

# The Museum Collection

No.8

## Original Ceremony and Chorus



From the Early Years  
of the R.A.O.B.

by

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and

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Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, Grand Lodge of England

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**Origin of the Royal**  
**Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes**  
**Ceremony and Chorus**

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## PREFACE

So many books have been written on this interesting subject, all of them without any proof, and mainly on supposition, that now the original records have been traced,\* something really reliable and interesting to all Brothers in all sections of the Order will, we feel sure, be appreciated, and will stop, once and for all, the printing of mythical stories as to our origin, which are very misleading and calculated to be very derogatory to the best interests of Buffaloinism.

The following facts contained herein have been extracted from a publication in the British Museum by the Authors, who will be pleased to give any Brother full details of how to see the original publication, should he be in any doubt as to any of the facts stated herein. They are all culled from Pierce Egan's book, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, and published many years ago by Messrs. Chatto and Windus, to whom we are indebted for permission to reproduce, and to this eminent firm of Publishers we tender our thanks.

\* Curators Note:

The statement above "that now the original records have been traced" Relates to the time of publication of this booklet around the end of the 18th Century to the present day.

# Origin of the Royal Antediluvian Order Of Buffaloes

## *ORIGINAL CEREMONY AND CHORUSES.*

The Ceremony of making a Buffalo is very simple, yet extremely ludicrous, and productive of great laughter.

The “uncommonly big gentleman” at the request of Logic had consented to become one of the members of this most eccentric Society\* which is composed of numerous Performers, and other comical wights” resident in the Metropolis, for the observation of Jerry. The artist has with considerable spirit and fidelity, represented in the plate the initiation of a person intended to become a Buffalo. He is seated on a chair in the middle of the room, with a bandage placed over his eyes.+

The initiated Buffaloes are waiting outside the door, the orator being decorated with a wig for the occasion. On a given signal, they all enter the room, with what they term the Kangaroo Leap, and jump around the chair of the “degraded wretch” as the victim is termed.

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\*At the Harp” in Great Russell Street, opposite Drury Lane Theatre, the Buffalo Society was first established in August 1822, by an eccentric young man of the name of Joseph Lisle, an artist, in conjunction with Mr W. Sinnett a comedian to perpetuate, according to their ideas upon the subject, that hitherto neglected ballad of “We’ll chase the Buffalo”.

+ See page 4



From P. Copyright by J. P. Colburn.

*TOM, JERRY, and LOGIC assisting at the Ceremony of making the Community big government  
a BUFFALO.*

## SONG

Come, all you young fellows who's a mind for to range,  
Unto some foreign country, your station for to change.  
Your Station for to change, away from here to go,  
Thro' the wild woods we'll wander and chase the Buffalo.

## CHORUS

We'll lay down on the banks of the pleasant shady Wo,  
Thro' the wild woods we'll wander to chase the Buffalo

This is succeeded by a solemn march, and the following chant, the Buffaloes carrying brooms, shovels, mops, and a large kettle by way of a kettledrum:

Bloody head and raw-bones,  
Bloody head and raw-bones  
Be not Perplex'd  
This is the text,  
Bloody head and raw-bones.

The charge is then given to the "victim" by the Primo Buffo, accompanied by the most extravagant and ridiculous gestures: "Degraded wretch! Miserable ashantee! Unfortunate individual! At least, you were so, not a quarter of an hour since.

You are now entitled to divers privileges: you may masticate, denticate, chump, grind, swallow, and devour, in all turnip fields, meadows, and pastures; and, moreover, you have the especial privilege of grazing in Hyde Park. Think of that, my Buffalo! You may also drink at all the lakes, rivers, canals, and ponds not forgetting the Fleet and lower ditches, You are entitled to partake of all public dinners (upon your paying for the same).

Such are a few of the advantages you will enjoy; but you must promise to gore and toss all enemies to Buffaloism! You must

likewise promise to patronise the Horns at Kennington; and occasionally visit Hornsey Wood, where you may do what you like best — rusticate, cogitate, or illustrate, and prove yourself an Hornament by respecting the natives of the island of Gore-He”.

The bandage is then removed from the eyes, and the chorus of “Chase the Buffalo” is repeated. The victim is then led into the passage, and the signs, etc, are given to him; after which he is ushered into the room with the full chorus of “See, the Conquering Hero Comes”, etc.

He is then called on for the customary fees for liquor, and a small compliment for the Buffalo in waiting; the expenses are in proportion to the means or inclination of the newly-made member. The liquor is introduced by the chorus altered from “the Pirates” :-

“We Buffaloes, lead a jolly, jolly life —  
Fal de,” etc.

A blessing is then given by the Primo Buffo, reminding the new member that the greatest characters in the country have solicited to become Buffaloes, and the following is sung in style:

#### **First Verse**

Harponions list unto me,  
And Kangaroos rejoice,  
And Buffaloes lift up your horns,  
Whilst I lift up my voice.

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\*In order to astonish, as well as to give a temporary importance to the Society, the new member is told, in the most bombastic style, that the Duke of Wellington is a Buffalo! Mr Kean, Mr Brougham, Mr Liston, The Lord Chancellor, and the twelve Judges, Mr Cobbet, Old Townsend the tramp, Mr Peel, etc, are all Buffaloes.

## **Second Verse**

Oh! Joseph Lisle a painter is,  
And Buffalo beside,  
So sit not in the scorner's chair,  
Nor Buffaloes deride.

## **Third Verse**

Inspire us with bull-like strength,  
With horns protect our head,  
And sprinkle with clean straw our stalls,  
Called by the vulgar, beds.

## **Fourth Verse**

Protect us from the Bailiff s fangs,  
Which do us much annoy;  
Lead us in meadows ever green,  
Fat pastures to enjoy.

## **Fifth Verse**

Now Buffaloes, join in a roar,  
Be heard from pole to pole;  
My solemn chant is at an end,  
Because you've heard the whole.

Why the Buffalo Order should be called Antediluvian seems a mystery. The word Antediluvian means before the flood, and there is nothing to justify the word in any records of Buffaloism. There are books in the British Museum relating to Buffs of a much earlier date than the records published in this book, but they all refer to the Military "Buff's" Regiments, and not to any Buffalo Society. The first mention of any real organisation of the Buffalo Order was in 1866, when a Bro. E. Wright was elected Grand Primo of the Order. Since this date our Order has greatly improved it's principles, and philanthropic funds were instituted.



Hitherto proceedings at the meetings consisted of beer drinking and clay-pipe smoking. The usual rule was that all monies collected by the Constable of the Lodge was spent in providing beer — hence the term boozy Buffs.

Later a great change for the better permeated the Order. This was in the years 1895-1897, when considerable controversy arose, which lead to a split. This took place in London at the Bedford Hotel, Maiden Lane, Strand, and was the cause of many sections being formed, most of which are in existence to-day. There is no doubt at the present time this Order is the greatest Philanthropic Order in the World, and Lodges are held in every part of the British Dominions.

It is a pleasing feature to note that although there are so many Sections, the same signs and passwords are used by them all, so that any person interested in any Lodge can enter Lodges of all Sections - hence the saying, “Once a Buff, always a Buff”, and there is ample evidence that all sections are anxiously awaiting the time when they will again be gathered together in one united Order. This would be a grand thing for Buffaloism in particular, and mankind in general, and the ambition of all good Buffs is that they will be spared to take part in the great rejoicing, when the full reunion is accomplished, and the fruit of many Brothers’ labours realised.

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