Internet Lodge 9659

United Grand Lodge of England
Province of East Lancashire
http://internet.lodge.org.uk

Short Papers Competition 2007

The opinions reflected by the author are not necessarily those of Internet Lodge, The Province of East Lancashire or the United Grand Lodge of England.

Paper 45/2007

Title **The City of Chester and its Masonic Significance**
Author **Bro Fred Lomax – United Kingdom**

Often overlooked is the significance of Chester in Masonic history, and very few know that there existed there a Masonic Lodge in the mid 1600s. I believe that is important because we know that there was a lodge nearby in Warrington where Elias Ashmole was initiated in 1646

Randle Holme, can be considered a fairly common name in Chester's history when you consider that no less than five persons of importance have borne that name. All were genealogists and heraldic painters and the third, Randle Holme, 1627- 1699 was the grandson of a deputy to a Garter King of Arms.

In his *Academie of Armoury* he makes several references to Freemasonry which may indicate a non-operative nature in the fraternity during the seventeenth century. An account of his states:

A Fraternity or Society, or Brotherhood, or Company; are such in a corporation, that are of one and the same trade or occupation, who being joined together by oath and covenant, do follow such orders and rules, as are made, to be made for the good order, rule and support of such and every one of their occupations. These several fraternities are generally governed by one or two Masters and two Wardens, but most companies with us, by two Aldermen and two Stewards, the latter, being to pay and receive what concerns them

And in another passage he says:

I cannot but Honour the Fellowship of the Masons because of its Antiquity; and the more, as being a Member of that Society, called Free-Masons. In being conversant amongst them I have observed the use of these several tools following some whereof I have seen being born in Coats of Armour

He had previously referred to several tools without making any comment about them.

Holme, it would seem, had transcribed a copy of the Harleian Manuscript and this' together with a scrap of paper, were found in his effects and written on the paper is the following:

There is several words and signs of a Freemason to be revealed to you; which as you will answer before God at the Great and terrible day of judgement you keep secret and not reveal the same to any in the hearing of any person but to the Masters and fellows of the said Society of Freemasons, so help me God etc…

Finally, but also significant is the fact that Cheshire was the first County in the English Constitution to have a Provincial Grand Lodge when Col. Francis Columbine was elected the first Grand Master at Chester in 1725, just eight years after the first Grand Lodge was formed.

Ref: Pick & Knight; Pocket History of Freemasonry

Short papers are intended to be read aloud in lodge meetings as a form of Masonic Education. Whilst we encourage you to use them for their intended purpose they must not be reproduced for publication in any manner without the prior permission of Internet Lodge No 9659 E.C. or the author.
© 2008 Internet Lodge and the author