

The Minutes of 15th December 1891 will hopefully be of interest to the Brethren as this is the Meeting when an Inspector of Police from Rochford was balloted and initiated. His name was George Chase.

1891 was the year when the Rochford Station Master and the Rochford Workhouse Master joined us.

W.Bro. Albert Lucking was our DC and we were regularly visited by brethren from Priory Lodge No.1000, Trinity Lodge No.1734 and St. Andrews No.1817 amongst others.

Attendance early in the year was 15 or 16 each meeting. Towards the end of the year it had risen to 20 to 30 including a sprinkling of visitors.

This was also the year the L of I was formed and the year when the formation of a G.P. Committee was discussed.

The explanation of the FIRST degree Tracing Board was given quite regularly at this time.

Installation was held in June during the late 19th Century and the 1891 Installation Meeting was held NOT at The Old Ship, Rochford where regular meetings were held but at The Old Court House, (WHICH OF COURSE IS NOW THE ROCHFORD MASONIC HALL) by special dispensation from the Provincial Grand Secretary. Albert Lucking performed the ceremony of installing the new Master.

LODGE OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP NO.160 OF ANCIENT, FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS HELD AT THE OLD SHIP INN AT ROCHFORD ON TUESDAY DECEMBER 15TH 1891

There were present 10 Officers:

W. Bro. A.J. Arthy W.M.

Bro. G.F. Golding S.W.

Bro. J.A. Hobday J.W.

W. Bro. R.C. Twyne Chaplain

W. Bro. H. Harper Secretary

The Treasurer was absent

Bro. C. Walton S.D.

W. Bro. A. Lucking D.C. and J.D.

Bro. W. Carter-Wood I.G.

Bro. H.A. Armitage Steward

Bro. A.W. Martin Tyler

and 2 PMs and 8 Brethren.

There were 10 visitors from 6 Lodges including Priory, Trinity and St. Andrews

The Lodge was opened in due form and the Minutes of the last Lodge were read and confirmed.

The ballot was taken for

W.Bro. W. Clark of Corinthian Lodge No.1382, and Bro. C.E. Judd of Trinity Lodge No.1734 as joining members AND as candidates for freemasonry

and Mr P.J. Burdett a Licenced Victualler of Southend

and Mr G.S. Chase an Inspector of Police in Rochford

The ballot in each case apparently proved UNIMOUS (sic).

The Lodge was opened in the second degree.

Bro. Page, being a candidate for the third degree, was entrusted with a test of merit.

The Lodge was opened in the third degree.

Bro. Page was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason.

The Lodge was resumed in the first degree.

Bros. Burdett and Chase were initiated into the mysteries and privileges of ancient freemasonry.

The J.W. gave the Charge.

Bro. R. Bourne of Prosperity Lodge No.65 was proposed as a joining member by Bro. Walker.

Mr A.E. Rankin, a farmer at Little Stambridge was proposed as a candidate for freemasonry by Bro. Armitage.

Bro. J. Goddard of Unity Lodge No.598 was proposed as a joining member by Bro. Palmer.

There being no further business, the Lodge was closed in due form with solemn prayer and adjourned.

Signed A.J. Arthy W.M.

It was George Chase who nine years later in 1900, by then Chief Superintendent of Rochford, had to police the Rochford celebrations of the relief of Mafeking. He had to arrest a number of Cottis's employees (who had been working unloading one of Rankin's barges at Stambridge Mills) when they became drunk and violent. He was assisted in this by the butcher, also a member of the Lodge.

It was about this time that Chief Superintendent Chase was checking on the vagrants sleeping one night in the stabling sheds behind the Rose & Crown. One was making a lot of noise in his slumbers so the superintendent turned him over with his foot and quickly found himself in trouble. The noisy sleeper was in fact a performing bear, resting next to his master. How Superintendent Chase extracted himself from the bear's grip, is not recorded... but performing bears were quite common around the turn of the century and the Lodge has a photograph of that particular bear dancing in North Street, Rochford.

And, we also have WBro. George Chase's regalia, wrapped in a 1920 newspaper and contained in a metal case in the Lodge archive.