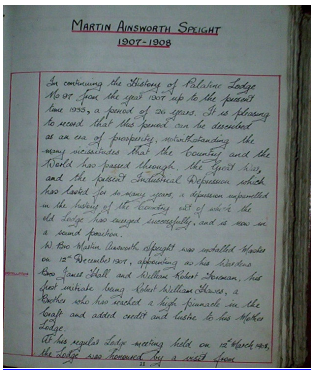
The History 1907 to 1937

Martin Ainsworth Speight, PPrSGW
Worshipful Master 1907 to 1908



MARTIN AINSWORTH SPEIGHT
1907-1908

In continuing the History of Palatine Lodge No 95 from the year 1907 up to the present time 1935, a period of 20 years. It is pleasing to record that this period can be described as an era of prosperity, notwithstanding the many vicissitudes that the Country and the World has passed through, the Great War, and the greatest Industrial Depression which has lasted for so many years, a depression unprecedented in the history of the Country out of which the old Lodge has emerged successfully, and is now in a sound position.

W. Bro Martin Ainsworth Speight was installed Master on 12th December 1907, appointing as his Wardens Bro James Hall and William Robert Herman, but first withdrew being Robert William Hawes, a Brother who has worked a high pinnacle in the Craft and added credit and lustre to his Mother Lodge.

At his regular Lodge meeting held on 12th March 1908, the Lodge was honoured by a visit from

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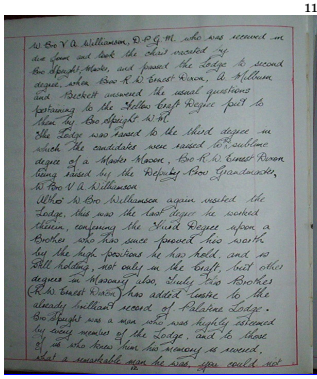

W. Bro V. A. Williamson, P.P.G.M. who was received in due form and took the chair vacated by Bro Speight, Master, and formed the Lodge to second degree, when Bro R. W. Ernest Wixon, W. William Beckett answered the usual questions pertaining to the Mother Craft Degree, fell to them by Bro Speight, W.M.

The Lodge was raised to the third degree in the Lodge. The candidates were raised to Sublime degree of a Master Mason, Bro R. W. Ernest Wixon being passed by the Deputy Bro Grantwinkle, W. Bro V. A. Williamson.

After W. Bro Williamson again visited the Lodge, this was the last degree he worked therein, conferring the Third Degree upon a Brother who has since proved his worth by the high positions he has held, and so fill holding, not only in the Craft, but other degrees in Masonry also, Truly this Brother (R.W. Ernest Wixon) has added lustre to the already brilliant record of Palatine Lodge.

Bro Speight was a man who was highly esteemed by every member of the Lodge, and to those of us who knew him his memory is revered, what a remarkable man he was, often could not

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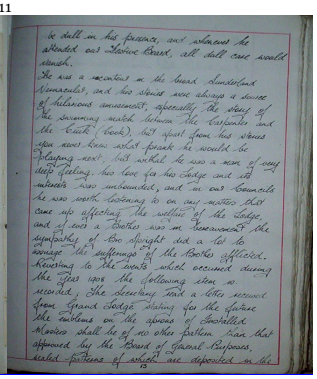

he dwell on his presence, and advances he attended our Festive Board, all dull care would vanish.

He was a miner in the Durham Sunderland Minerals, and his hours were always a source of Humorous amusement, especially the story of the swimming match between the Tadpoles and the Tuck (Duck) but apart from his Humour you knew what a friend he would be playing next, but withal he was a man of very deep feeling, his love for his Lodge and all interests Masonic, and in our Temperate he was worth listening to on any matter that came up affecting the welfare of the Lodge, and of such a Brother was in Sincerest the sympathy of Bro Speight did a lot to assuage the sufferings of the Brother afflicted. Referring to the events which occurred during the year 1908 the following item is recorded, the directing Grand a letter received from Grand Lodge stating for the future the emblems on the aprons of Installed Masters shall be of no other pattern than that approved by the Board of General Purposes, Rather patterns of which are deposited on the

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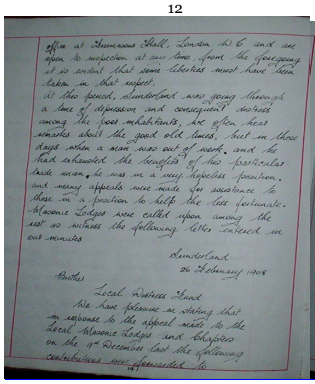

office at Freemasons Hall, London W.C. and are open to inspection at any time, from the foregoing it is evident that some liberties must have been taken in that respect.

At this period, Sunderland was going through a time of depression and consequent distress among the poor inhabitants, we often hear remarks about the good old times, but in those days when a man was out of work, and he had exhausted the benefits of his institutes trade union, he was in a very hopeless position, and many appeals were made for assistance to those in a position to help the less fortunate. Masonic Lodges were called upon among the rest so witness the following letter received in our minutes

Sunderland
26 February 1908

Brother

Local Distress Fund

We have pleasure in stating that in response to the appeal made to the local Masonic Lodges and Chapters on the 9th December last the following contributions were forwarded to

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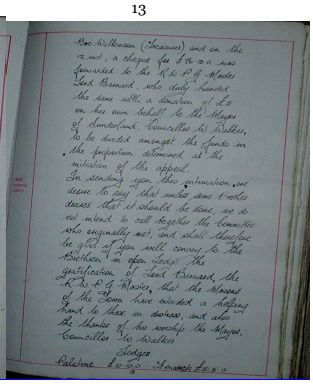

Bro Williamson (Treasurer) and on the 12 inst, a cheque for £70-0-0 was forwarded to the R.W. P.G. Master Earl Barnard, who duly handed the same with a donation of £10 on his own behalf to the Mayor of Sunderland, Councillor W. Walker, to be divided amongst the funds on the proportion determined at the institution of the appeal.

In sending you this information, we desire to say that under some trifling doubts that it should be done, as we not wished to call together the Committee who originally met, and which therefore the gift of you will convey to the Brethren in your Lodge the gratification of Lord Barnard, the R.W. P.G. Master, that the Masons of the Town have rendered a helping hand to those in distress and also the thanks of the worship the Mayor, Councillor W. Walker.

Lodges
Palatine £70-0-0 Lonsdale £2-0-0

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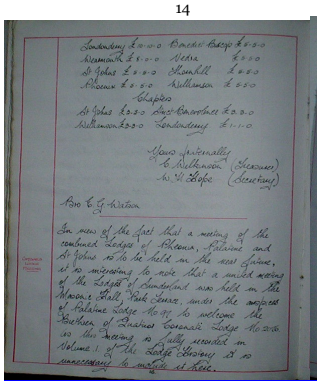

Lonsdale £2-0-0 Bamard Castle £2-0-0
Hermitage £1-0-0 Vestra £2-0-0
St Johns £2-0-0 Shenkhill £2-0-0
Phoenix £2-0-0 Williamson £2-2-0

Chapters
St Johns £2-2-0 Lady Barnard £2-2-0
Williamson £2-2-0 Londonderry £1-1-0

Yours fraternally
C. Williamson (Treasurer)
W. H. Lofe (Secretary)

Bro C. G. Watson

In view of the fact that a meeting of the combined Lodges of Athena, Palatine and St Johns is to be held on the 22nd Inst, it is interesting to note that a united meeting of the Craft of Sunderland was held in the Masonic Hall, Park Lane, under the auspices of Palatine Lodge No 95 to welcome the Brethren of Prince Consort Lodge No 2016 as this meeting is fully recorded in Volume 1 of the Lodge History it is unnecessary to mention it here.

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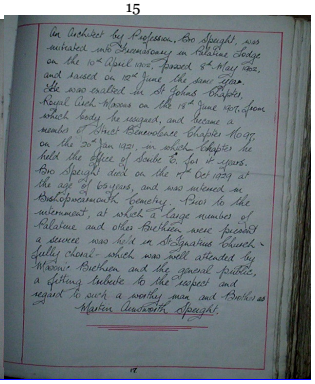

An Architect by Profession, Bro Speight, was initiated into Freemasonry in Palatine Lodge on the 10th April 1902, passed 8th May 1902, and raised on 10th June the same year. He was exalted in St Johns Chapter, Royal Arch Masons on the 19th June 1907 from which body he resigned, and became a member of Prince Consort Chapter No 97, on the 20th Jan 1921, in which Chapter he held the office of Scribe E. for 18 years. Bro Speight died on the 7th Oct 1929 at the age of 69 years, and was interred in Bishopwearmouth Cemetery. Prior to the interment, at which a large number of Palatine and other Brethren were present a service was held in St Ignatius Church - Gilley Choral - which was well attended by Masonic Brethren and the general public, a fitting tribute to the respect and regard to such a worthy man and Brother as

Martin Ainsworth Speight.

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