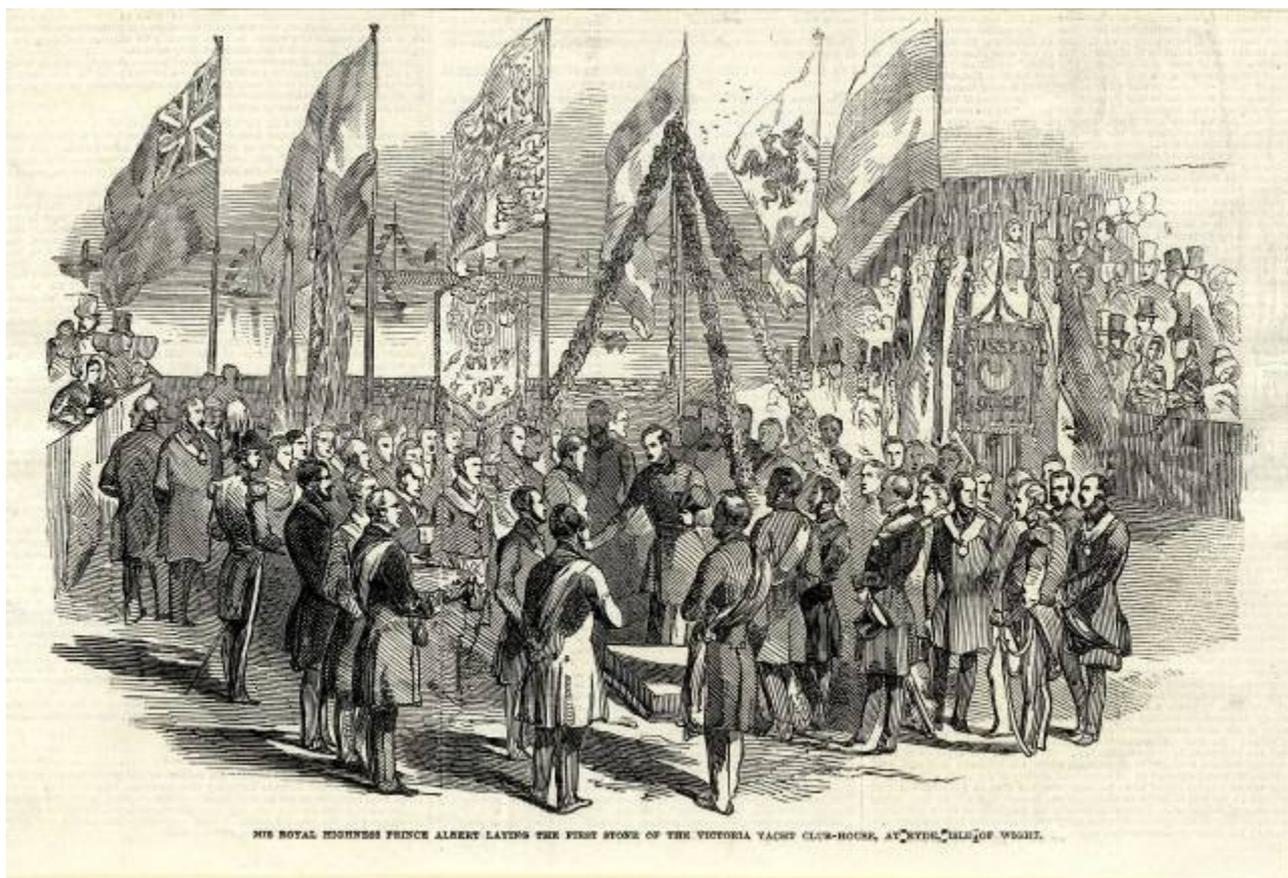


A LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY INFORMATION LEAFLET

THE USE OF STANDARDS AND BANNERS IN FREEMASONRY



Prince Albert laying the foundation stone of the Victoria Yacht Club House at Ryde on the Isle of Wight in March, 1846. Local masons were amongst the local groups in attendance and the banners can be seen for Sussex Lodge (possibly Royal Sussex Lodge No. 342 in Portsmouth) and Lodge No. 176, which is almost certainly Albany Lodge (now No. 151), which met at Newport a few miles away.

Standards and banners have long been used to proclaim the identity or affiliation of the bearer. Even as far back as Ancient Egypt a specific symbol was used to indicate the influence of various regimes. Army units of the Roman Empire had distinctive designs on their shields. It was not until the 12th century however that specific designs were used in England to identify individuals and families, passed down as an inheritance by those entitled to bear them.

The original use of heraldic designs as we know them today came in the jousting tournaments of the Middle Ages, a helmeted knight was anonymous, so his coat of arms, displayed on a shield, was used to clearly identify him. As the tradition of jousting faded away, these distinctive insignia came to be used in other ways, as designs on wax seals to mark official documents, carved on family tombs and embroidered and flown as banners over family estates. The first book of rules on coats of arms and who had the right to bear them was written in 1350, leading to the development of such bodies as the College of Arms, founded by King Richard III in 1484, which still regulates heraldry and the granting of new armorial bearings in England, Wales and Northern Ireland today (Scotland has its own body, the Court of the Lord Lyon).

Not all banners are heraldic. Originally a king or leader would display his standard on the battlefield to show his soldiers where he was, but eventually different units of soldiers created their own insignia, allowing troops to know where their comrades were assembling or fighting, leading to the development of the badges which regiments and battalions of the British army use to this day. Such military insignia have been under the control of the College of Arms, however, since 1806.

Other organisations have used banners to proclaim their identity. Trade Unions have used banners since at least the 1840s, carried in processions and May Day parades. Political organisations, temperance movements and the City Guilds have all used them. Today ad hoc banners are often carried in demonstrations.



Here we see a procession of the “Scald Miserable Masons” in London in 1741, actually organised to mock and ridicule real Freemasons but nevertheless carrying banners marked with Masonic symbols.

Lodges under the jurisdiction of the United Grand Lodge of England have their own individual insignia, a lodge badge, which many also display as a banner often carried in front of members as they march in procession. Such processions are rare now, but the banners still hang in masonic halls and lodge rooms across the country. In some lodges the master displayed his own coat of arms as a banner for his one year term of office.

Grand Lodge itself has its own coat of arms. The Premier Grand Lodge, formed in 1717, adopted theirs from the London Company of Masons and were known to be using it by 1730. The Antients Grand Lodge claimed theirs came from the writings of a 17th Century Jewish scholar, Rabbi Jacob Jehudah Leon, and adopted it at their foundation in 1751. Both were combined at the Union of the Grand Lodges in 1813 and form the basis of the current coat of arms, now with the addition of a red border with eight lions, indicative of the Arms of England, granted by the College of Arms in 1919 (see the information sheet “The Arms of the United Grand Lodge of England” for a more detailed history). The Grand Lodge also has its own banner, embroidered with this coat of arms, which can be seen hanging in the main gallery of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry together with the banner of the current Grand Master and previous Grand Masters who have held that office since 1901. These are heraldic, being the coats of arms of the person who held the position.

Here, on the left, is the standard of the United Grand Lodge of England itself, bearing Grand Lodge’s Coat of Arms and, on the right, that of the current Grand Master, HRH Prince Edward the Duke of Kent (1935-). When the Grand Lodge meets at Freemasons’ Hall both these standards are carried into the Grand Temple immediately behind the presiding officer.



The banners of previous Grand Masters who have served in the current Freemasons' Hall include the distinctive arms of Lawrence Roger Lumley, 11th Earl of Scarbrough (1896-1969), Grand Master from 1951 to 1967.



The Earl of Scarbrough was preceded by Edward Cavendish, 10th Duke of Devonshire (1895-1950) who was Grand Master from 1947 to 1950.



Henry Lascelles, 6th Earl of Harewood (1882-1947) was Grand Master from 1942 to 1947.



HRH Prince George, Duke of Kent (1902-1942), father of the current Grand Master, was Grand Master from 1939 to 1942, when he died in an aeroplane crash while on active service.



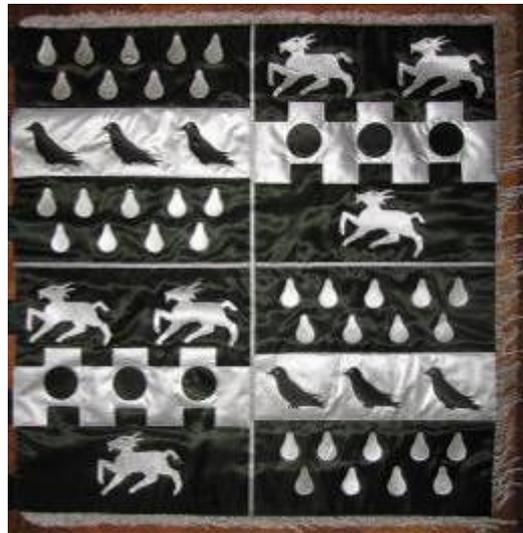
HRH Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn (1850-1942), Grand Master from 1901 to 1939.



When the Grand Master is a member of the Royal family, he has the capacity to appoint a Pro Grand Master, who stands in for him when he is unable to attend Grand Lodge due to other duties, in which case the Pro Grand Master's banner, if any, is substituted for the Grand Master's at the head of the procession into the Grand Temple. The current Pro Grand Master is Peter Geoffrey Lowndes (1948-).



Two earlier Pro Grand Masters are Barry Owen Somerset Maxwell, 12th Baron Farnham (1931-2001), left, who held the position from 1991 to 2001 and his immediate predecessor, Fiennes Neil Wykeham Cornwallis, 3rd Baron Cornwallis (1921-2010), right, who held the position from 1982 to 1991.



HRH Prince Michael of Kent, the younger brother of the Duke of Kent, is the current Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Middlesex and Grand Master of the Mark Master Masons.



Here are the heraldic descriptions or *blazons* of the banners pictured above-

United Grand Lodge of England - Per pale Gules and Quarterly Azure and Or, dexter on a Chevron between three Castles Argent a pair of Compasses extended of the third, sinister a Cross quarterly of the fourth and Vert between in the 1st quarter a Lion rampant of the third, in the 2nd an Ox passant Sable, in the 3rd a Man with hands elevated proper vested of the fifth the Robe Crimson lined with Ermine, and in the 4th an Eagle displayed also of the third, the whole within a bordure of the first, charged with eight lions passant guardant of the third.

The Grand Master, HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Kent - Royal Arms, differenced by a label of five points Argent, the points charged with an anchor Azure and a cross Gules alternately.

Royal Coat of Arms - Quarterly, 1st and 4th Gules three lions passant guardant in pale Or armed and langued Azure (for England), 2nd quarter Or a lion rampant within a double tressure flory-counter-flory Gules (for Scotland), 3rd quarter Azure a harp Or stringed Argent (for Ireland).

Lawrence Roger Lumley, 11th Earl of Scarbrough - Argent a Fesse Gules between three parrots Vert.

Edward Cavendish, 10th Duke of Devonshire - Sable three buck's heads caboshed Argent.

Henry Lascelles, 6th Earl of Harewood - Sable a Cross Patonce within a Bordure Or.

HRH Prince George, Duke of Kent - Royal Arms, differenced by a label of three points Argent, the points charged with an anchor Azure.

HRH Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn - Royal Arms differenced by a label of three points Argent, the centre point having a red cross, the other two having a blue fleur-de-lis.

The Pro Grand Master, Peter Geoffrey Lowndes - Quarterly 1st and 4th Argent fretty Azure each interlacing charged with a Bezant on a Canton Gules a Leopards head erased Or, 2nd and 3rd Sable a Fesse embattled Or In chief three Battle axes erect Argent and in base a Bezant.

Barry Owen Somerset Maxwell, 12th Baron Farnham - Quarterly 1st & 4th Argent a saltire Sable a chief paly of six of the first and second 2nd & 3rd Barry of six Argent and Gules.

Fiennes Neil Wykeham Cornwallis, 3rd Baron Cornwallis - Quarterly 1st and 4th, Sable guttée d'eau on a Fess Argent three Martlets of the field 2nd and 3rd, Sable on a Fess embattled counter-embattled between three goats passant Argent as many Pellets.

HRH Prince Michael of Kent - Royal Arms, differenced by a label of five points Argent. the points charged with a cross Gules and an anchor Azure alternately.