to their advantage and also that of an increasing numbers of visitors, who were attracted by ritual not to be heard in their mother Lodges and by the relaxed atmosphere thereby engendered, for which Highcliffe Lodge had become so well regarded throughout the Province.

The development of this atmosphere had also been fomented by the efforts of several eccentric personalities, of whom a few examples may be given.

There was Bro. Dennis Stevens, for whom the well-known response with the raised right arm was always 'Jaaatin' rather than the expected 'Jachin', which no effort at correction was ever successful.

Then there was the evening when Bro. George Cornish, who incidentally had been brought up in a masonic school for boys, arrived for the Lodge meeting dressed in a rather fetching pair of shorts and a sleeveless maroon pullover. This was considered to be quite acceptable attire in the newly tolerant atmosphere of Highcliffe Lodge at the time and George was seated in his accustomed place!

Never to be forgotten was the rotund figure of Bro. Harvey Gillingham, reminiscent of nothing more than a 'Womble from Wimbledon', who could always be relied upon to undertake any office at a moment's notice but to perform it in his own uniquely distorted and mangled form and at his own speed!

Nor must we ever forget our well respected organist, Bill Hale, who for many years routinely sat at his instrument in stockinged feet, for the better contact with the pedal board apparently. Alas, he invariably forgot to don his shoes when summoned to the Worshipful Master during ceremonies of Installation. On these occasions he could be observed advancing along the full length of the temple in his stockinged feet, to the amusement of all.

And of course there was that hair-raising moment when Fred Jesty, whilst being conducted blindfold about the Lodge during his Initiation, felt someone fiddling with his trouser belt buckle, which had somehow escaped detection as being of metal. Thinking that rather more than his belt was about to be removed, Fred assumed a posture more befitting the boxing ring than a Masonic Lodge. Happily his fears were rapidly allayed by his conductor, who saw himself in imminent danger of being on the wrong end of a right hook from Fred!

The influence of men such as these, and of others too numerous to mention, has over the years led to the development of a Lodge as renowned for its friendly and welcoming nature as it is for the variety and quality of its ritual, A Lodge of which its members may be justly proud.

Data collected by W.Bro. Malcolm Whiston  
Rendered into prose by W.Bro. Harold Birch

# APPENDIX

## THE FOUNDERS OF HIGHCLIFFE LODGE

W. Bro. William Benjamin Slope L.G.R. 4504,6061,132 - Primus Master  
W. Bro. P.A.M. Wyatt 5468, 7702  
W. Bro. David Kenneth Robert P.P.G.D.C (Dorset) 1675, 6582  
W. Bro. John William Voisey P.P.A.G.D.C  
W. Bro. Thomas Crowder Frederick Skinner 3410  
W. Bro. George Thomas James Smith L.G.R.  
W. Bro. Reginald Thomas Callam P.P.A.G.D.C (Herts) 6642, 4090, 5002  
W. Bro. Leslie John Farnworth 951  
Bro. Stanley Edmond Brewer 4317  
Bro. Eric Cecil Dixon 132  
Bro. James Humphries White 1443  
Bro. Percy Leslie Rundle Pinn 5889  
Bro. Walter George Crockford 132  
Bro. Laurence Henry Brown 6582  
Bro. James McPherson Holden 278  
Bro. Basil James 2874, 6840  
Bro. Clement Pritchard Hare 3492  
Bro. Allen Wheatley Green 349  
Bro. Wilfred Francis Wilby 2761  
Bro. Charles Henry Moore 4930  
Bro. Edgar Cecil Wall 1687  
Bro. William Tipp 132

## OFFICERS OF HIGHCLIFFE LODGE AB INITIO

Worshipful Master	W. Bro. W B Slope LGR	Asst.Dir.of Ceremonies	W. Bro. T C Skinner
Imm. Past Master	W Bro. J W Voysey PPAGDC	Almoner	(Vacant)
Senior Warden	Bro. E C Dixon	Organist	Bro. W F Wilby
Junior Warden	Bro. S E Brewer	Asst. Secretary	Bro. P Pinn
Chaplain	W. Bro. R T Callan PPAGDC	Inner Guard	Bro. L H Brown
Treasurer	Bro. C H Moore	Steward	W. Bro. G T J Smith
Secretary	W. Bro. P A M Wyatt	Steward	Bro. J McP Holden
Director of Ceremonies	W. Bro. D K Roberts PPDepGDC	Steward	Bro. A W Green
Senior Deacon	Bro. C P Hare	Steward	Bro. J H White
Junior Deacon	Bro. W G Crockford	Steward	Bro. B James
		Tyler	Bro. F A Grant



## WORSHIPFUL MASTERS OF HIGHCLIFFE LODGE

*W. Bro. W.B.Slope	1965-66	*W. Bro. Dr. L J Hale	1989-90
*W. Bro. E.C.Dixon	1966-67	W. Bro. J J Penfold	1990-91
*W. Bro. S.E.Brewer	1967-68	W. Bro. A R Williams	1991-92
*W. Bro. C.P.Hare	1968-69	*W. Bro. D E Tucker	1992-93
*W. Bro. C.H.Moore	1969-70	W. Bro. Dr. H E W Birch	1993-94
*W. Bro. J.M.Holden	1970-71	*W. Bro. H R Gillingham	1994-95
*W. Bro. L.H.Brown	1971-72	W. Bro. P G Goodman	1995-96
*W. Bro. A.W.Green	1972-73	W. Bro. L R Bowden	1996-97
*W. Bro. F. Needham	1973-74	W. Bro. T Morris	1997-98
*W. Bro. J.E.Elms	1974-75	W. Bro. G Tincknell	1998-99
*W. Bro. B.R.Pearn	1975-76	W. Bro. D G Nash	1999-2000
*W. Bro. R.Small	1976-77	W. Bro. A G Greenwood	2000-01
W. Bro. G.W.Davis	1977-78	W. Bro. M S Simmonds	2001-03
*W. Bro. E.C.Dixon	1978-79	*W. Bro. D S Stevens	2003-04
W. Bro. J.B.Ricketts	1979-80	W. Bro. L R Bowden	2004-05
W. Bro. M.S.Whiston	1980-81	W. Bro. J A Sweeney	2005-06
*W. Bro. B.A.Pettengell	1981-82	W. Bro. G Tincknell	2006-07
*W. Bro. G.L.Powis	1982-83	W. Bro. D Yates	2007-09
*W. Bro. H.J.Mitchell	1983-84	W. Bro. Dr. H E W Birch	2009-10
W. Bro. D.J.Watkins	1984-85	W. Bro. M Werner	2010-11
*W. Bro. G.H.G.Bell	1985-86	W. Bro. D Trewartha	2011-12
*W. Bro. G.G.C.Cornish	1986-87	W. Bro. M Harrold	2012-13
*W. Bro. R.D.Holt	1987-88	W. Bro. J Jenkins	2013-14
W. Bro. F.W.Jesty	1988-89	W. Bro. L Harris	2014-15

\* deceased

### LODGE TREASURERS

1965-66	Bro. C H Moore
1966-67	Bro. A W Green
1967-74	W. Bro. W B Slope
1974-76	W. Bro. F G Deane
1976-80	W. Bro. W W Peterson
1980-90	W. Bro. G W Davis
1990-99	W. Bro. R D Holt
1999-2002	W. Bro. A Green
2002-	W. Bro. D G Nash

### LODGE SECRETARIES

1965-66	W.Bro. P A M Wyatt
1966-67	Bro. J M Holden
1967-76	W.Bro. E C Dixon
1976-90	W.Bro. B R Pearn
1990-93	W.Bro. G S C Cornish
1993-98	W.Bro. J L K Bennet
1998-2002	W.Bro. P G Goodman
2002-07	W.Bro. A G Greenwood
2007-13	W.Bro. L H Harris
2013 -	Bro. M Stone

## **DIRECTORS OF CEREMONIES**

<b>1965-72</b>	<b>W. Bro. D K Roberts</b>
<b>1972-79</b>	<b>W. Bro. C P Hare</b>
<b>1979-83</b>	<b>W. Bro. F Needham</b>
<b>1983-90</b>	<b>W. Bro. R E Small</b>
<b>1990-91</b>	<b>W. Bro. M S Whiston</b>
<b>1991-93</b>	<b>W. Bro. H J Mitchell</b>
<b>1993-95</b>	<b>W. Bro. F W Jesty</b>
<b>1995-2000</b>	<b>W. Bro. Dr.H E W Birch</b>
<b>2000-2004</b>	<b>W. Bro. L R Bowden</b>
<b>2004-2009</b>	<b>W. Bro. Dr. H E.W. Birch</b>
<b>2009-</b>	<b>W. Bro. M S Simmonds</b>