

# **The Tradition of The Old York T. I. Lodge of Mark Master Masons**

## ***An enquiry into early Freemasonry at Bradford and neighbourhood. 1713-1873.***

**A paper given before the Old York T.I. Lodge at Bradford on November 28th, 1911 by Bro. C J Scott, P.M.M. and Chaplain Old York T.I. Lodge.**

In making an enquiry into the Tradition of early Freemasonry at Bradford and neighbourhood, we must go back about two centuries, and must also dwell for a short time on the connection of early Bradford Masonry with the Old York Grand Lodge.

There appears to be no doubt that Bradford is one of the oldest strongholds of Freemasonry in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and that a Lodge had been in existence at Bradford long before the establishment of the Lodge of Hope, but unfortunately no records of this early Lodge can be traced.

There is however one document of older date than the Lodge of Hope, which has been preserved at Bradford, viz: "The Hope Manuscript Constitution" of the seventeenth century, a transcript of which has been given by Bro. W. J. Hughan in his "Old Masonic Manuscripts" and by Bro. W. Watson in "The West Yorkshire Reprints."

There is evidence that a Lodge was held at Bradford in the year 1713, when "The Ancient\* and Honourable Society and Fraternity of Freemasons. meeting since time immemorial in the City of York " met at Bradford. The exact date and place of meeting are not at present known, and the manuscript book containing the Minutes of proceedings at that meeting is not to be found.

This. minute book was in existence at York in 1778 and 1779, it is mentioned in a Schedule of the Regalia, Records, &c., dated September 17th, 1779, which is still preserved, and a copy of which will be found in Bro. W. J. Hughan's " Masonic Sketches" page 20.

But before proceeding with the subject of our enquiry, it may be of help and interest to enquire first into the circumstances which led to the establishment of the first symbolic Grand Lodge, at London in 1717, the split, which occurred in 1751, and the position which the Mark Degree held before the Union in 1813, and the circumstances which led to the establishment of the " Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England."

After the Great Fire at London, which occurred on the 2nd of September, 1666, and lasted four days, destroying a great part of the City from Blackfriars to London Bridge, a great many Architects, Builders, and Masons were drawn to London from all parts of the country to assist. in the work of rebuilding the City and in the restoration of St. Paul's Cathedral, the natural consequence was that some of the old Lodges in the country, amongst which also the Old Lodge at York, declined, whilst the London Lodges developed great activity.

The old Lodge of St. Paul's (afterwards the "Lodge of Antiquity") and the Lodges meeting at Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and Westminster, met regularly during that time. Elias Ashmole, an Antiquary, D.Ph.(Oxford) and founder of the Library at Oxford bearing his name, born at Lichfield in 1617. and admitted into the Fellowship of Freemasonry at a Lodge at Warrington, in 1646, recorded in his Diary under date 1682, viz:

March 10th. Abt. 5 p.m. I received a summons to appear at a Lodge to be held the next day at Mason's Hall, London."

March 11 th. Accordingly, I went, and abt. noon were admitted -into the fellowship of F.M. Sir Wm. Wilson, Kt., Capt. Richard Borthwick, Mr. Will. Woodman, Mr. Wm. Grey, Mr. Sam Taylor, and Mr. Wm. Wise."

"I was the senior fellow amongst them (it being 35 years since I was admitted). There was present besides myself the fellows after named: Mr. Thos. Wise. Mr. of the Mason's Company this present year (then follow eight names).

"We all dined at the Halfe Moone Tavern in Cheapside. at a noble dinner prepar'd at the charge of the new accepted Masons."

My object in quoting these entries in Elias Ashmole's diary, is to show you, that previous to 1717, the Masonic Lodges were not confined to operative Masons, but admitted non-operatives as accepted Masons into the Fellowship of Masons. which shows that Masonry had already adopted an esoteric or symbolic character, previous to the establishment of the first symbolic Grand Lodge in 1717. A further proof is the Mark Book of the "Old Lodge at Aberdeen of the year 1670," which gives the names and Marks of forty-nine members and eleven apprentices. Out of the forty-nine members only eight were operative Masons. the Master of the Lodge was a Tutor and Collector of the King's Customs; amongst the members of the Lodge were: four Noblemen ( the Earls of Findlater, Dunfermline and Erroll, and Lord Pitsligo), three Ministers of Religion, one Advocate, one Professor of Mathematics, nine Merchants, two Surgeons, several Gentlemen, and the rest were Tradespeople.

When the rebuilding of the City and the restoration of St. Paul's were completed, the Architects and Builders congregated around St. Paul's, had no more work to do, and dispersed throughout the country.

The few accepted Masons remained, with them rested the task of reorganising the Fraternity in accordance with the spirit of the age.

The four surviving Lodges meeting

1. At the Goose and Gridiron in St. Paul's Churchyard,
2. At the Crown Ale House in Parker's Lane,
3. At the Appletree Tavern in Charles St., Covent Garden,
4. At the Rummer and Grape's Tavern. Channel Row,

met in February. 1717, at the Appletree Tavern. and after having voted the oldest Master present in the Chair, constituted themselves a Grand Lodge, pro tem., and in due form and forthwith revived the quarterly communication of the officers of Lodges, resolved to hold the Annual Assembly and

Feast. and to choose a Grand Master amongst themselves till they should have the honour of a noble brother at their head.

Accordingly. on St. John the Baptist's day, June 24th, 1717, the Brethren again met, and by a majority of hands elected Mr. Anthony Sayer, Grand Master of Masons, who was forthwith invested with the badges of office by the oldest Master and duly installed, Capt. Elliott and Mr. Lamball Carpenter were elected Grand Wardens ( Book of Constitutions 1738).

The first Book of Constitution was compiled from the Old Manuscript Constitutions, and first published by consent of Grand Lodge by the Rev. Bro. James Anderson, a Scotch Presbyterian minister, in 1723.

It appears that at first only two degrees were worked, those of F.C. and E.A., the M.M. degree does not seem to have come into existence until many years afterwards, and then it was only conferred in Grand Lodge. the first mention of an M.M. Lodge appears in an engraved list for the year 1738.

In 1751 a split occurred amongst the London Masons, which resulted in those who seceded. terming themselves "Ancient Masons," and designated those who remained loyal to the Grand Lodge, as "Modern Masons." The Grand Master of the "Ancients" was the Duke of Athol and hence they are also known as " Athol Masons" and their Lodges as Athol Lodges," and many of the oldest Lodges, now on the Register of the " United Grand Lodge of England" are descendants of "Athol Lodges" and some of these have from time immemorial to the present time, continued uninterruptedly to confer the Mark Degree, as was done in fact by individual Lodges, before the establishment of the Grand Lodge in 1717.

There were at one time actually four Grand Lodges in England, viz:

- 1 . The Grand Lodge of All England, meeting since time immemorial in the City of York.
2. The Grand Lodge at London (Modems) formed 1717.
3. The "Athol" Grand Lodge (Ancients) seceded from the former in 1751.
4. The Grand Lodge of "All England south of the river Trent," established by the York Grand Lodge in 1778.

The latter after a short existence rejoined the Grand Lodge of the Modems.

In 1813, when Augustus, Duke of Sussex, sixth son of George III, was Grand Master of the " Moderns," and Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III, was Grand Master of the "Ancients " or " Athol" Masons, a Union was effected between the two Grand Lodges under the title of " The United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England " under the Duke of Sussex as Grand Master, the Duke of Kent becoming Patron of the Craft.

The Ceremonies of the Order were revised by a Lodge of Reconciliation, which consisted of members of both parties.

One result of this change was, that the Mark Degree was discarded, although portions of it were retained in the Master Masons Degree and partly in the Holy Royal Arch, which, latter Degree, however, has since that time been so remodelled as to contain in it now few traces of the Mark Degree.

Nevertheless, although it was ignored by the supreme authorities of the Craft in this country. the Mark Degree has never ceased to be practiced in various parts of England, and it has been always recognised as an integral portion of ancient Freemasonry by the Grand Lodge of Scotland. and the Grand Royal Arch Chapters of Scotland, Ireland. Canada, and the United States of America.

The ceremony of selecting the Mark must have been in practice by the Brethren of the old Lodge in the City of York long before the formation of the first Grand Lodge at London. in 1717. as in the early Minutes of that Lodge, Masons' Marks are attached to the names of many Brethren.

The following letter of Jacob Bussey. G.S. of the Grand Lodge of All England, addressed to Bro. B. Bradley, J.W, of the Lodge of Antiquity, London, and dated, York, 29th August, 1778, is of special interest to all Bradford Masons, as it proves the existence of a Lodge at Bradford in 1713. four years prior to the formation of the Grand Lodge at London.

This letter reach as follows, viz.

" In compliance with your request to be satisfied of the existence of a Grand Lodge at York, previous to the establishment of that at London. in 1717, I have inspected an original Minute Book of this Grand Lodge. beginning at 1705 and ending at 1735, from which I have extracted the names of the Grand Masters of the period, as follows :-

1705-Sir George Tempest, Bart.

1707-The Rt. Hon. Robert Benson, Lord Mayor of York.

1708-Sir Wm. Robinson, Bart.

1711-Sir Walter Hawksworth, Bart.

1713-Sir George Tempest, Bart.

1714-Charles Fairfax. Esq.

1720-Sir Walter Hawksworth, Bart.

1725-Ed. Bell, Esq.

1726-Chas. Bathurst, Esq.

1729-Ed. Thompson, Esq., M.P.

1733-John Johnson, Esq.. M.D.

1734-John Maraden, Esq.

It is observable that during the above period the Grand Lodge was 'not holden twice together at the same house, and there is an instance of it being holden once, in 1713, out of York, viz. at Bradford in Yorkshire. when eighteen gentlemen of the first families in that neighbourhood were made Masons. In short, the superior antiquity of the Grand Lodge, to all other Lodges in the Kingdom, will not admit of doubt, all the books which treat on the subject, agree that it was founded so early as the year 926, and that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth it was so numerous, that mistaking the purport of their meeting, she was at the trouble of sending an armed force to dislodge the Brethren."

This letter was sent in response to an enquiry from the Lodge of Antiquity, No. 1, London, when that Lodge, in consequence of a disagreement with the Grand Lodge (Moderns) seceded from that body and applied to the York Grand Lodge for a warrant to form itself into a Grand Lodge, under the title of "The Grand Lodge of All England. south of the river Trent."

This Grand Lodge was only of short existence. The differences were soon settled and after a few years of separate existence, the Lodge Of Antiquity rejoined the Grand Lodge of the "Moderns."

The letter previously quoted is of special interest, as it proves that there was a Lodge formed in Bradford in the year 1713, in which were admitted eighteen gentlemen of the first families in the neighbourhood.

Let us now examine the list of Grand Masters, so called by the G.S. Bro. Bussey, who, however, up to 1725 were called Presidents,

viz :

1. Sir George Tempest. who was President 1705-6, and in 1713. The Tempest family is well connected with Bradford, the family seat is at Tong Hall,. within four miles from Bradford.
2. The Rt. Hon. Robert Benson, President in 1707, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and afterwards Lord Bingley, who resided at Gawthorpe Hall, Bingley.
3. Sir Wm. Robinson, Bart., of Ripon, an ancestor of the Marquis of Ripon, President in 1708.
4. Sir Walter Hawksworth, Bart., of Hawksworth Hall, near Bradford, President in 1711-12 and 1720-24.

But besides the above, it appears from the proceedings of the York Grand Lodge, contained in a parchment Roll (No. 7) commencing March 19th, 1712, under date August 7th, 1713, that Admiral Robert Fairfax, of Steeton and Newton Kyme, was admitted into the fraternity. He was M.P. for York in 1713, and Lord Mayor in 1715, and Vice-President of the York Grand Lodge in 1721.

With the President for 1713 residing at Tong (4 miles), one Past President at Bingley (51 miles), another at Hawksworth (6 miles), all within a radius of six miles from Bradford (at that time only a small place of about 3,000 inhabitants) it is not surprising that there was much activity in the craft, and that Freemasonry was a popular institution in and around Bradford at that time.

With these Masons of high position in the craft, supported by the newly admitted eighteen gentlemen of the first families in the neighbourhood, it may well be argued that the Lodge formed at Bradford in 1713 was well supported and likely to be carried on successfully for some time.

Under these circumstances, it is not too much to assume that, during the eighty-one years which elapsed between the establishment of the 1713 Lodge, and that of the Lodge of Hope in 1794, Freemasonry at Bradford had not completely died out. but was carried on in some regular or irregular form during part or the whole of the period, also that "The Old York T.I. Constitution" was brought into the Lodge of Hope by some descendant or descendants of the Brethren who formed the 1713 Lodge,

We have an instance of a similar kind in another Degree, formerly connected with the Lodge of Hope, where a Warrant (Faith 13, K.T.) was held by a single Brother, who refused to surrender it (Bro. R. M. Scholefield). and who, for a period of nearly thirty years, kept it from lapsing by the

payment of dues, and by making a yearly return to the authorities, until such time that he met with some Brethren who were ready to assist him in reviving the Encampment, which object he has successfully accomplished in the course of time.

Gould says :

"It is much to be regretted, that the narrow folio manuscript, beginning March 7th, 1705, from which Bro. Bussey extracted his letter, is still missing. With that valuable document before us it would doubtless be easy to obtain clues to several puzzles which now confront us. That it was in existence at York in 1778 and 1779, we know from the Inventory of 17th September, 1779, published in 'Hughan's Masonic Sketches.'"

Unfortunately all the efforts to trace a connection of the 1713 Lodge with the Lodge of Hope have faded, although an extensive search was made by a Research Committee, appointed in 1892.

All the records and documents in possession of the Lodge and other old Lodges in the neighbourhood were carefully examined, but without result.

There are no records preserved at Bradford throwing any light on the subject, the only evidences are the letter referred to, written by the G.S. of the York Grand.Lodge, which was an extract from a Minute Book now missing. and which is also quoted in Bro. Gould's History. Vol. II.. pages 408 and 409, and an old Manuscript Constitution in the possession of the Lodge of Hope, 302, a Parchment Scroll some 5-6 feet long, with part of the Apprentice Charge and date missing. entitled:

**The Constitutions and Articles which are to be observed and followed by all Those who are made Free by the Rt Worshipful Masters, Fellows, and Brethren of Free Masons at any Lodge or Assembly.**

This old Manuscript Constitution is registered as No. 20 in the tabulated list of " Manuscript Constitutions " and pronounced to be of the middle of the seventeenth century. It has been transcribed by Bro. W. J. Hughan, in his " Old Masonic Manuscripts," now out of print, and by Bro. Wm, Watson in the " West Yorkshire Reprints."

How and when this document has come into the possession of the Lodge of Hope cannot be ascertained from the Minute books, the tradition is that it has been in the possession of the Lodge of Hope, since the establishment of the Lodge, and that it was the Constitution under which Brethren were promoted to the Mark Degree.

I cannot enter into the tradition of the Old York Lodge, without referring to the early history of the Lodge of Hope, of which it was an integral part, placed between the II. and III. degree.

The Lodge of Hope, 539, now 302, was constituted under a Warrant, dated York, 23rd of March, 1794, granted by Richard Slater Milnes, Esq., Prov. Grand Master for the county of York, under authority of His Royal Highness George Augustus Frederic, Prince of Wales, etc., etc. (afterwards George IV.), Supreme Grand Master of the Order, to Jeremiah Ambler, as Master, John Sherwin Watson and Fox Taylor, as Wardens, to open a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons under the title of the Lodge of Hope, at the Talbot Inn, Bradford.

The first meeting of the Lodge was held at the said Inn, on the 7th of April, 1794.

Evidently at that time there was no Consecration Ceremony, the Lodge was simply opened. The following is a copy of the Minutes of the first meeting, viz:

Lodge of Hope, commenced at Bradford, April 7th, 1794.

Brethren present

Jeremiah Ambler ... Master

T. S. Watson ... S.W.

Fox Taylor ... J.W.

Jno. Smith ...S.D.

Wm Hargreaves ... J.D.

Christ. Wand ...Secretary

Robt. Anderson . ..Tyler

Visitors from the Harmony Lodge, No. 461: Bros. ino. Farrar,

ino. Holdsworth, Rich. Ashworth, Jno. Ramsden and Jno. Taylor. Wm. Waterhouse initiated to act as Tyler. Jno. Varley, John Maud, Wm. Garnett, Jno. Oddy, Jos. Hobson, Jno. Stansfield were proposed Candidates for Masonry by Chris. Waud, Secretary :-Carried nem. con.

Closed at 11 p.m. with peace and harmony!'

The Minutes of the second meeting are as follows, viz

Lodge of Hope, April 21 at, 1794. Brethren present

Wm. Goodchild ... Master

Jerry Ainbler ... S.W.

Josh. Pollard ... J.W.

Geo. Luckland ... Tyler

Rich. Scholefield ... Secretary

Laurence Pain ... Treasurer

Joshua Greenwood ... Member

Sand. Glover ... S.D.

Thba. Berry . ... J.D.

Mr. John Varley initiated,£2 2s. Mr. Jno. Stansfield initiated, £2 2s.

Mr. Jno. Smith, past Fellowcraft.

Closed at 10 o'clock in good harmony."

In quoting the first two Minutes of the Lodge of Hope, I have a special object in view as a means of our enquiries.

Bradford at that time was but a small place, limited in area of the township of Bradford, the population, according to the census of 1801, being 6.393. The incorporation of the Borough, which included the townships of Bradford, Horton and Manningham, did not take place until 1847.

1. The records do not show to what Lodge or Lodges the Brethren belonged, who formed the Lodge of Hope, but we suppose that all, or the majority of them, were members of the Harmony No. 461, Halifax, five visiting Brethren from that Lodge being present at the first meeting.

There was an initiation of a serving Brother, without previous proposal in open Lodge, and five candidates were proposed and carried nem. con.

2. At the second meeting, there was quite a different set of officers. Bro. Jerry Ambler, who was appointed W.M. in the Warrant. acted as S.W., he and Bro. Jno. Smith were the only Brethren who were present at the first meeting. Bro. Wm. Goodchild was the Master. His name is not mentioned in the Minutes of the first meeting. Was he a P.M. of another Lodge, probably Harmony ? If he was not a founder of the Hope, he must have joined the Lodge afterwards, for he was S.W. of the Hope in 1804 and 1805, and W.M. in 1806 and 1807.

Bro. Jno. Smith, who was recorded S.D. at the first meeting, must then only have been an E.A., for he was passed at the second meeting; but where did the other Brethren come from, were they also members of the Harmony, or of some other Lodge ?

3. The Brother of special interest to us is the Secretary. Bro. Richard Scholefield, on whose statements we must rely for the transmitted history of the working of the Mark Degree in the Lodge of Hope.

Unfortunately no early Minutes are extant of the Hope Mark Lodge, but Bro. Scholefield, whom we have seen recorded as Secretary at the second Meeting, and who was W.M. in 1810, 1830 and 1831, always asserted that the Mark was conferred in the Lodge of Hope, since its formation under the Old York Manuscript Constitution, and it appears from the Minutes of the Lodge of Hope, that Bro. R. M. Scholefield was appointed by the Brethren to represent the Lodge at the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813, and to attend the Lodges of Reconciliation to ascertain the position of the Lodge with regard to the Mark Degree, and he reported, that by authority of the Grand Master, and arrangements then come to, the Lodge of Hope was entitled to continue to confer the Mark under the authority of the Old York Manuscript Constitution, which has uninterruptedly been done until the Mark Lodge enrolled under the banner of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons in 1873.

The oldest Mark Minutes extant in West Yorkshire are contained in the old Minute Book of the " Prince George Lodge," which was first held at the White Lion Inn, Haworth, on the 2nd of March, 1796 Warrant dated 18th of February, 1796 and granted by Wm. Spencer, Esq., P.D.P.G.M. of the County of York, to Stephen Paslow, William Holmes, John Holmes, John Roper and J. Driver.

In the Minutes of Dec. 3rd, 1799, we find recorded "that the Lodge was closed in perfect harmony, when James Scott and Jonathan Uttley received the Mark."

On Dec. 27th, 1799:

"Jos. Pollard, John Feather, Jas. Akroyd, John Heap, received the Mark."

On Oct. 5th, 1800.

"John Craven, John Greenwood, Timothy Hardaker, received the Mark. No other business being done, only Mark, the Lodge was closed in Harmony:'

The first entry shows that the Mark was after the Craft Lodge was closed, from the other entries, it that the Mark was given before the closing of the Craft Lodge.

At one time Haworth had two Craft Lodges, "The Prince George" and " The Three Graces," one Royal Arch Chapter, "The Brunswick;" and two Knight Templars "encampments, "The Brunswick " and " The Plains of Mamre." " The Three Graces" Lodge, "The Brunswick" Chapter and "The Plains of Mamre" Preceptory, are still held there, but the "Prince George" Lodge was removed from Haworth to Eastwood (Bottoms), in 1812. But strange to say, Eastwood (Bottoms) had a Arch Chapter and a Knight Templars Encampment before the removal of "The Prince George" from Haworth to Eastwood.

As Bottoms has in former times been such a very interesting Masonic place, the very hotbed of the "High Degrees," visited regularly every Sunday by Masons from all the neighbouring towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire, from Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Wakefield, Rochdale, even Manchester, it may be interesting to dwell for a short time on this very interesting Masonic place, and I am quoting here from Bro. E. Craven's "Free Masonry at Bottoms": " Before the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway was made, there was an Inn at Bottoms called the Freemason's Arms." This Inn was built on the side of an old turnpike road, which was the old Stage Coach route from Manchester to Halifax."

When the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway was built, the old Freemason's Arms," being on the site of the line, was pulled down and the road diverted, the railway company building the owner another inn in the place of it on the side of the newly made road. The present inn is considerably larger than the old one, and it would seem to be out of keeping with the ordinary requirements of the place, for the neighbourhood is not a populous one. There is a village there, which along with the hilly district to the north-east is called Eastwood. But does not seem to have any defined boundary-it is not a township or hamlet, not strictly a village name. but a general and indefinite local name. It probably derived its name from some ancestor of the present family of Eastwood, some members of which have resided and been landowners at Eastwood for over 300 years."

"Thus the pulling down of the old Inn "TheFreemason's Arms" whilst destroying many old and pleasing Masonic associations, led to the erection of a more commodious building, which proved most convenient for many Masonic assemblies which were held there."

"The name of the Craft Lodge is the "Prince George." and as mentioned before was transferred from Haworth in 1812."

" I cannot better show the zeal of the " Prince George," than by referring to its old Calendars which gave the hours and date of meeting for

Craft Lodge - Craft' Lodge Lecture,

Holy Royal Arch - Holy Royal Arch Lecture,

Knight Templar - Knight Templar Lecture,

Mediterranean Pass - Knights of Malta,

Rose Croix - Ne plus Ultra.

Priestly Order - Red Cross of Babylon."

"The Minutes of the Red Cross Knights and Knight Templar Priests begin in 1819. So do the Minutes of the Ark, Mark and Link. The Mark was originally worked with the Craft, but in 1838 we find separate Minutes."

I have shown that Bottoms was a place of great Masonic interest, if only from the many degrees which were, and have been for a long time, worked there. It has often been asserted, that Bottoms possessed an Old York Warrant. or Warrants of some other other description."

"I have already previously mentioned that there was a Royal Arch Chapter and a Knight Templar Encampment at Bottoms, before there was a Craft Lodge there."

"Previous to becoming a Royal Arch Mason or a Knight Templar, a person must first be a Craftmason, and it is very singular if there was a Royal Arch Chapter and a Knight Templar Encampment where no Craft Lodge existed!"

"'Prince. George' was noted for its working and Masonic zeal very soon after its removal to Bottoms. It initiated twenty candidates in the first year, fifteen in the second, and sixteen in the third. This is a very large number (fifty-one in three years) for a young Lodge. If there were Masons at Bottoms, not under the Grand Lodge of England. it would be necessary to re-initiate them."

"These facts are interesting and strange, and point to a strong probability that Masonry at Bottoms is much older than its present records, and that Masonry existed at Bottoms, in some regular or irregular manner, before the removal of "The Prince George" in 1812."

And so probably it was at Bradford previous to the establishment of the Lodge of Hope in 1794, as there also, we have many initiations in the first years of its existence, and though there are no previous records of any meetings, the fact remains, that there is an old Manuscript Constitution, recognised as genuine by all Masonic authorities, and the statement made by Bro. R. M. Scholefield, who was present at the Union on behalf of the Lodge, that on the authority of the first Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge Of England, and the arrangement then made, the Lodge of Hope was entitled to continue to confer the Mark Degree under its old Manuscript Constitution.

I have considerably deviated from my path, by dwelling for such a long time on the history of Freemasonry at Bottoms, but apart from being a very interesting subject, dear to all Yorkshire Masons from the many happy associations, and pleasant and instructive meetings. my object was to point out how similar its connection with old York Masonry is to the object of our enquiries at Bradford.

The early Minutes of the Harmony Lodge No. 461, were not available when- these enquiries were made, but lately, when at Huddersfield, I was shown a history of that Lodge in Manuscript, and I was struck by the great number of Bradford Brethren, who were members of that Lodge in 1792 and 1793.

The Warrant of the "Harmony Lodge" is dated 1792, ( two years previous to the "Hope" Warrant), and the question suggests itself, how came it to pass that so many Bradford Brethren were members of a Halifax Lodge ?

One explanation is the following: The York Grand Lodge collapsed about that time. The last record is dated August 23rd, 1792, when the following Brethren were elected :

Bro. Edward Wolley ....Grand Master

Bro. Geo. Kitson ... Grand Treasurer

Bros. Richardson and Williams ... Wardens,

On the Grand Lodge collapsing, the old York Masons were without legal authority. and many of them joined the "Union Lodge" at York, under the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) Warrant dated 1777. which afterwards (1870) changed its name to " The York Lodge. No. 236," and which is generally considered the lineal representative of the extinct " Grand Lodge of All England." In consequence of which, many important and invaluable documents, Minute Books, Jewels, Furniture, Paintings. and other property of the ancient Grand Lodge, have been transferred thereto, and are now in its possession.

The question suggests itself now : Did those Bradford Brethren who joined the, Harmony Lodge at Halifax, belong to some regular or irregular Lodge, meeting under York Constitution, were they descendants of the Lodge formed in 1713. and on the York Grand Lodge collapsing, did they go to Halifax to be re-initiated in order to form a regular Lodge at Bradford ? Thus following the example of the York Brethren, who joined the Union Lodge.

If we turn back to the first two Minutes of the Lodge of Hope, we find the names of fourteen members recorded and five visitors from Harmony, two of these have joined the Hope afterwards, viz. Jno. Farrar and Jno. Ramsden, the former was W.M. of the Hope in 1795, 1804 and 1805, the latter in 1812 and 1813, 1818 and 1824, also Wm: Goodchild, who was the Master at the second Meeting, who was S.W. of the Lodge of Hope in 1804 and 1805, and W.M. in 1806 and 1807, these make seventeen Brethren who came from the Harmony.

Of those initiated at the second Meeting, Jno. Stansfield, was S.W. in 1795, and W.M. in 1797. and John Varley, J.W. in 1795, 1796 and 1797, and W.M. 1798 - a strikingly quick advancement for newly initiated Brethren. This again suggests the question, did they belong to some regular or irregular Lodge before, and were they re-initiated ? It was the custom at the time, that Brethren belonging to one or the other of the Rival Grand Lodges, when they joined a Lodge under another Constitution, but that under which they were initiated, had to be re-initiated.

We left off at the time of the Union of the two London Grand Lodges in 1813, when the Mark Degree was discarded from the Craft. Nevertheless Mark Masonry was continued to be practised by many Lodges in many parts of this country, and it has always been recognised as an integral part of ancient Masonry by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the Grand Royal Arch Chapters of Scotland, Ireland, Canada and the United States of America.

Matters came to a climax in September 1851. when a Warrant was granted by the Bon Accord Chapter No. 91, at Aberdeen under the Supreme Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland. to six of its members in London, to establish a Mark Master Masons Lodge under the title of " The Bon Accord Mark Master Masons Lodge."

The return of this Warrant was demanded in 1855, by the Supreme Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland. which the Principals of the Bon Accord Chapter declined to accede to. But in February, 1856, they returned their own Warrant, which left the Bon Accord Mark Lodge without supreme authority.

In consequence of conflicts respecting the Mark Degree arising in Nova Scotia and Canada, between Lodges under the Grand Lodge Of England and those under Scotch and Irish Constitutions, it was agreed at a Quarterly Communication of the Supreme Royal Arch Chapter of England, held on November 1st. 1855, that it was desirable to enter on the subject of the Mark Degree. The committee appointed to report on the subject decided that the Mark Degree did not form part of the Royal Arch, and it was resolved to refer the matter to the Grand Lodge of England.

The following report of the Board of General Purposes was accordingly made in Grand Lodge on 5th of March, 1856:

" That the Committee for investigating the subject of the Mark Degree are of opinion that it is a link between the 2nd and 3rd Degrees of Craftmasonry. That the degree of Mark Mason or Mark Master Mason is not at variance with the ancient landmarks of the Order, and that the Degree be an addition to and form part of Craftmasonry, and consequently may be conferred by all regular warranted Lodges, under such regulations as shall be prepared and sanctioned by the Most Worshipful Grand Master."

However, at the next Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge, in June, 1856, the above resolution was non-confirmed in the absence of many Brethren who would have attended the meeting and voted in favour, had they been made aware of the intended opposition, which was on the ground that it was agreed at the union " that Freemasonry existed of three degrees and no more, and that were the Mark acknowledged, other innovations might follow."

With regard to the discussion, it was stated that nearly all the speakers admitted that the Mark Degree was an integral part of ancient Freemasonry, although they voted against it. The motion against its recognition was carried by a majority of one.

Still, as a deliberate expression of opinion by a body as the United Grand Lodge of England, the above resolution has a most significant value and importance.

Thus shut out from practising the Degree in Craft Lodges, the Mark Masters of England were compelled to do as the four London Lodges did in 1717, associate together and constitute a governing body of their own.

This course was adopted by a number of distinguished Brethren, and the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons was accordingly formed in June, 1856, with Lord Leigh, Provincial Grand Master of Warwickshire, at its head as first Grand Master. Other members of the Degree continued working under the Grand Chapter of Scotland, by whose authority a Warrant was granted to several Brethren to form a Lodge of Mark Masters, to be called St Mark's No. 1, and for some time this section of the Brethren met with remarkable success, no less than twenty-one Warrants having been issued by the Scottish Grand Chapter to English Mark Masons.

Some of the old Time Immemorial Lodges also withheld their support from the new Grand Lodge for a time, but by degrees the advantage of unity and consolidation became so apparent that Lodge after Lodge gave its adhesion to the national body. and as an example the St. Mark's Lodge. No. 1 of Scotland. is now No. 1 of England.

The following Time Immemorial Lodges joined:-

The Northumberland and Berwick, Newcastle.

The Royal Cumberland, Bath.

The Kent, London.

In May, 1857, the newly constituted Lord Leigh's Grand Lodge convened a special meeting to consider whether it would be better to unite under one Constitution, or continue separately under English, Scotch, or American Warrants.

The result of this meeting was that a resolution in favour of unity and uniformity was unanimously agreed, and on the 16th of June, 1857, we find that several Lodges had joined it, and that seven Provincial Grand Masters had been appointed.

Since that time Mark Masonry has happily continued to prosper, all the Mark Lodges working under Warrants granted by foreign supreme bodies have returned the same and taken out new ones from The Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of West Yorkshire was inaugurated under the Banner of the Fearnley Mark Lodge, No. 58, at Halifax, on Wednesday, August 2nd, 1871, by the Rt. Worshipful Bro. W. R. Callender, Junr., R.W. Prov. Grand Master of Lancashire, who installed W. Bro. Thomas Perkington as first Prov. Grand Master of West Yorkshire.

When Provincial Grand Lodge was constituted, the following six Lodges were on the Roll, viz.

Prince Edward, No. 14. Hebden Bridge.

Britannia, No. 53, Sheffield.

Fearnley. No. 58, Halifax.

Integrity, No. 110, Morley (now at Wakefield).

Copley, No. 111, Leeds.

Portal, No. 127, Dewsbury (now Barnsley).

You will notice that the Old York was not on the Roll of Provincial Grand Lodge at its inauguration in 1871. No, the Old York Lodge kept its independence, although negotiations for its joining the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons had been going on for nine years.

From the old Minute Book it appears that the working was different from our present working. the Mark was considered an integral part of the Craft at that time. The Lodge was opened in the First and Second Degrees, and afterwards proclaimed open in the Mark - the Ritual was also different from the present one (a copy of the old Ritual is still preserved amongst the Lodge documents)- the Candidates were promoted, and after the Mark business was done, the Mark Lodge was proclaimed closed, and the Second Degree resumed, the Lodge lowered to the First and closed.

The Charge and Lecture were regularly given to the Candidate, and the questions were regularly asked from the chair and answered by the Brethren. Papers were sometimes read by the Brethren, and there is a record where the Lodge followed the precedent set by the York Grand Lodge and met out of Bradford, viz., at the Philanthropic Rooms, at Leeds, when twenty-seven of the Leeds Brethren were promoted to the Mark Degree; this took place on June 8th, 1860.

On this occasion a paper on " Masons Marks " was read by Bro. E. W. Shaw, and upwards of 1,200 Masons' Marks were exhibited and explained. There are two more lectures by the same Brother recorded in the minutes of later dates.

Bro. Nelson, the Grand Secretary, had repeatedly made proposals to the Lodge to enrol under the Banner of Grand Mark Lodge.

As early as December, 1862, propositions were received and the Secretary was deputed to enter into negotiations with the authorities at London, and ask for particulars, but it was not until twelve years later that the lodge gave up its independence and enrolled under the Banner of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

The following are extracts from the Minute Book, viz.

Dec- 9th, 1862

"Bro. Gaunt read a letter from Bro. Nelson, stating that a Grand Mark Lodge had been formed, and wishing to know whether No. 379 (the number which the Lodge of Hope then had) was desirous of being enrolled under the Banner of Grand Mark Lodge, or of remaining independent."

A proposal to join was put, seconded, and supported, but an amendment was proposed and seconded, that no hasty steps be taken and further information be asked. The latter was carried by a large majority."

Nothing further is found in the Minutes indicating that further progress had been made until March, 1873, when it is recorded:

" Bro. Gaunt rose and explained, that we consider to work under the same Constitution as the Lodge of Hope, which was granted by the Grand Lodge of York, and when, in 1813, the Grand Lodges united, this Constitution was confirmed, whereby we understand that we have a right to work the Mark Degree."

He also stated that our late Bro. Scholefield, PM, who was present in London at the meeting when the Grand Lodges united, worked ever afterwards the Mark Degree in conformity with the arrangements then come to.

Bro. Gaunt hoped that in time the Grand Lodge of England will acknowledge the Mark Degree. A movement in that direction commenced by the establishment of the Grand Master Masons Lodge of England, in the year 1856; since then the Mark Degree has spread more widely, and already 164 Mark Master Masons Lodges were under the Banner of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

Several of our Past Masters and Brethren desired to join, and Bro. Gaunt made therefore the necessary enquiries, in consequence of which he received very liberal offers through the Secretary of Grand Mark Lodge.

In conclusion, Bro. John Gaunt proposed, Bro. Dr. Taylor seconded, and Bro. Thos. Hill supported : "That, considering the liberal offers we have received, we shall take means to organise ourselves under the Banner of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England.' After a lengthened discussion this proposition was carried by a large majority."

A Committee was appointed, consisting of seven Past Masters, and Bro. Henry Berlon as Secretary.

At a Committee Meeting held October 17th, 1873, the following resolutions were passed, viz.

"That the name of the Mark Lodge be "The Old York Time Immemorial Lodge of Mark Master Masons."

"The fees for joining, advancement, and annual subscription were fixed."

" The Meetings were fixed once in three months."

It was proposed, seconded and carried, that

Bro. John Gaunt, P.M., be the first W.M.

Bro. John Craven Taylor, P.W the first I.P.M.

Bro. Thomas Hill, P. W the first S.W.

Bro. J. D. Sugden, P. W the first J.W.

"That a petition be at once forwarded to the M.W. Grand Master to appoint these officers; that a circular be issued to all Brethren who took the Mark Degree in this Lodge; and a second circular to call a Mark Masters Lodge for Monday, October 27th, at 6~30 p.m."

The last meeting of the independent Mark Lodge attached to the Lodge of Hope was held on the above-mentioned date, twenty Brethren being present.

"The Minutes of the last meeting, held March 31 st, 1873, were read and confirmed. Seven Brethren were promoted to the Mark Degree."

Amongst them were Bro. Joseph Matthewman, our late Prov. Grand Secretary, and the late Bro. Jeremiah Leech Atherton.

The Charge was given by Bro. John Craven Taylor, the oldest member of the Lodge.

The Minutes of the Committee Meeting, held October 17th, were read, after which the King, Bro. Gaunt, P.W asked the Brethren if any had to make any suggestions on the propositions of the Committee."

After a lengthened discussion thereon, Bro. Thos. Andrews proposed, and Bro. Hanson Farrar seconded, that the propositions of the Committee be passed, this was carried by a great majority.

"The Mark was then proclaimed closed at 8-20 p.m., and after resuming the Second Degree, lowered to the First, and closed in harmony at.8-30 p.m".

The independent Mark Lodge was a strong Lodge, during the period from January, 1852, to October, 1873, 194 Brethren have been promoted to the Mark Degree, 71 Brethren had expressed their approval of enrolling under the Banner of Grand Mark Lodge, and the Old York Lodge joined Grand Mark Lodge with a muster roll of 71 Brethren.

The original circulars, with the autograph signatures of these 71 Brethren, bound in a book presented by Bro. Henry Berlon, the last Secretary of the independent Mark Lodge and the first

Secretary of the "Old York" under the Banner of Grand Mark Lodge, are carefully preserved amongst the documents of the Lodge.

Of these 71 Brethren six are now amongst the living, but only one of them has kept up his connection with the Lodge as a subscribing member.

He was promoted on April 26th, 1864, but owing to advanced age and residing a good distance from Bradford, we have not had the pleasure of seeing him amongst us for many years, but his interest in the Lodge is still kept up, he insists on all communications being sent to him, even circulars calling Practice Meetings, and his apologies for non-attendance are regularly received by first post after communication, the best proof that he is still with us in spirit, and has not lost interest in the welfare of the Lodge of which he has been a shining star during the best part of his life.

Having enrolled under the Banner of Grand Mark Lodge, a new era of history commences for the Old York T. I. Lodge, which does not come within the compass of this paper.

My object, was to enquire into the traditional history of early Freemasonry at Bradford and neighbourhood, and to furnish evidence which proves that Freemasonry was introduced into Bradford, in the year 1713, by "The Ancient and Honourable Society and Fraternity of Freemasons, meeting since time immemorial in the city of York," and to advance arguments which lead us to suppose that Freemasonry, in some form or other, must have been in existence at Bradford and neighbourhood previous to the establishment of the Lodge of Hope in 1794.

Before I bring this paper to a close, I feel it my duty to pay tribute to the memory of the three Brethren, who during their lifetime have worked so hard for the benefit of the Lodge, and who have been the means of transmitting its history from one generation to another, as we find it from time to time recorded in the transactions of the Lodge. Our thanks are due to:

1.-Bro. Richard Mortimer Scholefield, whose name we have seen recorded as Secretary at the second meeting of the Lodge of Hope in 1794.. He was Worshipful Master in 1810 and again in 1830 and 1831. During the whole of his long life he was a most enthusiastic worker in the Craft, Mark, Royal Arch, and the Temple ; his name still headed the new Mark Register started in 1853, carried forward from an older Register, and we found his name recorded as late as 1860.

2.-Bro. John Craven Taylor, who was initiated in the Three Graces Lodge, at Haworth, on August 18th, 1834. He was the founder and first Worshipful Master of the Scientific Lodge, founded at Cullingworth, on November 21 st, 1836 (removed to Bingley, 1839), when he was elected Worshipful Matter for a second time. He was a member and P. M. M. of the Mark Lodge for over fifty years. He died in 1891, and his remains are laid to rest at Cullingworth Church.

3.- Bro. Henry Berlon, who was Secretary of the Mark Lodge for nearly twenty years, who carried on the negotiations with Grand Mark Lodge for many years, and who after the Old York Lodge had enrolled under its Banner. was Secretary for another nine years. We lost him in 1885.

The first-named died before my time. but his name was still a landmark in the Lodge of Hope when I was a young Mason; with the latter two I was well acquainted. the one was my proposer as candidate for the Mark Degree, and both were the instructors of my Masonic youth. The last named I succeeded as Secretary of this Lodge. and after his death all his Masonic books and documents were handed over to me by his widow; from his notes and records that part of this paper touching the traditional history of the Lodge was compiled.

In conclusion, I remind you that the bi-centenary of the introduction of Freemasonry into Bradford is now approaching, and it would bhe a fitting occasion if some commemoration of the event was held during the year 1913, which is also the centenary of the Union of the two rival Grand Lodges at London..