

THE FOUNDATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND

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Introduction

On 30th November, 1986, the members of the Grand Lodge of Scotland and of her Daughter Lodges, together with representatives of Sister Grand Lodges, Visitors and guests from all over the world, came together at Ingliston, Edinburgh, to celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Foundation of Scottish Freemasonry's governing body. The minutes of the Grand Lodge begin with the record of the first meeting on 30th November, 1736, advising the reader that it was held in Mary's Chapel, Niddry's Wynd, Edinburgh, where thirty-three Lodges were represented by their Masters and Wardens, or by proxies, the purpose of the meeting being to elect a Grand Master for Scotland. It will perhaps come as a surprise to many members today to learn that the minute book of Grand Lodge contains records of meetings from 15th October, 1736, these being the minutes the Committee composed of 'the Masters and Wardens of the Four Lodges in and about Edinburgh'.

There were a number of Lodges active in Edinburgh during 1736 but four of them were involved in the preparatory moves towards the formation of a Grand Lodge. The four were, The Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel), Canongate Kilwinning, Kilwinning Scots Arms (sometimes called "The Lodge kept at Gray's", because it met at Gray's Coffee House in the High Street) and Leith Kilwinning, which was formed in June, 1736, and was the Lodge from which the present Lodge St. David, Edinburgh, No. 36, was formed .

Even earlier records concerning the election of a Grand Master are found in the minutes of Canongate Kilwinning, where, on 29th September, 1735, the members established from their own number a Sub-Committee to consider the proposition.

Why was there a requirement for a Grand Master?

There are numerous possibilities for this requirement, but the written records do not give a wholly satisfactory answer, and any consideration of the matter cannot be given in isolation. In England a Grand Lodge had been formed in 1717 by four Lodges of Speculative Masons in London, but in Scotland at the same time it is doubtful whether

there was one purely Speculative Lodge. For more than two hundred years before 1700 Scotland's great old Operative Lodges such as Mother Kilwinning, Mary's Chapel, Melrose, Aberdeen, Scone and Perth, etc., had governed the building trades within their own geographical areas. Why should they seek a central governing body to control their activities? The Speculative, or "Free" masons existed in the Scottish Lodges only by the leave of their Operative Brethren. While the English Freemasons of 1717 found no opposition to the Foundation of a Grand Lodge, the position in Scotland was that, whatever the driving reason behind such a requirement, the Speculative Masons lacked the strength of numbers to effect a change before 1736.

Prior to 1600 there had been no Speculative masons in Scotland. Membership of the Operative Lodges was in three grades - Apprentice, Entered Apprentice and Fellow of Craft, with the Entered Apprentices being in the majority. An Apprentice would normally be seen but rarely in the Lodge until, at the Festival of St. John after his being taken on by his employer, he appeared before the Lodge to be booked. He then entered formally into the terms of his apprenticeship and his name was inscribed as a member of the Lodge. This made him an "Entered Apprentice", and from that moment his masonic education began. In addition to the use of tools, and teaching in the skills of his calling he learned the modes of recognition which enabled him to recognise his fellow masons, and he was instructed in the Mason Word. This was a lengthy catechism designed to separate Lodge members from other masons, however skilled, who were not members of Lodges - i.e. Cowan or Masons without the Word. Having finally completed his apprenticeship, it was certainly not incumbent on the stonemason to become a Fellow of Craft. He took this step only if he wished to become an employer of labour, and such employers were often afforded the courtesy title of "Master". This had no connection with the degree of Master Mason, which was an 18th century introduction to the rituals of the Speculative masons.

Scottish Operative masonry was a conservative organisation and might have remained so for many more years if William Schaw, a career courtier of King James VI, had not been appointed as the King's Master of Works. Schaw was a member of a family from Sauchie, Clackmannanshire, where the ancestral home and estate was on what is now the local golf course. His education followed the usual pattern for a young man of his class and aspirations, including a period in France where he trained in Architecture. In 1583 King James sent a Diplomatic embassy to Denmark to seek on his behalf the hand in marriage of the Princess Anne of that country, William

Schaw being a member of that expedition. Not only was the party's mission successful, but Schaw's courtly graces, his manners and intelligence, made a lasting impression on the Princess. Soon after her arrival in Scotland, Schaw was appointed to her staff, and so pleased the King that he appointed him as his Master of Works. Little is recorded of Schaw's activities for a number of years, but it is known that he designed a number of buildings in Dunfermline and Edinburgh, personally supervising their construction. He made a careful study of the Mason craft and its organisation in Scotland, often using the title of Warden General. He set himself the task of modernising the Craft, but like many innovators before and after him, he found difficulties. These were removed when the King made a further appointment, possibly at Schaw's request. Schaw was aware, through his studies of the masons' systems, of the respect and veneration they afforded to the St. Clairs. Legend had it that William St. Clair of Roslin, in 1441, had been appointed by the monarch at that time to be Ruler of the Masons of Scotland. Certainly the St. Clairs had been great patrons of the masons through their funding of religious buildings throughout the country. Those days, by 1600, had passed, and the amount of building work available had decreased. Schaw saw a possibility that masonry in Scotland might deteriorate as it had in France, where members of the Compionage had taken up arms against each other.

King James, possibly at Schaw's request, appointed William St. Clair in 1600 as Head of the Masons of Scotland, and Schaw used the fact to consolidate his own influence over the Craft. He issued two sets of statutes to govern masonry, one for the west of Scotland, one for the East, and their overall effect revitalised the Craft. So successful was the appointment of St. Clair that his Majesty extended its terms, awarding the title of Head of the Masons to William St. Clair, his heirs and successors in perpetuity. Among other reforms, Schaw decreed that the mason lodges should keep written records of their membership and of their proceedings, as a result of which the early years of the 17th century saw the first instances of men who were not masons being given membership of the Lodges. Such intrants were normally Clerks, or Ministers, soon followed by Lawyers, brought into the Lodges in order to keep the minutes and the Roll books. By the closing years of the century, the trickle of such members had become a stream, and during the first few years of the 18th Century the stream became a veritable flood. As the numbers of Speculative Brethren increased, so did their requirements, and in 1728 the Master Mason degree is recorded as being worked for the first time in Scotland in Lodge Dumbarton Kilwinning. There are two

very interesting pieces of evidence which tend to show that although the degree itself was not worked before 1728, the story portrayed by it was known in Scotland one hundred years earlier. These are the H.A. stone in Melrose Abbey, brought there from Newstead in 1634, and the painting, 'Raising of the Master' by Guercino, which is held by the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter.

Inevitably this influx of Speculative members had its effects on the Lodges. Some of the older Operative Lodges had mixed memberships, some with a majority of Operatives, others with a majority Speculative membership. Other Operative Lodges had become entirely Speculative, such as Canongate Kilwinning. Many new Lodges of Speculatives were formed during those years, such as Kilwinning Scots Arms in 1729 and Glasgow Kilwinning 1735. When viewed in this way it can easily be seen that whatever the desires for a Grand Master and a Grand Lodge in Scotland, it was not until 1735 that the Speculative Masons felt sufficiently strong to go ahead without being stopped by the Operative Brethren. Nevertheless, many Operative Lodges demonstrated their feelings by ignoring the formation of a Grand Lodge - indeed, some ignored its existence for many years.

Events in Canongate Kilwinning

The Canongate Lodge played a leading part from the outset in the Election of a Grand Master and the Founding of the Grand Lodge. Her minutes show that on 29th September, 1735, the members formed a Sub-Committee from their own numbers, its remit being to consider proposals concerning the Election of a Grand Master for Scotland. Members of that Sub-Committee were:-

Thomas Trotter Old Master (i.e. I.P.M.)

Robert Blissett Depute Master

David Home Senior Warden

William Robertson Junior Warden

George Crawford Master Mason

William Montgomery Master Mason

The minutes of Canongate Kilwinning show that the Sub-Committee met regularly during 1735 and 1736, reporting back to the Lodge after each of its meetings. Understandably, the minutes do not indicate the nature of the discussions

held within the Sub-Committee, but subsequent events show that they must have been actively consulting with representatives of other Lodges.

Formation of the Committee of Masters and Wardens of the Four Lodges

On 29th September, 1736, exactly one year after the establishment of the Canongate Sub-Committee, the Lodge received a Deputation from the Kilwinning Scots Arms under Captain John Young, Depute Master of that Lodge. The minute says that the Deputation 'made proposals anent the Election of a Grand Master', though, as usual, the details are not provided. The direct result of this liaison between the two Lodges appears to have been the setting up of a committee of the 'Masters and Wardens of the four Lodges in and about Edinburgh' to prepare proposals for the election of a Grand Master.

Events leading to the Grand Election

29th Sept., 1735	Formation of Sub-committee of Canongate Kilwinning
18th May, 1736	William St Clair of Roslin Initiated in Canongate Kilwinning
2nd June, 1736	William St Clair Passed to the second degree
24th June, 1736	Leith Kilwinning founded from members of the Canongate.
7th July, 1736	Dr. John Douglas (Kirkcaldy) affiliated to Canongate Kilwinning
29th Sept., 1736	Deputation to Canongate Kilwinning from Kilwinning Scots Arms
15th Oct., 1736	First meeting of the Committee from the four Lodges
20th Oct., 1736	Second " " " " " "
1st Nov., 1736	Third " " " " " "
11th Nov., 1736	Fourth " " " " " "
22nd Nov., 1736	William St. Clair Raised to the degree of Master Mason
25th Nov., 1736	Fifth and final meeting of the Committee from the four Lodges
30th Nov., 1736	WILLIAM ST. CLAIR ELECTED GRAND MASTER

& THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND FOUNDED

The Sub-Committee of Canongate Kilwinning had been meeting for some eight months when, on 18th May, 1736, William St. Clair of Roslin was Initiated into membership of the Lodge. In his history of the Lodge Brother Allan Mackenzie mentions that he was Initiated without being balloted, but he fails to mention that until the of 1736 the Lodge had no bye-laws (though balloting was customary, but obviously not demanded). In fact, a ballot was taken before he was Passed on 2nd June.

The Canongate Lodge held a meeting on 24th June, 1736, when a petition was submitted by William Montgomery and others seeking permission to establish a Lodge at Leith. The assent of the Lodge having been given, all present marched from the premises to Leith, where the new Lodge was erected under the title of Leith Kilwinning. This incident has to be mentioned, as it was directly connected to the events concerning the projected Grand Lodge. By this time, the Canongate members were beginning to realise that battle lines were emerging, and that they were facing an alliance of Mary's Chapel and the Scots Arms Lodge. The creation of Leith Kilwinning gave the Canongate an ally, redressing the balance so that the sides were ranged two against two. (From Leith Kilwinning there sprang the present day Lodge of St. David, Edinburgh, No.36).

On 7th July there was another meeting of the Canongate Lodge, at which Dr. John Douglas became an Affiliate member. There is no record of his attendance before that date, yet the minute says:-

'... Dr. John Douglas, representing that he was a member of the Lodge at Kirkcaldy, but that he could not attend the same therefore the Lodge (i.e. Canongate Kilwinning) **for services done and to be done** thought him worthy to be a member of the Lodge and admitted him as such.'

Dr. Douglas' mysterious services are not defined in this, or in any subsequent minute, but three years later he was Master of the Lodge, and in 1738 he became Scotland's first Substitute Grand Master. A clue to the solution of this mystery is probably to be found in the fact that Dr. Douglas had come from Kirkcaldy, where he had no doubt

treated members of the St. Clair family on their estate at Dysart, thereafter introducing William St. Clair to the members of the Canongate Lodge.

Following the visit by the Deputation from the Kilwinning Scots Arms on 29th September, a private meeting in the Canongate Lodge on 11th October resulted in the establishment of the Committee of Masters and Wardens of the four Lodges (Mary's Chapel, Canongate Kilwinning, Kilwinning Scots Arms and Leith Kilwinning). It was agreed that this Committee would meet on 15th October.

The minute of this meeting was inscribed by Robert Allison in a book which, three months later, became the first minute book of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. It reads as follows:-

'Minute of the proceedings of the Masters and Wardens of the four Mason Lodges in and about the City of Edinburgh with respect to the Election of a Grand Master for the whole regular Lodges in Scotland convened at Edinburgh the fifteenth day of October one thousand seven hundred and thirty six years. The which day the Masters and Wardens of the said four Lodges having met they unanimously condescended and agreed upon the methods underwritten for Electing a Grand Master for Scotland and upon Certain Regulations to be observed there anent for the good and prosperity of Masonry in general in the terms following:

1 mo. That the Masters and Wardens of the four Lodges in and about Edinburgh do meet in some convenient place and that there be no precedency insisted upon by either of them but that they take place according as they enter the room.

2 do. That the Clerk of Mary's Chapel shall act as Clerk to their meetings who is to write out the following proposals or such as shall be agreed upon.

3 teo. That upon the above Lodges' agreement to the proposals Circular Letters be wrote in name of the whole four Lodges and signed by the Masters of the particular Lodges

by turns, to be sent to the respective Lodges in Scotland, with a copy of the proposals inclosed in order to have their approbation.

4 to. That the above four Lodges upon the day of Election of a Grand Master be represented by their respective Masters and Wardens and such Masters and

Wardens of the other Lodges either by themselves or by proxies to Master Masons.

5 to. That Mary's Chapel be the place of Election of a Grand Master where such Master is to name his Deputy and Wardens of the Grand Lodge; and the Clerk of Mary's Chapel to be Clerk to the first Election.

Regulations for the Grand Lodge

1 mo. That each Grand Master give towards a General Fund a sum as under ...

2 do. That the Grand Master shall name the new Grand Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary and if unanimously approved of by the Grand Lodge that he shall be Declared, Saluted and Congratulated in the usual method; But if not they shall be chosen by Ballot providing they be fellow-crafts or master-masons, which Treasurer and Secretary may have a Clerk each, if approven of by the Grand Master, who shall always be with their books at his command or his Depute, to see how matters go on and Know what is expedient to be done upon any emergent occasion.

3 teo. That such Treasurer, Secretary, his or their Clerks shall not presume to speak or vote without liberty asked and given.

4 to. That the Grand Master shall have power to name his own Deputy, provided such Deputy, Grand Wardens, Treasurer or Secretary be not members of his original Lodge.

5 to. That the Quarterly Communication of all the Masters and Wardens of the particular Lodges with the Grand Master at their head, or his Deputy in his absence, and the Grand Wardens in their proper places, be held in some convenient place, as the Grand Master shall appoint, providing always the same be in Edinburgh, or the privileges thereof where no brother shall be present who is not at the time a member thereof, without a dispensation and while he stays cannot be allowed to vote or speak without leave from the Grand Lodge, in order to conduct the business of masonry in general, make new regulations, settle and determine all differences and disputes, if any such arise in Masonry.

6 to. That the Grand Master with his Deputy and Wardens shall at least once a year go round and visit all the Lodges about the Town during his Mastership, upon which visitations he is to take the Chair, with the Master of that Lodge

upon his left hand, providing always no Grand Master, Deputy, Wardens, Treasurer, Secretary, or whoever acts for them in their stead pro tempore, can at the same time be Master or Warden of a particular Lodge, but as soon as any of them has honourably discharged his grand office, he returns to that post or station in his particular Lodge from which he was called to officiate.

7 mo. That the first elected Grand Master and Grand Wardens, shall each of them furnish a proper jewel for their respective offices, which are to belong to the said Lodge, and are to be delivered to their successors in office and always to be worn at a green ribbon.

8 vo. The Grand Master to appoint such a number of Stewards as he shall think fit out of a Committee consisting of one appointed from each Lodge who are to have the charge from the Grand Master or his Deputy in all things relating to the feast upon St. John's Day.

9 no. That the Grand Master be named upon the Quarterly Communication immediately preceeding St. John's Day that there may be no delay upon the day of election and in case it shall be provided by the majority of the Masters and Wardens with the Grand Master or his Deputy and Wardens that there shall be a feast and general Communication of all the Brethren where each member shall pay as the Grand Lodge shall see fit to agree upon, and all other Brethren that shall incline to attend may be furnished with tickets from the Stewards of the Grand Lodge sealed with the Grand Master's seal on their paying not under five shillings sterling.

10 mo. That each Brother upon the entrance into the Hall or place where the feast is held shall have a ticket given him by the Stewards who shall attend the door, which shall intitle the brother to such a quantity of liquor and if he calls for more he shall pay for it to the Stewards who are accountable to their successors next Quarterly communication.

11 mo. And for the better support of the Dignity of the Grand Lodge and raising a fund for that effort. That there be paid Two shillings and sixpence for each Intransit

in each Lodge from the day of an Election of a Grand Master which is to be accounted for by the Masters and Wardens of the respective Lodges and a list transmitted of such Intransits every Quarterly Communication in order to their

being recorded in a book kept by the Grand Lodge for that purpose where the present members of all the Regular Lodges are recorded.'

Comments on the minute of 15th October, above

The first five enumerated points dealt clearly and economically with the projected proceedings of the Committee from the four Lodges. The regulations for the Grand Lodge are not as simply expressed. In copying, spelling has been modernised throughout.

The sum to be given to the funds by each Grand Master has never been shown in the records.

It will be noted that in 1736 there was never a reference to a Grand Master Mason, usage being simply the title 'Grand Master'. The words 'Deputy' and 'Depute' were interchangeable, 'Depute' being the modern usage in the Scottish Craft. In 1736 the Treasurer was senior to the Secretary and it was some years before this order was reversed. From the first day of the existence of the Grand Lodge there is a distinction between Secretary (or Treasurer) and Clerk.

Rule 4 states that the Deputy Grand Master, the Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary must not belong to the same Lodge as the Grand Master. Captain John Young, the first Deputy, held the appointment for several years. On one occasion he declined on the grounds that the new Grand Master was from his own Lodge (Kilwinning Scots Arms), but the Grand Lodge approved a special dispensation allowing him to remain in office.

Rule 6 placed on the Grand Master the duty of visiting the Edinburgh Lodges, but as the Institution grew other representatives had to be appointed to visit Lodges throughout the country - hence Provincial Grand Masters and Provincial Grand Lodges.

Rule 7 is of particular interest, as it is the only indication in Grand Lodge records as to why the Grand Lodge colour is green. The jewel selected by the first Grand Master was formed from a level and compasses and can be seen on the portrait of William St. Clair in the Chapel of St. John, a copy of which hangs in the Board Room of Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh. The jewel hangs not from a collar, but from a sash worn over the right shoulder. There appears to be no record of the Wardens' jewels, but it is probable that in 1736 they were plumbs of differing lengths, as is demonstrated by the original Wardens' jewels of Canongate Kilwinning.

There are several mentions of the Festival of St. John as being the day of election. This was the day originally decided, but after the regulations had been considered by the Grand Lodge, the festival of St. Andrew was adopted.

The final rule, No.11, named two shillings and sixpence as the contribution to Grand Lodge from each Intrans's entrance fee. For many years Lodges were censured for failing to make returns of Intrans, thus denying the Grand Lodge the funds to which it was entitled.

On 20th October, five days after its first meeting, the Committee from the four Lodges came together again, when Robert Allison reported that, in accordance with the instructions he had received, he had ordered to be printed 100 copies of the circular letter to be sent to Lodges, together with 100 copies of the five proposals and 100 of the proposed regulations. The circular letter read as follows:-

'Brethren,

The four Lodges in and about Edinburgh having taken into their serious consideration the great loss that Masonry has sustained through the want of a Grand Master, authorised us to signify to you, our good and worthy brethren, our hearty desire and firm intention to choose a Grand Master for Scotland, and in order that the same may be done with the greatest harmony we invite you, as we have done all the other Regular Lodges known by us, to concur in such a great and good work; whereby it's hoped Masonry may be restored to its antient lustre in this kingdom, and for effectuating this laudable design we humbly desire that betwixt this and Martinmas Day next you will be pleased to give us a brotherly answer in relation to the election of a Grand Master which we propose to be on St. Andrew's Day for the first time and ever thereafter to be on St. John the Baptist's Day, or as the Grand Lodge shall appoint by the majority of views which are to be collected from the Masters and Wardens of all the Lodges then present, or by proxy to any Master Mason or Fellow Craft in any Lodge in Scotland; and the election is to be in Mary's Chapel. All that is hereby proposed is for the advancement and prosperity of Masonry, in its greatest and most charitable perfection. We hope and expect a suitable return wherein if any Lodges are ineffective they have only themselves to blame. We heartily wish you all manner of success and prosperity and we are, with great respect,

Your loving and affectionate brethren,'

The foregoing letter was signed by the Masters of the four Lodges in turns. This could mean that each Master signed 25 copies or that all four signed each copy, varying the order of their signatures to avoid any suggestion of seniority. The actual date, or dates of posting remain unknown.

The records do not indicate what the authors of the letter intended to convey by the term 'Regular Lodges', and although Allison had ordered 100 copies of the material to be sent out, there is no indication of the actual number dispatched.

Allison had asked the Lodges to reply by Martinmas Day which, in 1736, was on 11th November. The Committee instructed him to open the replies as he received them **but on no account was he to disclose the nature of the replies to any other person** before they were seen by the Committee.

As agreed, the Committee met again on 1st November, when Allison advised the members that he had not received any replies to the circular letter. Thus we can deduce that a maximum number of 100 communications was posted between 20th October and 1st November, and in the absence of replies on the latter date, the Committee agree to meet again on 11th November, Martinmas Day the date by which it had been hoped that all the replies would have been received. In view of the primitive state of the Scottish postal system at that time, the Committee's hopes were extremely optimistic, as will be shown later.

At the meeting on 11th November Robert Allison announced that he had received seven replies, naming the following Lodges as those which had responded Glasgow, Lanark, Greenock, Jedburgh, Melrose, St Bride's at Douglas, and Journeymen Masons, Edinburgh. **There is no indication in the minutes of the nature of any of these replies**, the St. Bride's answer is stated to have raised some minor questions which were answered later. When the election meeting was held on 30th November, Jedburgh and Melrose were not in attendance and were not represented. It is therefore safe to assume that they had indicated a lack of interest in the matter. Seven replies must have proved disappointing to the Committee, and arrangements were made to convene again on 25th November, six days before the Grand Master was due to be elected. On this occasion, Allison stated that further replies had been received. **On this occasion he did not name the relevant lodges,**

nor did he give any hint of the nature or number of these additional replies. This reticence leads to the assumption that there were few additional replies, and that altogether there was a severely limited enthusiasm in the ranks of the Scottish Craft for the proposed step, a situation which, five days before the event, must have presented a woeful prospect to the proponents of change.

Thus far the story has followed the chain of events as portrayed in the minutes of Grand Lodge and Canongate Kilwinning, but in order the better to comprehend the overall picture it is necessary to turn our attention to other activities which were to affect the ultimate issue. We have seen that of the two nominated candidates for the Grand Mastership one, the Earl of Crawford, had withdrawn, as his interests elsewhere would have prevented him from paying full attention to the duties of the Grand Office. This left an apparently clear field for the Earl of Home, Master of the Scots Arms Lodge and, as it transpired, the favourite of that Lodge and of Mary's Chapel for the Grand Office. However, on 22nd November there had been a meeting of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge at which William St. Clair who had been Passed in June) was Raised to the Master Mason degree. The timing of this event by itself, given the context in which it took place, was suspicious, but the activities at the end of the evening confirmed that the Earl of Home had opposition. When Brother George Fraser, Master, rose to end the meeting, he was taken ill and had to retire. Before leaving he asked the Senior Warden to take the Chair, the Junior to act as Senior and the newly Raised Master Mason to act as Junior Warden. The Acting Master then resumed the ceremony, but realised he had a vital appointment in the City, made his apologies and before departing promoted the Acting Junior Warden to Acting Senior and the latter to the Chair. It does not need the intellect of a Sherlock Holmes to deduce the next move, and William St Clair ended the evening in the Master's Chair, closing the work and signing the minute book as Master. Purely by coincidence, it had been decided by the members of the Committee from the four Lodges that whoever became the first Grand Master must have held the Chair of a Lodge, and there could be no disputing the fact that the Laird of Roslin had done so. This incident also indicates that there must have been scant ceremony involved in the closure of a meeting, just as it shows that the rulers of the Lodge were the Master and Wardens - in the absence of the Master the Wardens took precedence over the Past Masters and over the Depute.

The Canongate Kilwinning and her ally, Leith Kilwinning, were not the only plotters, as is evident from the following letter. It was written on 16th November by James Deans, a member of Kilwinning Scots Arms, to Lachlan MacIntosh, a former Master of Lodge St. Andrew, Inverness.

16th November, 1736

'Dear Brother,

This day I was honoured with your favour in execution of which I shall be careful to act agreeable to your instructions and as becomes the dignity of your Honourable Lodge. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to observe your good inclinations and zeal for masonry in making choice of my Lord Crawford, an excellent Bro. and every way capable of that Honble. Office you have named him for. But it was proposed to his Lordship that he stand for the Grand Chair, but he declined must acquaint you that many of the Lodges have named my Lord Home (a brother very well qualified) to be Grand Master, particularly Mary's Chapel, Glasgow Hamilton, Falkirk, Dunfermline and a great many more, so it is without doubt my Lord Home will be elected. Therefore your proxy will be the only one for Lord Crawford. I acquaint you with this only to exonerate myself that you may know the designs and opinions of the other Lodges, because probably you will think it convenient to join unanimously with the rest. I thought it was not proper to deliver your letter to the four Masters till I had acquainted you with what I have writ. But upon your answers (by the post) I shall exactly obey all your commands either by a new proxy or by this I have received, as you shall be pleased to direct me.

(Signed by James Deans on 16th November, 1736.)'

This letter is a most illuminating document, showing that Deans had already been in contact with MacIntosh regarding the Grand Mastership. He lists a number of Lodges which he claims had committed themselves to vote for the Earl of Home, and he states categorically that Inverness will be alone in voting for Crawford, if they do not change their proxy. James Deans was not a member of the Committee from the four Lodges, being neither Master nor a Warden of the Scots Arms Lodge. On 16th November, when his letter was written, Robert Allison had named only seven Lodges from which replies had been received. Hamilton, Falkirk and Dunfermline were

certainly not among them, yet James Deans was aware of their intentions. Indeed, he hints that he has further information by suggesting that Inverness should join unanimously with the rest.

The fact that this letter was written, and that it was written on 16th November, leads to the conclusion that there had been breaches of confidence, and that there was a strong plot to ensure success for the Earl of Home in his bid for the Grand Mastership. There are, however, numerous possibilities regarding the guilt for what was happening, combined with a lack of sufficient written evidence, which would make it dangerous for a researcher, over 200 years later, to attempt any positive assertions regarding individual liabilities. Equally, the planning, scheming and conniving was not restricted to the supporters of only one side, for we have seen what occurred when William St. Clair was Raised.

Deans did not post his letter of 16th November immediately, for on the 18th he added to it the following postscript:-

'As the election comes on Tuesday 30th instant, and that by course of the post we cannot have your answer and in consequence your proxy will be lost, we entreat you to renew it in favour of Lord Home and contrive to send it up so it may be here on Monday ye 29th instant either by express to the first post town or by some trusty private hand, **for we are apprehensive of some competition which we wish to frustrate by all means possible.**'

The postscript was signed by James Deans and counter-signed by Alexander Tait, who was Senior Warden of the Scots Arms Lodge and thereby a member of the Committee from the four Lodges. This latter fact shows that at least one member of that Committee was aware that confidential information had been leaked. Obviously Deans and Tait had learned something between 16th and 18th November which was causing them great concern - could it have been that they had learned of the Canongate's intention to place William St. Clair of Roslin in the Chair of the Lodge on 22nd of the month?

The postscript shows that Brother Deans had grave misgivings regarding the postal service, and an examination of that service in Scotland in 1736 shows it to have been primitive in the extreme. The circular letter had been sent out between 20th October and 1st November, but the minutes of the Lodge of Dunblane, No.9, show

that it did not reach that destination until after 30th November, when the election was held. To how many other Lodges would this apply also?

The three major postal towns in Scotland at the time were Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling. A fairly regular service connected the three cities, other parts of the country being served from them. Aberdeen acted as a post town for the north, and was the nearest post town to Inverness. It was not unusual for letters to be delayed in the post by being held until a sufficient number for one area merited sending them on. The letter to Dubliner no doubt went from Edinburgh to Stirling, where it must have been held up. James Deans impressed on Lachlan MacIntosh the need for haste, but there is no evidence that he ever received a reply. A letter dispatched from Edinburgh to Inverness was subjected to the following route:-

Edinburgh to South Queensferry by horse.

Ferry to Kinghorn or Burntisland.

To Cupar, Fife, by horse. Change of mount at Cupar.

Cupar to Tayport by horse.

Ferry to Dundee.

Dundee to Laurencekirk by horse. Change of mount.

Laurencekirk to Aberdeen by horse.

Aberdeen to Inverness on foot.

Taking these factors into account, and bearing in mind the state of the roads in November, it is doubtful whether James Deans could have expected a timely reply.

To maintain economic viability, such a system had to sacrifice speed, starting each leg only when the number of letters for delivery made it worth while to do so. On balance, and considering the time-table of events in Edinburgh, it is likely that the total number of replies from Lodges was very few in excess of the seven originally reported by Allison.

The minutes of Grand Lodge show that thirty-three Lodges were represented at the election meeting, representation being as shown below:- (Representatives in the order Master, Sen. Warden, Jun. Warden unless stated otherwise)

Mary's Chapel

Thomas Mylne

Kilwinning

George Fraser

Canongate Kilwinning

William St. Clair of Roslin

Samuel Neilson	Andrew Hay	George Crawford
Charles Mack	Alexander Hunter	Francis Kemptie
Kilwinning Scots Arms	Kilwinning Leith	Kilwinning Glasgow
John Young (Dep.M.)	William Montgomery	Charles Selkrig (Dep.M.)
Alexander Tait	William Tibbets	George Home
Chalmers Lewis	Archibald Smart	John Murdoch
Cupar of Fife	Linlithgow	Dunfermline
Dr John Moncreiff	Sir Alexr. Dalmahoy	Capt. Arthur Forbes
John Ross	John Lucas Baillie	Charles Chalmers
John Sheen	Colin Campbell	Henry Finlay
Dundee	Dalkeith	Aitchison's
John Young	Wm. Stirling of Herbertshire	James Crichton
Alexander Tait	Alexander Neilson	James Rutherford
Chalmers Lewis	Mungo Graham	Robert Ramsay
Selkrig	Inverness	Lesmahagow
Thomas Mylne	James Deans	Robert Blissett
Robert Douglas	Thomas Horton	David Boswall
George Keir	John Crawford	Peter Campbell
St Bride's at Douglas	Lanark	Strathaven
John Douglas	Sir Wm. Baillie of Lamington	Major Robertson of Earnock
Thomas Allen	George Bull	Sir Alexr. Hope of Herse
John Oswald	Henry Hepburn	Eaglesfield Griffiths
Hamilton	Duns	Kirkcaldy
Maj. Robertson of Earnock	David Home	William Baxter
William Adams	William Robertson	James Wyllie
Arthur Jervis	Robert McLellan	Alexander White
Journeyman Masons	Kirkintilloch	Biggar
William Brownlie	Robert Walkinshaw	Thomas Trotter
John Brownlie	John Don	John Nisbet
Robert Gray	Thomas Dundas	Hugh Penman
Sanquhar	Peebles	Glasgow St. Mungo's
John Brown	James Hay	Thomas Hamilton
David Clelland	Robert Hay	Thomas Hamilton of ...
James Cuming	Samuel Todd	Robert Walkinshaw
Greenock	Falkirk	Aberdeen
Alexander. Lindsay	(Sir)Michael Bruce	Rt.Hon. Earl of Kintore
Andrew Martin	Robert Mirries	David Maule
James Campbell	William Walker	Robert Biggar
Mariaburgh	Canongate & Leith	Montrose
Capt. John McLean	James White	Robert Allison
John McDouall	Thomas Fergusson	Charles Mack

William Gray

James Hamilton

Samuel Neilson

From the foregoing list it can be seen that most of the Lodges were designated by the towns in which they existed. Selkrig was the old term for Selkirk (this applied to the surname of a person as well as the name of the burgh). Aitchison's refers to the old Lodge of Aitchison's Haven (now dormant) whose minute book, held in the Grand Lodge opens with a minute of a second degree on 9th January, 1598. Mariaburgh refers to the Lodge at Fort William.

When Alexander Laurie, Grand Secretary in 1804, wrote his 'History of Freemasonry', he stated the 32 Lodges were represented at the Foundation meeting, but he omitted Mariaburgh.

In the Minute book of Grand Lodge, all the Lodges have been numbered, with the exception of Kilwinning, but Scottish Lodges were not numbered before 1737 - the numbers were added at a later date. Similarly, the word 'Mother' has been inscribed in front of 'Kilwinning', but in a different hand and different ink from the original. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the early records of Grand Lodge show evidence on occasion of alterations and additions having been made, some of which have been used to support spurious claims by Lodges.

Thirty-three Lodges having been present at the election, each with three representatives. One would have expected to find 99 names on the foregoing list - 100 if the Clerk (Allison) is included also, but Allison, as well as acting as Clerk, was representing Montrose. However, the following names appear twice:-

Thomas Mylne	Mary's Chapel and Selkrig
Samuel Neilson	" " " Montrose
Charles Mack	" " " "
John Young	Kilwinning Scots Arms and Dundee
Alexander Tait	" " " " "
Chalmers Lewis	" " " " "
Major Robertson of Earnock	Hamilton and Strathaven
Robert Walkinshaw	Kirkintilloch and Glasgow St Mungo's

Deducting the 8 names and that of Allison, it means that there were 91 brethren present at the election, and of the 91, the following were from the 'four Lodges in and about Edinburgh':-

Brethren from Mary's Chapel

David Boswall, William Adams, James Wyllie, Earl of Kintore, Robert Biggar

Brethren from Canongate Kilwinning

Wm. St. Clair, George Crawford, Francis Kemptie, James White, William Tibbets, Mungo Graham, Robert Blissett, John Douglas, Thomas Allen, John Oswald, George Bull, David Home, Wm. Robertson, Robt. Sir Wm. Baillie, Alexr. White, Thomas Trotter, Hugh Penman, John Brown, David Clelland, Jas. Cuming, Alexr. Lindsay, David Maule

Brethren from Kilwinning Scots Arms

George Home, Colin Campbell, Capt. Art. Forbes, Robert Douglas, George Keir, Jas. Deans, John Crawford, Samuel Todd, Sir Alexr. Hope, Eaglesfield Griffiths, John Don, Thomas Dundas, James Hay, Robert Hay, Thos. Hamilton, John Nisbet, Thos. Hamilton of... Capt. John McLean, John McDouall, William Gray, Dr. Thomas Horton, Robert Mirries

Brethren from Leith Kilwinning

John Ross, Archd. Smart, Wm. Montgomery, Alexr. Neilson, Dr. John Moncreiff

Brethren whose Lodges are not yet known

Henry Finlay, Peter Campbell, Andrew Martin, Wm. Walker, Arthur Jervis , Henry Hepburn ,James Campbell, William Stirling (thought to be of the Haddington Lodge)

From the above analysis we can draw the conclusion that at least 55 of those present were members of the four Lodges representing Lodges from elsewhere and in the light of the known facts it is reasonable to assume that the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge were foisted on to an unenthusiastic Craft by the four Edinburgh Lodges

which had planned for such an outcome. Nevertheless, reluctant as the Lodges may have been originally, the Grand Lodge came to be accepted by the Craft as its driving force; for example, within a few years, with the guidance of Grand Lodge, the Freemasons were taking the lead in funding the building and endowment of Edinburgh's Royal infirmary, Freemasonry entered an era where it made a great impression on public life.

Before looking at the events on the day of the Grand Election, it will perhaps be of interest to enlarge a little on two of the Founder representatives, each of whom played a small part in the history of our country, Major Robertson of Earnock and Eaglesfield Griffiths. Both were military men, and both were in the garrison of Edinburgh Castle, Major Robertson as Adjutant and Eaglesfield Griffiths as Master Gunner. In 1745, when Charles Edward's Camerons were forcing an entry into the City, Major Robertson took all the books, cash and other paraphernalia of the Bank of Scotland into his quarters in the Castle for safe-keeping. The Royal Bank was not quite as swift in hiding its assets and the Prince was able to claim certain of its funds. Through the agency of John Campbell the Bank's Chief Accountant (and a member of Canongate Kilwinning), the bank was able to carry out a damage limitation exercise, and the Major took charge also of the Royal Bank assets.

Eaglesfield Griffiths remained with the garrison until the Hanoverian Army moved north before Culloden. The Duke of Cumberland ordered Griffiths to take charge of his artillery, and it was through Griffiths' gunnery skills that the Highland regiments were decimated in that battle.

Reverting to the main theme of this paper, the minutes of the Grand Election meeting show that all was not plain sailing. Once the brethren had assemble in Mary's Chapel, the representatives produced the evidence which allowed them to vote. One assumes, in the absence of direct proof, that the evidence in most cases consisted of proxy certificates, and suspects that many of the representatives had authorised themselves to hold the proxies of Lodges, on the grounds that the Lodges themselves would have approved the course taken, had they known anything about it.

Sir Michael Bruce, Master of the Falkirk Lodge, had apparently failed to hold a meeting of his members to decide who should represent them at the meeting Robert Allison read out a letter he had received from James Livingstone, I.P.M. of the Lodge, countersigned by eleven members who claimed they had awarded the Lodge's proxy to Brother Richard Cooper (Canongate Kilwinning), who does not appear to have

been present at the meeting. A small sub-committee was formed on the spot to decide the matter. They decided that even if Sir Michael had been remiss in not holding a meeting, he was nevertheless the de facto Master of the Lodge, and would be allowed a vote. The Privilege was denied to his Wardens, and proxies were obviously present on behalf of Livingstone and his Supporters, as they were given the Wardens' votes.

The Falkirk issue being settled, the meeting was asked to consider, a proxy for Canongate and Leith. The Master of the Lodge was present, with one of his Wardens, the proxy being sought for the other one. Thomas Mylne, Master of Mary's Chapel, raised an objection on the grounds that the Masons of Canongate & Leith were a schismatic body from his own Lodge, and that Mary's Chapel had never recognised them as a separate entity. James White, Master of the supplicant Lodge, argued that they had parted company from Mary's Chapel in 1688, since when they had met regularly, and had kept written records of all their transactions. Following his eloquent reply, the assembly voted in favour of Canongate & Leith, granting the requested proxy but reserving the right to consider the position of the Lodge itself at a future date. This was probably thrown in as a sop to Mary's Chapel.

There then occurred one of the most important events to have been recorded in the annals of Scottish Freemasonry. William St. Clair of Roslin rose to his feet and sought permission to address the meeting. This having been granted he produced a document which he read to the brethren, requesting that it be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. This document was a deed of renunciation by St Clair, on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors, of the authority over the masons of Scotland which had been granted to his forebear by Schaw's agency. The wording of this document, which was dated 24th November, 1736, was:-

I, William St. Clair of Roslin, Esq., taking to my consideration that the Masons in Scotland did by several deeds constitute and appoint William and Sir William St. Clairs of Roslin, my ancestors, and Heirs to be their patrons, protectors, judges or masters and that my holding or claiming any such jurisdiction, right or privilege might be prejudicial to the Craft and Vocation of Masonry whereof I am a member, and I being desirous to advance and promote the good and utility of the said Craft of Masonry to the utmost of my power, do therefore hereby for me and my heirs RENOUNCE quilk claim overgive and discharge all right, claim or pretence that I or my heirs had, have

or anyways may have pretend to or claim to be patron, protector, judge or Master of the Masons in Scotland in virtue of any deed or deeds made and granted by the said Masons or of any grant or Charter made by any of the Kings of Scotland to and in favours of the said William and Sir William St. Clairs of Roslin or any others of my predecessors or any other member of way whatsoever for now and ever. And I bind and oblige me and my heirs to warrant this present renunciation and discharge at all hands. And I consent to the registration hereof in the books of Council and Session or any other Judges' books competent therein to remain for preservation, and thereto I constitute my Provs. etc. in witness whereof I have subscribed these presents (written by David Maule, Writer to the Signet) at Edinburgh the twenty-fourth day of November, one thousand, seven hundred and thirty-six years before these witnesses:- George Fraser, Deputy Auditor of Excise in Scotland, Master of the Canongate Lodge and William Montgomery, Merchant in Leith, Master of the Leith Lodge, Sic Subscribitur William St. Clair; George Fraser, Canongate Kilwinning, Witness; William Montgomery, Leith Kilwinning, Witness.

As stated, this document was written on 24th December, but there is no hint in the minutes of the Canongate Lodge that such a matter was in hand. Prior to the Election meeting William St. Clair had made no move to declare himself a candidate for the Grand Mastership, and there can be no doubt that the supporters of Lord Home entered the Hall of Mary's Chapel confident that their man would have a walk-over. It is likely that the numerous members of the Canongate and the Leith Lodges present to exercise their proxies were not aware of St. Clair's intention to produce this Deed of Renunciation. Its effect on the meeting was electrifying; it was received with prolonged acclamation by the brethren, the election proceeded immediately, and William St. Clair was elected unanimously as Scotland's first Grand Master. He appointed Captain John Young of Kilwinning Scots Arms as his Depute, Sir William Baillie of Lamington and Sir Alexander Hope of Herse as Grand Wardens, Dr. John Moncreiff as Grand Treasurer, John McDonald as Grand Secretary with Robert Allison as Grand Clerk and Archibald Kennedy his Assistant. Grand Master appointed Eaglesfield Griffiths, Andrew Syme, Peter Campbell and John McMill as Grand

Stewards. These were all the Office-bearers of the first Grand Lodge and as the years passed, the list of Offices grew to what it is today.

Many years were to pass before the Grand Lodge was accepted universally by the Scottish Lodges and even during the 19th century daughter Lodges left the fold after various arguments, but they invariably returned.

The story of the Foundation can be ended on a light note. The train of events showed that there must have been a resolute determination on both sides to get their candidate elected to the Grand Chair. The Canongate brethren, however, had prepared a resolution to be put forward if the Lodges had been unable to arrive at a decision, and that was to the effect that in such a case, the Lodges could do no better than to appoint the Master and Office-Bearers of the Canongate to the corresponding offices in the Grand Lodge.

The original Deed of Renunciation was held in the archives of the Canongate Lodge as recently as 1895, but at some stage during the past century it has disappeared, possibly having been affected, like other papers of the Lodge, by damp.

Sources of information used in preparing this paper

The first minute book of the Grand Lodge of Scotland

The first Registration book of Grand Lodge

The first extant minute book of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge

Haldane 'Three hundred years of the Scottish Post'

'Freemasonry in Inverness' by Bro. Alexander Ross, P.M., St. John's Lodge, Inverness

'The History of Freemasonry' by Alexander Laurie, Grand Secretary, 1804

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