

# The Museum Collection

No.16

## The 'York Convalescent Home' Story



An intriguing look into the history of the  
R.A.O.B., G.L.E. York Convalescent Home,  
Weston Super Mare

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## **FOREWORD**

**W**hilst browsing through the RAOB GLE Website during the early days of it being placed on the internet I found that on the front page there were many articles and links regarding the Order and its past along with two pictures of our Convalescent Homes; (a) Grove House & (b) The York. Under the picture of Grove House was "Read the fascinating history of Grove House". Under The York was nothing.

I realised that nowhere in the recent history of the RAOB GLE was there anything in writing relating to the York, so I set about researching this history, which turned out to be a fascinating adventure into past journals and documents that were in my possession along with photographs and drawings that were scrounged or borrowed, this effort was most rewarding and well worth the work involved.

I have tried, with the contents of this book to tell the story of the York Convalescent Home, Weston Super Mare, the beginnings as a Hotel, School, Nursing Home and Boarding House, it's rather rough ride through the ages (well at least since 1962) and all the arguments for and against keeping or selling the same.

Many will remember Brother Mervyn Payne, who was a great 'Anti York' campaigner but who's heart softened with age allowing him to finish the last years of his life as a permanent resident in 'That Place', the place he so hated when the Order bought it.

Tribute ought to be paid to the various Matrons and House Managers that put in so much hard work to make the place work, and to the many members who, through their various skills, repaired and kept the York going through sometimes very tenuous periods.

The story ends with my account of the process leading up to the Sale of the York and the difficulties that faced the Grand Primo's of 2006, 2007 and 2008 along with the Trustees of Grand Lodge and the Grand Secretary in dealing with many queries and questions from members of the Order and the prospective buyers that came to view the Home.

It has to be said though that at the end, Grand Lodge Management Committee identified damp problems over the whole footprint of the building which would have been very costly to repair, this along with other problems, added to the demise of the York.

Please be advised that the views expressed in this work are those of myself as author of this publication and in no way reflect the views of the R.A.O.B., G.L.E. or of its members.

Read and enjoy.

*Mick Walker ROH*  
*Grand Primo 2006*

**W**eston-super-Mare, one of the largest seaside holiday resort towns in the West Country, is on the Bristol Channel, 18 miles south-west of Bristol.

Set in the broad sweep of Weston Bay, the resort boasts miles of sandy beaches. However, because the Bristol Channel experiences the second largest tidal rise and fall in the world, at low tide the sea can be over a mile from the promenade.

Until the early 19th century Weston was just a small windswept village of around 30 houses.

Weston-super-Mare owes its growth and prosperity to the boom in seaside holidays during Victorian times. Its first hotel opened in 1808 and over the years the town gradually spread out along the coast between the higher ground of Worlebury Hill and Bleadon Hill.

The proximity of large centres of population in Bristol, Bath and South Wales was important to the growth of the resort.

As Weston became more popular, many fashionable terraces, crescents and villas were built. Hans Price, a local architect, was responsible for much of the development of Weston during the Victorian period. Isambard Kingdom Brunel lived here for some months while he was supervising the construction of the Bristol and Exeter Railway. When the railway opened in 1841, it enabled visitors to travel long distances for day trips at Weston.



Paddle steamers also brought visitors from ports on both sides of the Bristol channel and steamers tied up at Birnbeck Pier, opened in 1867, to cater for daytrippers. The pier also offered amusement arcades, funfair rides and tearooms.

One of the resort's most important developments was the strengthening of the sea wall and creation of a two mile long promenade in the 1880s.

The Grand Pier opened in 1904 and its Winter Gardens and Pavilion in 1927. The opening of the Grand Pier saw a decline of



the Birnbeck Pier and this Grade II listed structure is now derelict and on English Heritage's list of endangered buildings.

Today Weston-super-Mare, with its sandy beaches and a bustling seafront, has lots of activities to keep tourists and visitors entertained. A land train transports visitors along the promenade to Marine Lake and to Royal Sands.

The area has two, two-mile long sandy beaches, one in Weston-super-Mare and one in Sand Bay, 3 km to the north.

At low tide the sea goes out about a mile exposing mudflats and danger signs warn visitors of the risks of crossing these. To compensate for this an artificial lake, with a stretch of sand, was created at the northern end of the main beach and this allows children to play safely whatever the state of the tide.

Donkey rides on the beach are still a feature of today's Weston-super-Mare.



The story of the York can be identified and related in three different stages - the buying, the repairs and upkeep and the final sale. Because of the final outcome of the sale and the legal implications attached to that end it is, by necessity, important that I keep all comments regarding the York confined to the first two sections, that is, the buying and the upkeep of the property and until there is no threat of any legal action being taken the full story cannot be told. Perhaps in years to come it will be told with all the highlights, warts and all, I am certain that it will be a fascinating story. This book however is a complete story in its own right.

The York is an imposing Victorian building with magnificent panoramic views overlooking the sandy beaches of the sea front of the Bristol Channel, with the Winter Gardens and the Grand Pier being adjacent attractions. The front entrance of Number one is actually at the side of the building and the keystone of the arch over the entrance indicates the building was erected in 1887, the main superstructure being built using local sand and fine Bath Stone.



*illustration one*

Although Mervyn Payne in his articles in the Journal says it was originally three houses in a short terrace called Salisbury Street, records I have seen would indicate this is not quite correct, all five houses in this street were built at the same time with No.1 being used as a School, No.2 a Nursing Home, No.3 a Boarding House, No.4 an Hotel called Les Leas and No.5 The Granby Cafe with boarding facilities over.

The first few pages of this book attempt to show a pictorial overview of the York and Weston Super Mare as a seaside holiday resort, some of the pictures used are copies of the framed photographs which used to hang in the glass covered entrance way leading up to the front door of the York, these photographs were returned to Grove House when the York was finally sold and cleared of all belongings relating to the R.A.O.B. G.L.E.

Illustration one is of the Promenade taken in 1902 and shows the York still being used as a school, it is a Picture Postcard obtained from Weston Super Mare Library by someone staying at the York as a Convalescent Guest, the York can be seen at the far end of Marine Parade.



*illustration two*

This second illustration taken around the turn of the twentieth century shows the sands and Rotunda with the front of the York in full view next to the magnificent Winter Gardens.

Illustration three shows the York Hotel as it was in 1910, the stone walls surrounding the property are still there and in good condition.

The front has now been revamped and rebuilt adding an additional Dining Room, Lounge and Recreation Room and a sun lounge/conservatory at the side to cover the entrance to the front door.

The name of Salisbury Street has been changed to St. Margarets Terrace.

The road to the front has also changed names, from Marine Parade to Royal Parade, the name it still holds today.



The 3 houses (numbers 1 - 3) were purchased in 1904 by Mr. H. Ashman who opened it as a hotel during that year and at the time of the sale to the Royal





Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes in 1962, it stood as one of the oldest Hotels in Weston super Mare, boasting 42 bedrooms.

Mr. Ashman and his wife went to live in Canada in 1911 and the running of the York Hotel was taken over by Mr. Ashman's sister Mrs. A. M. Thorn-Evans.

The Ashman family returned to this country in 1919 and Mrs. D. I. Broderick, the daughter of Mr. Ashman entered into the business and in 1947 became the Manageress of the Hotel and stayed in that position until its sale in 1962 to the RAOB, GLE.

Illustration four shows the Hotel with three houses knocked into one, the extended building to the front and the addition of the glass covered entrance way, the original stone wall can be seen quite clearly.

Illustration five shows the Promenade in the early 1920s, whilst illustration six shows a snapshot of three holidaymakers (nothing to do with the RAOB) sitting on the beach sunning themselves with the York Hotel clearly in the background, this photograph was taken in 1949.





## **PURCHASE OF THE YORK HOTEL WESTON SUPER MARE**

### **Grand Lodge meeting March 1962**

A special report in the following terms was submitted for consideration by Grand Lodge.

At the meeting of Grand Lodge held on September 2nd, 1961, Grand Lodge Executive requested deferment of further consideration of renovation and re equipment at "Corfield", Weston Super Mare, pending their investigation re alternative accommodation. One of the main reasons for this deferment was the receipt of a letter from Mr. W. H. King, the Architect who had met Grand Lodge Executive members at Weston Super Mare and who in August had produced a revised plan of renovations and alterations accompanied by the following comment: "The extra cost of this work over my earlier estimate of £30,000 would not be more than £2,000 but if your Executive decide in the future to proceed with this project, more precise estimates can be drawn up after considering your exact requirements".

Grand Lodge Executive were and still are of the opinion that to spend £32,000 on a property which originally cost £23,000 (contents included) and now stands in G.L. Balance Sheet at a capital value of slightly less than £14,000 for the building and slightly less than £2,000 for the furniture is not a proposal which can be justified by common sense.

Since that date Grand Lodge Executive have been actively examining other possibilities and they are now satisfied that a property is available in Weston Super Mare which would meet the whole of the present and future requirements of the Order for male convalescence in the southern half of the country, and which is also served by through trains from the north. The property is illustrated at the head of this report and comprises the York Hotel, immediately adjacent to the Winter Gardens on the sea front.

It is a building with beautiful lounges, dining rooms, games room and other public rooms on the Hall floor, many of these rooms directly overlooking the sea. On the first floor there is a wide balcony overlooking the sea, 12 separate bedrooms, 2 separate bathrooms, 2 separate toilets and 1 combined bathroom

toilet. On the second floor there are 13 separate bedrooms with similar bathroom and toilet arrangements as on the floor below. On the top floor there are 11 separate bedrooms together with a combined bathroom toilet. All floors are served by a passenger lift. The insertion of a single door in the passage way adjacent to the lift on the top floor would make an efficient division of staff quarters from patient's bedrooms. All bedrooms have washbasins with hot and cold water, and electric or gas fires.

It will be seen from the picture above that there is also a semi



basement or garden floor overlooking the front lawn which the present proprietors have used for living accommodation and other services there is also a sun lounge surrounding the main entrance to the building.

Grand Lodge Executive caused a thorough survey of the premises to be made by Mr. W. H. King. Two items from his report are quoted here: "The buildings have, in our opinion, been well maintained, and money has obviously been spent regularly in achieving this object ... Having some knowledge now of your overall requirements it is felt that they could be adequately met in these premises".

Following receipt of the Architect's report the under mentioned members of Grand Lodge Executive, together with the Chairman of the Grand Lodge Benevolent Committee engaged rooms at the York Hotel and conducted their own personal examination whilst in residence. They have entered into negotiations with the proprietors of the building and the directors of the Hotel and will submit an option to purchase to this meeting with their unanimous recommendation that the York Hotel be purchased on behalf of Grand Lodge, and that our existing Convalescent Home at "Corfield" be sold.

A. H. Button, R.O.H., Grand Primo

A. L. H. Walker, R.O.H., Immediate Past Grand Primo

W. C. Hawkins, R.O.H., Deputy Grand Primo

A. E. Whitcher, K.O.M., Grand Lodge Executive

J. N. Duggan, R.O.H., Grand Lodge Executive

H. G. Briggs, R.O.H., Grand Lodge Executive

C. H. Milnes, R.O.H., Chairman, Benevolent Committee

G. J. Smith, R.O.H., Grand Secretary

The report was introduced by Bro. A. E. Whitcher, Grand Lodge Executive who gave a full explanation of the recent negotiations which had made it possible to bring the report as a matter of urgency to the Meeting. He referred to the survey carried out by Mr. W. H. King who gave his professional opinion that to provide accommodation on the scale available at the York Hotel would cost the Order £65,000 to £70,000, to which would have to be added the cost of procuring a site. He quoted the Surveyor's report that the property had been well maintained and was ideal for our purposes. He examined the financial implications of the suggested purchase, compensated in part by the sale of Corfield. He pointed out that he was submitting a unanimous recommendation of Grand Lodge Executive and of Grand Lodge Benevolent Committee. Finally Bro. Whitcher moved "That this properly convened Meeting of Grand Lodge, instructs the R.A.O.B. G.L.E. Trust Corporation to purchase the freehold property known as the York Hotel, Marine Promenade, Weston Super Mare for the sum of £32,000 0s. 0d. (Thirty two thousand pounds), the property to be held under the terms of the Comprehensive Trust Fund Deed and to be used for the purpose of a Convalescent Home. The purchase price is to be provided by the Comprehensive Trust Deed Fund".

The motion was seconded by Bro. J. N. Duggan, who spoke in equally felicitous terms of the advantages of the purchase.

The motion was supported by Bro. C. H. Milnes, Chairman of Grand Lodge Benevolent Committee who recounted the many amenities which he desired should be preserved in providing for our convalescent patients on the sea front. All his requirements were met by the proposal.

Bro. M. W. Payne was critical of the policy of purchasing old buildings which would be expensive to maintain and were very largely out dated. He had hoped for a single storey Convalescent Home in a quiet country spot, where a lift was unnecessary.

Bro. A. E. Simmons (Edinburgh) said that examination of the proposal before them had caused him to alter the opinion which he had put forward at the previous meeting. He was heartily in favour of the purchase.

Bro. J. Jones (Sheffield), differed from Bro. M. W. Payne. Grand Lodge did not require an "antiseptic" hospital type building miles out from civilisation. The proposal before them appeared to provide the homely atmosphere wanted by the Order.

Bros. D. S. T. Foster (Leeds), T. Firth (Huddersfield), C. Beer (Warwickshire) and R. J. Armes (Bradford) asked a series of questions with reference to the structure of the building, the nature of the tenure, the rateable value, and the present contents, all of which were answered satisfactorily by the Grand Secretary with quotations from the Valuer's report.

Bro. T. Jones (Merthyr), repeated many of the arguments he had used in a previous meeting of Grand Lodge to prove that the Order did not require so large a building or indeed two Convalescent Homes at all. "You are told that this is a bargain", he said. "Ask your wives what constitutes a bargain. They will tell you that the first necessity of a bargain is that it is something which you actually need. You do not need this property". Bro. Jones also criticised G.L. Executive for going outside their terms of reference and not presenting alternative schemes for securing convalescent treatment.

After a brief reply by Bro. A. E. Whitcher the motion was submitted to the meeting and carried by an overwhelming majority, the Grand Primo stating that there were only five votes in opposition.



The minutes of the Grand Lodge meeting on 2nd June 1962 shows that only one question appears on the decision to purchase the York - "A question was then asked with reference to the decision to purchase the York Hotel Weston Super Mare. The Grand Secretary replied that planning permission had been given for the use of the building as a Convalescent Home and that the vendors' Solicitors and Grand Lodge Solicitors had exchanged signed contracts, that 10% deposit on the purchase money had been paid and completion fixed for 31st December 1962".

That then was the case for the purchase of the York Hotel, Weston Super Mare and such was duly purchased and used for Convalescent Patients, in the true sense of the word however, it was purchased by the aforesaid members before the item was placed before the floor of Grand Lodge.

That seemed to be a done deal until Brother Mervyn Payne took the liberty of writing the following article in the Buffalo Journal of September 1962 and as he was the Journal Editor at the time I can only conclude that they (Executive) did not know it was going to be printed and it was too late for the Executive of the day to stop this publication.

\* \* \*

### ***THE PRICE OF LIBERTY IS ETERNAL VIGILANCE***

***By Bro. M. W. PAYNE***

***"THAT PLACE"***

I am anxious not to overstate my case and will therefore quote the description of these premises given to Grand Lodge by the Executive, and then add my description arrived at in the same way as the executive, who reported that they had "engaged rooms at the York Hotel and conducted their own personal examination whilst in residence".

In my case I took up residence on three occasions so that there could be no question as to the facts.

Now to a brief general description of the place, a description not included in the report presented to Grand Lodge.

The York Hotel was built in the 1880's and originally was three houses of a short terrace called Salisbury Street. The house nearest the sea was a school, the next a nursing home and the third a boarding house.

In 1904 the present owners secured possession of the property and as time went on knocked holes in the walls of the centre house and the three houses are now connected by narrow, and uneven corridors at each floor level.

The executive report describes the hall floor thus. "It is a building with beautiful lounges, dining rooms, games room, and other public rooms on the Hall floor many of these rooms directly overlooking the sea".

My examination shows that there are "no other public rooms" in addition to the lounges and dining rooms and no games room; the rooms overlooking the sea are the dining rooms and one lounge only.

The so called "games room" is not on the hall floor level at all; it is down in the basement four feet below street level, impossible of use without artificial lighting and with a ceiling so low that it is unthinkable that sick men should be asked to stay there for any purpose. It is at present used as a television room and the only equipment there is a number of chairs, and a ping pong table dismantled and stuck against the wall.

THEY THEN PROCEED TO SAY ..."On the first floor there is a wide balcony overlooking the sea". My examination shows that there is no balcony. When the three houses were turned into an hotel the owners knocked out the pine end at the "Hall" level and built outwards to make the present main lounge and dining room. What the executive call a balcony is merely the roof of these rooms; it was never intended as a balcony, it has never been used as a balcony and the only way to obtain access to this so called "wide balcony" is to climb out of the bedroom window or climb up a ladder from the path down below.

The next item in their report is. "All floors are served by a passenger lift". The room I occupied on my last visit was No.44, one of a group of six rooms in one section of the house. A member of the hotel staff took me to my room via the lift to the second floor; after leaving the lift we walked down six steps and then up a flight of eleven steps to get to the room. To be fair to the executive

as climbing stairs is not one of my best performances, I found an alternative, and by taking the lift right to the top floor it is possible by walking down two short flights of stairs (thirteen steps), to get to this group of rooms but to add spice to this fantastic position it is impossible to get to a toilet or bathroom without going down eleven steps, up two and taking a hop, step and jump to the toilet and to get back to your bedroom you have to do the journey in reverse, hop, step and jump, two steps down and eleven steps up to your bedroom.

The top floor is even better; from the nest of rooms at the end the brother has to descend eleven stairs, go up six stairs, along 15 to 20 yards of corridor and then down six stairs to reach the toilet only to find when he opens the door, a deadly concealed step down inside. It is on this floor they propose to erect a locked door which would deprive a group of rooms a toilet altogether in addition to setting up a fire risk to which no sane man would agree. I will deal with this later.

THE EFFECT OF THIS SORT OF JOURNEY ON PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM SOME COMPLAINTS WAS A MAIN REASON FOR CLOSING GROVE HOUSE AND SUBSEQUENTLY SPENDING £20,000 ON ALTERATIONS AND RENOVATIONS BEFORE RE OPENING THE HOME.

The next executive statement I shall examine is this. "There is also a sun lounge surrounding the main entrance to the building".

My comment is this. The purpose of this so called "sun lounge" is clearly twofold. It protects the main entrance from the boisterous winds at this exposed point, a protection badly needed for there are twelve steps up to the main entrance of the hotel. This use takes up 3/5ths of the "Sun Lounge" space and I can best give a picture of the remaining 2/5ths by describing the furnishing. It is simply two faded and worn Lloyd loom settees; that's all, and they face one another. The two brethren sitting in the one on the North would have a clear view of the blank wall of the premises, the two sitting on the South side have a view of the wall of the "sun lounge" and the tops of the larger cars passing the windows. It is made of glass and in a normal summer would be intolerable and in a normal winter impossible.

When we come to the bedrooms the executive say. "On the first floor there are 12 separate bedrooms. On the second floor

there are 13 separate bedrooms. On the top floor there are 11 separate bedrooms". In examining this statement you have to remember one very important item of policy, WE ARE PLEDGED TO GIVE EACH MEMBER A SEPARATE BEDROOM.

The bedrooms in this place vary between huge bedrooms in which one double and two single beds are absorbed with ease, to bedrooms in which it is literally impossible to put a bed on which any member of the executive could sleep.

These latter bedrooms were designed for children and hold miniature children's furniture but even so, it is impossible to get at the small wardrobe without first closing the bedroom door. This difference in the size and quality of bedrooms was one of the reasons for spending £30,000 at Claremont.

Those of you who were present at the June G.L. meeting will remember that they started off their report about the accommodation they are providing the Grand Secretary at Grove House by saying they had discovered space that was NOT being used. They go one better at the York for there I came upon a group of five bedrooms that they had never found at all. Two magnificent bedrooms each with spacious accommodation for two double or four single beds and three amply spaced single rooms, so the total "lettable bedrooms" are 41 and not 36.

The York Hotel has bed accommodation, dining room accommodation and lounge accommodation for no less than 65 persons; we needed accommodation for a maximum of 25; the waste of space is colossal and the problem of finding a sufficient labour force will prove insoluble. At Corfield with an average of twenty patients in high season the Matron has been so hard pressed for labour that she has literally had to polish floors and at the end, so impossible had it proved to fill the posts, that she gave a clear indication to the Committee that she could not accept more than 15 patients.

The wage bill at the York varies between £80 and £150 per week according to season and the labour problem there, with the system of "tipping" in full force, is such that the owners have no real choice.

With our set up and no tipping, I have no hesitation in saying it would prove impossible.

Two minor points before I deal with the last and final issue. We are proudly informed by the executive that - "... the York Hotel is immediately adjacent to the Winter Gardens on the sea front".



They did not mention that on the other side it is adjacent to a clutch of hot dog stalls and in adequate smelling distance of the fish and chip stalls on the amusement pier.

The executive demanded an immediate decision on the ground that other people were interested and our option was only valid until the end of the day.

The facts are that the place has been in the market for a very long time. Many people have been interested, and they have made an examination and then faded away; our advent must have seemed like an answer to prayer, for we stayed.

The last major point refers to fire precaution. "The executive, in answer to a question, said there was no need to take action as the means of escape were ample".

They also said they proposed to insert a door in the top corridor to segregate the staff from the patients (or the patients from the staff).

I happen to know something of fire prevention and safety precautions and it was clear to me at once that they had never seen a professional survey of the premises and had never consulted a professional man competent to advise on this point.

It turned out as I anticipated; there had never been a survey of the premises for this purpose and with the lives of a houseful of sick and aged brethren at stake they were speaking out of sheer ignorance.

This is a place full of timber with five stories from basement to roof; there is no central heating system and the building (including bedrooms) are heated by a profusion of heaters of various kinds, many of them portable and forming a patent and obvious fire risk no sane person could miss.

THERE IS NOT A SINGLE SMOKE STOP IN THE BUILDING and if a serious incident occurred the whole of the stairs and corridors would fill with smoke to the utter confusion of the people in residence. To suggest a locked door, however the key is held, on the top floor of such a building is sheer lunacy.

So keenly did I feel this that I asked the Somerset County Fire Service to make a survey, a team turned up to meet me and with the consent of the owners they made a survey, a copy of which is in my possession together with plans of the premises showing the points at which they recommend action. I shall hand them to the secretary at the end of this session of Grand Lodge.

I say without reservation, that I do not accept as fact that eight intelligent men could “. . . conduct their own personal examination whilst in residence” and come away with a report in which so many material facts have been suppressed, distorted, or missed altogether.

That is a statement that neither Grand Lodge or the committee concerned can ignore; it must be proved or disproved and I stand ready to meet any committee of enquiry set up to ascertain the facts.

My final complaint is of the complete secrecy which surrounded this transaction. I know the date they were in residence at the York and say without hesitation there is no valid reason why the delegates should not have had the document in their hands before they left home for Grand Lodge but instead of this there was an absolute black out on the subject and I believe the Trustees and Benevolent Committee with the exception of the then chairman of the Benevolent Committee who was “in residence” with the others, were only informed on the Friday night, prior to G.L. Meeting. I was offered a copy that night in the presence of witnesses with the proviso “Don’t forget to give it back. I am not supposed to let it out of my possession”. I handed it back to its owner.

The last childish pressure in dumping this thing on Grand Lodge is that the Benevolent Committee were induced to postpone the election of Bro. J. G. Evans as chairman for 1962 so that the eight signatories could present a united front to Grand Lodge.

One final word that sums up the stupidity of this transaction.

The architect reports of the York Hotel that “. . . the premises have been well maintained”. He said exactly the same thing about Corfield. I know Corfield and assert that in spite of its known limitations which can be cured, from the viewpoint of a convalescent home it is infinitely superior to the other place.

A new home worthy of the Order would be better than either and to get one suitable to our requirements would cost approximately half the figure mentioned by the architect.

\* \* \*

The continuing saga of the York was again placed on the Grand Lodge agenda in the form of a motion from Merthyr & District Provincial Grand Lodge at the 1962 September meeting in the following manner.

“That this Grand Lodge instruct the Trustees to dispose of our interest in the York Hotel at Weston-Super Mare”.

A delegate challenged the validity of this motion claiming that the six months’ rule had not been satisfied.

The Grand Primo, said he was going to allow the motion to be put as it was clearly in the interests of Grand Lodge to get a decision so that plans could be made for opening the new home.

The Merthyr representatives in closely reasoned speeches gave figures to show that the present accommodation at Corfield was only used to the extent of one third its capacity. At the York Hotel we had at least double the capacity that was available at Corfield and it seemed to them wrong that with a slowly diminishing membership we should be undertaking the responsibility for an Hotel where the accommodation was more than twice the Order needed. They pointed out that we had spent huge sums of money on modernising two old buildings at Southport and Harrogate and then we come to Weston and purchase a building which had every fault that compelled us to incur the expenditure at the other two places. In every material respect where amenities were required for convalescent patients the York was lacking and we had no moral right to spend the money of the Order on something we must know would not provide the service that the Members anticipated. It was situated in the noisiest spot in the Town and if we really wanted to give our members a Home where they could recover in circumstances appropriate to their complaint the only thing to do was to build a Home in a spot where the amenities could be provided. They were perfectly certain that the defects at the York could not be made good unless we spent many thousands of pounds on alterations.

Bro. Mervyn Payne said he had been to the York Hotel on three occasions. He described what he considered to be its many defects and said that in his opinion the description of this place as given to Grand Lodge by the Executive was inaccurate and misleading, its defects were suppressed and its alleged amenities magnified. He did not accept as fact that eight intelligent men could “conduct their own personal examination whilst in residence” and come away with a report in which so many material facts had been suppressed, distorted, or missed altogether.

Bro. Leonard Booth, Warwickshire, said that he had been to Weston quite unofficially and had seen Corfield which he considered one of the best Convalescent Homes in the district. He afterwards saw the York Hotel and was shocked to think we had bought the place. It might have commercial possibilities but had no qualities to commend it to our purpose.

A delegate said that whilst he did not have all the details he was quite satisfied to rely on the report of a Chartered Surveyor who had advised our Executive and in whom he had every faith.

A delegate asked for information as to the legal position. Had we signed the contract of purchase? He felt we were in danger of incurring a lot of expenditure for no purpose unless we completed it.

The Grand Secretary detailed the action taken since Grand Lodge gave him instructions to purchase these premises and outlined the various penalties to which we might be liable if we failed to carry out the contract into which we had entered.

Bro. Ben Whitcher, Executive, and Bro. A. L. Haydn Walker, I.P.G.P., both defended the report given by the Executive at the March meeting of Grand Lodge. There had been no suppression and they had given a picture as they saw it. Nothing that they had heard today altered their opinion in the slightest degree. They were confident they had secured a first class home which would serve the purpose of the Order and of which everyone could be proud. They were fully aware of the slight deficiencies that existed and had every intention of putting them right. They strongly resented the innuendo that they had not acted in good faith.

A delegate asked G.L. to note that most of the trouble about convalescent homes was coming from a part of the country where they clearly did not want convalescent homes. G.L. had voted on two occasions and by overwhelming majorities to support the Executive in this matter.

Bro. Tom Jones, in reply to the debate, said he had imputed nothing against anyone in his opening remarks and he hoped his Province would be given credit for the same sincerity as was given to other people. He did not see how it could be said that we would be involved in a loss if we disposed of the property because we were told when we bought it that it was a bargain and there



ought to be no difficulty in passing our bargain on to someone else.

The vote was then taken and the motion lost by an overwhelming majority.

\* \* \*

That then seemed to end the saga of Brother Mervyn Payne and his “anti York” comments for it is well catalogued that this brother did everything in his power to have the ‘York’ closed and rebuild a new clinical type of Convalescent Home, until we read in the 1971 June edition of the Journal:-

***Bowled by a ‘York’ er  
by Brother Mervyn Payne Grand Primo 1934  
1962 AND ALL THAT***

During the many years I have been playing on Grand Lodge Convalescent pitches I have been highly critical of most of the pavilions in which our members took their recreation and of some of the Umpires who officiated from time to time.

The game, mind you, designed to improve the physique of the players and thus add to their usefulness in the team, always had my strong support and being bowled out after carrying my bat for so long has not altered that fact.

However, enough of that old hat, for there is an old saying that goes like this: “It is better to be thought a fool than use your typewriter and prove it” so on with the story before you discover my deficiencies in the National game in which my County would win every game, if it wasn’t for the other side.

***THE MATRON***

Up to my 88th birthday I had never been a guest at a Convalescent Home and had not the least intention of doing so until the Grand Secretary told me in conversation, I’m sure you will be glad to know that the Committee have appointed Evelyn Anderson, who as a child was with us at Grove House, as Matron at the ‘York’.

Take no notice of the fact that I am mixing my metaphors, the information hit me for six, for I remember her as one of the few children who really found life wonderful in our Orphanage. Intelligent, gay and with no inhibitions that I can recall, she was loved dearly by the then Matron, Miss Peck, and John Wilson and I, who at that time had the duty of trying to plan the future of the children, had no trouble in this case. She wanted to be a nurse and she stayed with us until she was old enough to go into training for that profession, she walked her examinations and the last I had heard of this little lass was that she had accepted a position as Staff Nurse, a few steps above student nurse.

In the nineteen thirties, and for many years afterwards, nursing was one of the worst paid and arduous professions; but was also most certainly one of the most rewarding in personal satisfaction if the person involved had that spot of dedication close contact with suffering and want can give.

So, suddenly, and without warning, I felt the need for convalescent treatment and, having worked my way successful through the preliminaries precedent to acceptance, I 'took off' for the 'York' and became a subdued, hesitant, slightly fearful and wholly obedient convalescent patient.

### **ARRIVAL**

Having cursed the building good and plenty in the past it would not have been surprising if a coping stone had dropped on my head but no; a safe passage and a warm reception by the Sister, accorded to every person who enters her domain and then in to the office to meet the Matron and get on the official records any physical, spiritual or financial difficulties that might complicate the easy rhythm of my stay.

To those of you who lived through the Grove House/ Aldridge Saga 1930/35 there is no need to say that either of us could resist the urge to become reminiscent, for Evelyn was one of the children who sadly left Grove House for Aldridge after the decision of the 1934 Convention, and who took her place in the general rejoicing when, for reasons which do not concern us here, Grand Lodge reversed the decision and brought all children back to Grove House.

After this, for me, heart warming interlude, routine took over and I was shown to my bedroom. My luck was in for this 'haven

from the madding crowd' was on the same landing as that of the three permanent residents.

### ***LIFE AT THE YORK***

7.30 a.m. and a knock on the door announced that tea was available on the landing and the four of us were out in 30 seconds flat and in the next 15 minutes between sips of the cuppa, took the Order to pieces and remoulded it nearer to our hearts desire. 'Twas still the same shape 15 days later. A quick bath and down to breakfast at 9 a.m. and then, as Mirlam Carlin used to say, "Everybody out!" to the Sun Lounge, the Lawn, the Balcony or to the broad promenade where visitors take their daily constitutional. Lunch at 1 p.m., a cuppa at 3.30 p.m. High Tea at 5.30 p.m. and a light snack at 9 p.m. If any of the guests needed sustenance after that, it was proof that they had not been trying and was treated accordingly. Bed at 10.15 and lights out at 10.30 p.m.

Discipline in life generally is of two kinds, it is either enforced or accepted. The first never works, for its victims are for ever dodging the column; the latter makes for peace and contentment and this is the kind we had; not a single moan in 15 days.

As a breakaway from the normal, Brother Fred Hulland organised tournaments for Billiards, Cribbage and Darts, and a raffle for a large box of assorted fruit, profits to the communal comforts fund and the Journal Children's Fund respectively. Well over six pounds and a houseful of good fun and fellowship was the result.

### ***SEEKING BUFFALO FRIENDS***

Visits to local Lodges is one of the valued experiences for most of the guests; the taxi driver Tyler of the Loyal Victoria 1482 toted me over to the London Hotel on two occasions whilst tall and immaculate Jimmy Jones introduced me to the old and famous Sir Lionel Jacobs Lodge, at the house of refreshment mentioned in the 'History'.

The Rostrums in each of these Lodges are of the massive 'open' front type, dignified and well proportioned, giving point to our ancient lineage and worthy of the efficient Brethren who use them.

The "Causeway" Lodge at Watchfield operate a fine service for the residents of the 'York'. Each Sunday at 10.30 a.m. a coach arrives in Weston to take the party out into good Somerset country to attend this Lodge; the ladies in the party are dropped off at the local Inn where the wife of the Brother who owns the hostelry entertains them to biscuits and coffee whilst the Brethren go on to the Lodge. Prompt at 12.30 the party again board the coach and are delivered at the 'York' in time for lunch. The 'Causeway' leave all business until the visitors have departed so as not to interfere with the entertainment. A very good effort by a very good Lodge.

Thanks to Bro. Ron Humphries, P.G. Cham. Wells and Glastonbury, I was able to visit the P.G.L. meeting of his Province at Street. My impressions were of a very businesslike assembly who took a pride in their work and who were enthusiastic as to a very special effort they were making to provide equipment for the 'York', they being ably assisted by Weston P.G.L.

One unexpected pleasure at the Loyal Victoria was to meet the Brother who, forty years ago, acted as P.T. instructor at the Aldridge Orphanage. He retains a great affection for the old place and for the Board of Directors which included such famous giants of Buffaloism, such as Bros. Cooks, Leonard Aulton, Frank Stephens and Sam Hunt.

He gave me a 'Report and Balance Sheet for 1929' which showed the very healthy state of the finances of an institution which stirred the emotions of the Brethren, pro and con, more than any other subject in our long history.

### **NOSTALGIA**

One nostalgic action I must take. I must see the two Convalescent Homes we occupied before we secured the 'York'.

First "Woodford" which, by the way, we handed over to the Civic Authorities during the 39/45 war, for the purpose of housing evacuees from London, Never a friendly place and I had no doubt but that we were in hostile territory. You will have the key to this when I say that the immediate area appears to be re developing with a predominance of very good private residences and Luxury Flats. I did not ask the present occupier of the premises, now known by a different name, to allow me to have a



reminiscent view of the interior. To me the outside still had a forbidding look and I turned my back on it with satisfaction.

At "Corfield" at the other end, and in my view easily the better end of the town the name has been changed to "The Cove", which, in Weston Super Mare is a geographical location. I had always had a soft spot for this beautifully situated building and I had no hesitation in knocking at the door to ask permission of the new proprietors. Mr. and Mrs. Snell, to view the new lay out. They have done a magnificent job, bright and tasteful modern furnishing, carpeting and decor has transformed the place and I was glad to see that the stately sweeping staircases were still in position and a central feature of the general plan. They have worked hard with good effect and they spoke warmly of the help given them by our administrators.

### **VERDICT**

Summing up, the lasting impressions left with me, it would be unfair to select any of the staff for special mention for each one, or so it seemed to me, gave to the extent of her power within the limits set by their occupation and certain physical difficulties that will, I am confident, be overcome.

If I come back to the Matron it is for the reason that of the very great number I have known, and with the exception of Miss Peck at Grove House, Mrs. Anderson, returned to us from our best loved Orphanage, is almost, if not quite, in a class of her own. Many were highly professional and efficient but lacked, and were not expected to have, any feeling other than professional pride in their job.

We now have at the head of this establishment someone who, even after years of experience, actually believes in us and in all we do.

Think on that, ye Buffaloes. One of the most rewarding hours of my life was spent with her at the 'York' as we went together through a large volume of slightly faded and worn 'snaps' and cards which helped to tell the story of her life with us when she was an orphan in our care; a most treasured possession.

With bowed head and muted voice, after standing up to some of the fiercest bowling Grand Lodge can produce over many years,

I have at last been "Bowled by a 'York' er". On the credit side, however, I am physically better, spiritually exalted, and, thanks to my lodge and P.G.L., financially solvent.

\* \* \*

Many different things happened with respect to the York, least of which was the proposed purchase of one of the existing buildings in St. Margarets Terrace, which happened to be number four, the building attached to the York and the following appeared in the December 1966 meeting of Grand Lodge:-

### ***EXTENSIONS TO THE YORK***

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Executive) said that he desired to bring an urgent matter before Grand Lodge. Recently it had come to their knowledge that an adjacent property to the York was available for purchase. The price would be in the region of £9,800, but negotiations were possible. The present site value of the existing York premises was almost double the amount paid for it in 1962, and in view of the success of the Old-aged Members' Holiday Scheme and the possible extension of the Permanent Residents' Project, he felt that immediate steps should be taken to obtain the additional property. Bro. Whitcher asked for permission to go ahead with the investigations, after which Provinces would be circularised giving full information and asking for their decision.

Bro. J. Pringle (Western Germany No. 4) proposed that this action be agreed to.

Bro. H. Vaughan (Wolverhampton) seconded.

Bro. A. P. Butcher (Lincoln) enquired if there would be further costs for the installation of heating, etc.

Bro. T. Firth (Huddersfield) suggested that a surveyor should be called in to check for any unapparent faults in the structure.

Bro. W. H. Beverley (North Kent) asked if the York was being used to capacity at the present time.

Bro. T. S. Mitchinson (Aylesbury) thought that Grand Lodge would be getting a bargain.

Bro. A. W. Tate (Peterborough) thought a professional evaluation should be obtained.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Executive) said The York was being used to its full extent. Naturally precautionary steps would be taken to ensure that we were getting value for money. He also gave a further assurance that final steps would not be taken without the knowledge and approval of the Provinces.

The Resolution was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

It has to be said that although the purchase was for an adjacent property it did not say which property it was, as we have already read, the buildings in St. Margarets Terrace consisted of numbers one to five with the Order owning numbers one to three.

Now having said that, the following item was on the agenda at the March 1967 Grand Lodge meeting.

### **LES-LEA HOTEL, WESTON-SUPER-MARE**

Grand Lodge Executive in pursuance of the authority granted to them at the December 1966 Meeting of Grand Lodge, called for a professional survey of the above property.

After considering the report, which highlights serious defects in the fabric of the building, which our Architect estimates will cost £3,500 to rectify, it is considered that the best offer they can recommend Grand Lodge to make for the property, fully furnished, is £6,000.

Accordingly, permission is requested to make a firm offer to purchase at the above figure.

Bro. W. S. Bull (Warwickshire) moved the reference back of this item. He stated that the architect's report had not been circulated to the Provinces as promised. Apparently all kinds of defects had been discovered, and it might mean an expenditure of around £10,000 to correct these. He also stated that the Executive were divided on the subject.

Bro. T. J. Jones (Merthyr) seconded the reference back, making three points. (a) Is there a present need for the extension of The York; (b) will the North Kent scheme be worth while, and (c) the money should be spent on the annuitants rather than on bricks and mortar.

Bro. W. E. P. Dunn (Malta) thought that the result of the purchase might be that we had bought a pig in a poke.

Bro. A. Jenkins (Rhondda) also demanded further information. In view of the fact that it was now known that the Executive were not of one mind, and the high costs of convalescence, we should have the full facts before Grand Lodge.

Bro. T. Forth (Huddersfield) supported the previous speakers, and Bro. A. J. Hurrell (West Suffolk) suggested that the idea be abandoned, and thought given to the purchase of a new Home in East Anglia.

Speaking against the reference back, Bro. D. Walker (Derby) observed that it seemed to him that the issue before Grand Lodge was a straight one. If we want this property, vote in favour of it. If we do not, then vote against it.

Bro. L. Stewart (Derby) said any further delay in obtaining a decision might mean the loss of the opportunity to purchase.

Bro. J. Jones (Sheffield) was apparently puzzled by the comments of some of the earlier speakers. He asked what the argument was all about. The recommendation was a simple and straight issue, either in favour or against.

Bro. W. Robinson (Redcar) and one other Delegate were also against the reference back.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Executive) then said that the platform had listened to the debate with interest. He then announced that the Executive were now in a position to state that the offer of £6,000 for the property would not be accepted, and asked permission to withdraw the item No.8

Grand Lodge, although not without some dissension, agreed to this course.

\* \* \*

One might be led to believe that the purchase of the York was a bargain and that the few 'deficiencies' were put right at very little cost. It is a matter of record that the place was too big for our use, the bed vacancy was very high and that for the disabled it was virtually useless, added to that, because of the ever increasing cost of repairs it was beginning to become a serious drain on our resources.

This bargain purchase could not have been such a wise buy because after just fourteen years the Grand Lodge Executive issued a recommendation that the York Convalescent Home be closed and the property disposed of. This was borne out by the report of the Study Document on the York issued in 1976 which was as follows.

## **RULE 154(f) RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **(i) The “York”, Weston-Super-Mare**

In accordance with the notice of intent, presented by Grand Lodge Executive to the March Meeting of Grand Lodge, it is recommended that the ‘York’ Convalescent Home be closed and that Grand Lodge Executive be instructed to dispose of the property. The reasons for the recommendation are fully explained in the study document attached to the Agenda papers for this meeting.

Copies of the study document have already been circulated to all Provincial Grand Lodges and Minor Lodges in the Order.

## **STUDY DOCUMENT**

**SUBJECT — Joint Report by Grand Lodge Committees, containing discussion material relative to the Notice of the Motion to close the “York”, Weston-Super-Mare.**

### **Introduction**

Following the Auditors report to G.L. in March, 1975, the Committees of Grand Lodge have applied themselves to the considerable problem of trying to control the finances of Grand Lodge in an inflationary situation. Plans were drawn up, including motions to Convention, seeking to alleviate the more pressing problems. All designed to both encourage greater participation in Benevolent and Charitable activities, and to ensure that all of the Benevolent money available to Grand Lodge, would be used, totally, in those areas where need is established.

Subsequent publication of the 1975 accounts, shows that immediate action is vital to reduce the further impact of inflation on our finances.

The purpose of this report is to explain briefly, why certain actions are proposed, the consideration leading to them and why they are so urgent.

### **Problem**

It became apparent during our initial investigation, that the basic problem is a shortfall of income, to meet both commitments and the sum needed to preserve the purchasing power of our capital. The problem becomes dramatically heightened by a large percentage of our members, not understanding that Buffaloism is about 'Voluntary Benevolence', upon which premise our work is to a large extent orientated.

No area of committee decision is by itself sufficient to solve the problem, and a Grand Lodge decision to cut back on expenditure is necessary.

Our further investigation following the presentation of the September 1975 accounts, when Grand Lodge Auditor advised us, in advance of the March meeting of Grand Lodge of the need to take immediate and positive action, led us again to the area of dues and donations, against the cost for various activities provided, which coupled with the fact that our assets have reduced by one third in 5 years, and more over a longer period, leads to need for action now, to redress the imbalance and secure our future.

### **Areas of Investigation**

Four areas have been investigated these are:

- (a) Accounts as published.
- (b) Income by Voluntary Ben and Dues.
- (c) Expenditure on Benevolent Activities.
- (d) Expenditure on Administration.

### **Findings**

Using the four paragraphs sub-headings above, a brief summary of each is as follows:-

- (a) *The examination of the Accounts.*



Our findings are confirmed by Grand Lodge Auditor, his statement is published verbatim in the Grand Lodge Quarterly Report and will not be repeated.

(b) *Income by Voluntary Benevolence and Dues.*

The accounts show our income by voluntary means as approximately £41,500 which gives an average donation per member per week (excluding dues) of 1.08p.

Donations to the fund are broken down as follows:—

- (i) 13 Provinces representing 2.7% of membership made a NIL donation.
- (ii) 13 Provinces representing 1.7% of membership made a donation of .08p per Registration.
- (iii) 66 Provinces representing 31% of membership made a donation of .27p per Registration.
- (iv) 56 Provinces representing 22.6% of membership made a donation of .75p per Registration.
- (v) 32 Provinces representing 13% of membership made a donation of 1.25p per Registration.

The above showing in summary that:- 180 Provinces representing 71% of membership, produce voluntary Benevolence at a weekly rate, less than the 1.37p which when added to dues, is necessary to cover the cost of G.L. Benevolent expenditure. The average donation being .59p per Registration and in total is 39% of the sum donated.

It further shows that the remaining 29% of the membership donates 61% of the total subscribed at an average 2p per registration.

NOTE:— Whilst the Journal Childrens Gift Fund is excluded from our investigation, examination of donations to this fund show that at each end of the donation list, 22½% of members donate 4½% of the sum donated. 13% of membership donate 41%, all when measured by the basis used above.

(c) *Expenditure on Benevolent Activities.*

- (i) Annuities at a cost of £36.277 p.a.

Our work under this heading is mainly to long standing members, and widows of former members of advanced years. We

cannot contemplate taking from them the fruits of the harvest they planted and cared for. All cases being subject to rules governing the awards, and need being established. The average value per award is £36.98.

(ii) *Special Grants at a cost of £10,066.*

Here again controls are maintained over conditions of application, to ensure the most needy receive help, when assistance is most required. The average value of each award is £37.14.

NOTE :— Whilst these awards under (i) (ii) are within limits imposed by the State, there is undoubtedly scope to enlarge the activities if greater prominence is given to them.

(iii) *2 Convalescent Homes at a cost of £83,079*

Up to the age of 65 years for members and 60 for wives and widows, a case of need can be established by their admission. Our aim in this group is to get them back too caring for families, as soon as possible, after accident or illness. This group however, represent only 32% of our intake. 30% of the intake being over retirement age. In this section wages and N.H.I. represent 51½% of the total expenditure, an increase of 12½% over 1974 and by itself exceeds the total donation to Grand Lodge Benevolent Fund raised by Voluntary means. The total intake of patients reduced by 83 during the year.

(iv) *Permanent Residents.*

This area of activity is largely self sufficient, by reasons of terms of residence and would not show any significant cost factor. We have a moral responsibility for what is a successful part of our work and no further investigation is envisaged.

(v) *Section 'E' Convalescence.*

Although popular this part of our work is not based on the establishment of need. Whilst costs have continued to rise, 83 fewer patients used the home, but the percentage of Section 'E' patients rose from 33% to 38%, the probable cost of which was some £13,000, at a minimum average of £40 per admission.

When analysing the information available it was found that whilst dealing with those areas requiring establishment of need, as a pre-requisite to award, benefits were spread fairly evenly, through Provinces and regions. In this section it was found that 27 Provinces of 16¾% of members took 48% of the places available under Section 'E'.

### **Special Note**

Simultaneous to our investigations into various matters of this report, our attention was drawn to a press statement relating to a paper prepared for the Government, by Lord Goodman, on the activities of the "Charity Commissioners".

Our impression is that a greater degree of surveillance will be maintained over registered charities in the future. After much discussion we feel, that if put to the test we could, on the grounds of proven need, justify all areas of expenditure, with the single exception of Section 'E'. We must, therefore, draw the attention of the Order to the fact that we would continue with this part of our work, at some increasing risk to our charitable registration.

#### *(d) Administration Expenditure.*

This area of expenditure is under constant review and the staff is in line with the numbers needed to service the requirements of the Order, attempts are being made to cover the costs incurred by charges for services given. Further investigation in this area will continue after decisions taken by G.L. and Convention in the next 6 months.

### **Conclusions**

Based on analysis of the foregoing, these conclusions are drawn:—

- (a) The Committees must recommend to Convention the acceptance of the principle of higher dues to achieve a fairer allocation of cost in keeping with reasonable even distribution of facilities.
- (b) The Order must accept in the short term a lower level of expenditure in the area of Convalescent Homes, where substantial and immediate cost saving may be made to the minimum of effect on the maximum of members.

- (c) After such cuts as are agreed, the Order must leave itself in a position, whereas money becomes available, Grand Lodge may extend its controllable Benevolent expenditure at an early date.
- (d) Within the levels of the still considerable sums available, such cuts as are agreed must not have any effect on any case of proven need.
- (e) Grand Lodge must embark on a course of publicity with regard to fund raising with particular emphasis on the need for all provinces to play a full part in the provision of voluntary support.

In the wake of the conclusions we must now proceed to our recommendations arising from para's (a) (c) and (d).

### **Recommendations**

1. To close a Convalescent Home (with due regard to the welfare of staff).
2. To Terminate Section 'E' expenditure and utilise the remaining Home for established need cases.

By which means it would be anticipated that expenditure could be reduced by £30,000 p.a.

The next following consideration must be which Home? In examining the options, both homes have advantages and disadvantages, if we were not anxious to reduce expenditure, these of necessity would have to be examined in detail. Therefore, we cannot recommend the disposal of "Grove House", by reason that we would have to consider additional expenditure, for moving and housing our administrative Headquarters. Additionally it has grounds and space, if eventually we decide in Grand Lodge to extend facilities in the future. With the cost of staffing two Homes running at the current rate of 51½% of total cost, it is obvious that we must only consider a centralised operation in the future. The whole question of our future development in this area must be shelved pro tem.

The two factors quoted outweigh the advantages of the "York" with the single exception, that in these days of a depressed property market, its seafront location and compactness, probably

render it a more marketable commodity. We conclude this section by recommending

3. The sale of the “York”, Weston-Super-Mare.

### **Summary**

You now have, in a condensed form, all the information available to your Committees on which their recommendation is based. Responsibility now passes to you, with it, our future ability to provide support to those in need, which will inevitably lessen as capital devalues.

You will, however, appreciate that no Committee, worth anything, can ignore the risks to the benefits, now posed by the continuance of expenses and even questionable benefits to the minority.

The only area of major cost saving, in any way palatable, without effect or need, is that recommended to you. Delay will merely enlarge the ultimate problem. We are not unmindful of the distress such action will cause in the minds of Brothers devoted to the belief in Voluntary Benevolence, for we too recognise this action as a failure!! of that precept!! How else can we describe a situation in which a 10p donation to the Benevolent Funds of Grand Lodge, made in the Lodges of 71% of our members, means that 16 others who have taken our common obligation, apparently give nothing.

NOTE :— Information in respect of the donations to the Voluntary Benevolent Funds of Grand Lodge by the Minor Lodges in your Province can be obtained on application to your P.G. Secretary who can obtain it from Grand Lodge.

Bro. A. Jenkins (Rhondda Valley) moved that the voting on this very important point should be taken by some other method than by show of hands.

The Grand Primo answered that if the question had not been asked at all, it was his intention that the vote should be taken by paper ballot.

Bro. R. J. Armes (Executive) in proposing the recommendation in reference to the “York” at Weston-Super-Mare, said he did so with mixed feelings, because the Executive, like many others, have over the past few years, tried to find some way of retaining

the “York”, but on studying the Auditor’s reports, it has become absolutely clear that we have to change our benevolent activities to meet the ever changing demands upon our resources. Some of our members have no doubt already made up their minds on the issue and have been mandated by their Provinces how to cast their votes. Grand Lodge Executive have been labelled “panic sellers” and the “Get rid of the York” mob. Certain members present on the platform at the moment were involved way back in 1962 in the purchase of the “York Hotel” (as it was then known) and they had the unenviable task of convincing the members of Grand Lodge that it was a viable investment. They had many formidable opponents and very much to the fore was the late Bro. Mervyn Payne. His description of the place was “The Mausoleum” and he was very much opposed to the purchase, but the “fors” won the day and many of them have in the intervening years, worked diligently to convert “The Mausoleum” into a Convalescent Home of which we could be justly proud. Even its most dedicated critic was happy to end his days there.

The present opposition from many quarters is without doubt positive proof that the policy to provide our members with nothing but the best was the right policy at that time. Do you honestly believe that after so much work and effort over the past 14/15 years that we would recommend its closure without a great deal of serious thinking. Far more knowledgeable people than ourselves failed to foresee that this country would be faced with galloping inflation in the mid 1970’s any more than we could foresee the ever escalating costs of maintaining our Convalescent Homes. In 1971 the cost of running the Homes was as follows: The York £22,000 and Grove House £21,287, a total of £43,287. In 1974 the costs had risen to The York £43,000 and Grove House £41,729, a total of £84,729. All this in a period of four years. Wages and National Insurance in 1971 accounted for The York £9,180 and Grove House £9,116, a total of £18,296, these rising in 1975 to The York £23,364 and Grove House £19,418, a total of £42,782. These costs are still rising and will continue to rise and it is estimated that the costs of approximately £85,000 for last year will have escalated to an approximate £113,000 in 1976, with this amount of money providing for a dwindling number of genuine convalescent patients. Last year genuine convalescent patients were as follows: Male age 20/65 203, Female 20/65 76, a total of



279. Male 66/90 177, Female 60/90 68, a total of 245 and an overall total of 524. Schedule "E" cases amounted to Male 65/90 172 and Female 60/90 158, a total of 330. Thus 854 patients were catered for. These figures represent a cost on each Minor Lodge of almost £80 per annum as against £55 in 1971. Ignoring Schedule "E", the number of convalescents has dropped from 830 in 1965 to 524 in 1975, a decrease of 306. So that in ten years, the need for convalescence has declined by this number, but with a continuing rise in costs. When these facts are considered in relation to what we expend on our 1,250 long serving members (Annuitants), Widows and Orphans, a sum of less than £50,000 per annum, compared with that of nearly £85,000 on 524 convalescents plus 330 Schedule "E" cases, it seems necessary that we should get our priorities right. There is ample accommodation at Grove House at the present time to take care of all our Male and Female convalescent cases without any immediate extensions. Schedule "E" in its present form would, of course, be discontinued, but do not take from this that some other method to provide convalescent holidays will not be found, but most certainly we cannot continue to operate in the present form. In conclusion, it must be said that we have got to change the whole concept of our benevolent activities, channelling the money we have available into the projects which will give the greatest benefit to the majority, and at the same time, keeping in mind that the minority also receive their fair share. It is ludicrous to preach of brotherly love and good fellowship and let such a state of affairs continue. We are a benevolent society, but we must be certain that this benevolence is used sensibly and the closure of The York would be the first step in this direction—to make sure that this great Order of ours is to continue as we know it and to progress in the years ahead. I ask you to support the Executive on the Motion now before the meeting.

Bro. R. E. Summers (Executive) seconded the recommendation, fully supporting everything that had been said by Bro. Armes. The time had arrived to take positive action to save the Order's finances in the most practical possible way — that of reducing preventable expenditure.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (Bath) attempted to move the reference back of the item, but the Grand Primo ruled that it stood as a Motion and therefore could not be referred back. It either stood or fell on its wording.

Bro. G. F. Hall (G.L.O. 1964) pointed out that the item was shown as a recommendation, but the Grand Primo still insisted that it was a Motion under the terms of Rule 154(f).

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) on a point of order said the item was in the wrong place, but the Grand Primo declined to accept any other situation other than it was there for Grand Lodge to make a decision and it was the duty of the meeting to make that decision.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer) asked if a proposal for a deferment until the next meeting of Grand Lodge would be in order.

The Grand Primo said this would be acceptable and his only desires had been to draw the attention of the delegates to their responsibilities.

Bro. E. Langton (Executive) amplified the terms of Rule 154(f) and said that was just what had been done.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (Bath) then moved the deferment of the item until the September meeting of Grand Lodge. He did this because (1) certain items on the Convention agenda might possibly affect the financial situation, and (2) some of the visitors now in the gallery would be attending Convention as delegates and he felt they should have the opportunity to express their opinions on any of the financial matters on the agenda.

Bro. G. E. Hall (G.L.O. 1964) seconded the deferment. It was possible that the decisions made in Convention could result in additional income becoming available to Grand Lodge and this should be known before any decision was taken on the present item.

Bro. B. Partridge (Canterbury) said he had some facts and figures relating to the York and if the item was deferred to Convention these would not be brought out. He gave these figures, but it would appear that these can still be given at the September meeting of Grand Lodge.

Bro. R. J. Armes (Executive) felt that some of the important financial outlets had been omitted.

Bro. A. J. Hunt (Grand Primo 1973) said no explanation of why the Order was in its position had been given.

The Grand Primo would not allow this point to be developed.

Bro. D. Wilcock (Doncaster) moved that the question now be put.

Bro. E. B. Williams (G.L.O. 1975) seconded. On being put to the meeting it was agreed that the vote be taken.

The deferment was then put to the vote as a Motion and was declared to be carried.

\* \* \*

The Brighton Convention in 1976 went some way to improving the income to the Order by way of increasing the dues but this was still not enough to sway the Executive to change their views, and in any event the item had to be brought before the floor of Grand Lodge as it had been deferred from the March meeting.

So we now find that the recommendation to sell the York was given another airing with the same brothers having a second bite at the cherry, as follows.

## **RULE 154(f) RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **(i) The York, Weston-Super-Mare**

In accordance with the notice of intent, presented by the Grand Lodge Executive to the March meeting of Grand Lodge, it is recommended that the "York" Convalescent Home be closed and that Grand Lodge Executive be instructed to dispose of the property.

The reasons for the recommendation are fully explained in the study document attached to the Agenda papers for the May 1976 meeting of Grand Lodge.

Copies of the Study Document have already been circulated to all Provincial Grand Lodges and Minor Lodges of the Order.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (G.L.O. 1973) moved the Suspension of Standing Orders to deal with the item before the meeting in reference to Rule 154(f) recommendation (i) The York, Weston-super-Mare.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) seconded.

Grand Lodge agreed to this course being taken for this item only.

Bro. R. J. Armes (Executive) said the Grand Primo had decided, in view of the fact that the debate had been carried forward from

the last Grand Lodge meeting to this one, he felt the right thing to do would be for him to repeat all that he had said on that occasion. Therefore, in proposing the acceptance of the Executive recommendation, he further said; he did so with mixed feelings, because the Executive, like so many others, have over the past few years, tried to find some way of retaining the "York", but on studying the Auditor's reports, it has become absolutely clear that we have to change our benevolent activities to meet the ever changing demands upon our resources. Some of our members have no doubt already made up their minds on the issue and have been mandated by their Provinces how to cast their votes. Grand Lodge Executive have been labelled "panic sellers" and the "Get rid of the York" mob. Certain members present on the platform at the moment were involved way back in 1962 in the purchase of the "York Hotel" (as it was then known) and they had the unenviable task of convincing the members of Grand Lodge that it was a viable investment. They had many formidable opponents and very much to the fore was the late Bro. Mervyn Payne. His description of the place was "The Mausoleum" and he was very much opposed to the purchase, but the "fors" won the day and many of them have in the intervening years, worked diligently to convert "The Mausoleum" into a Convalescent Home of which we could be justly proud. Even its most dedicated critic was happy to end his days there.

The present opposition from many quarters is without doubt positive proof that the policy to provide our members with nothing but the best was the right policy at that time. Do you honestly believe that after so much work and effort over the past 14/15 years that we would recommend its closure without a great deal of serious thinking. Far more knowledgeable people than ourselves failed to foresee that this country would be faced with galloping inflation in the mid 1970's any more than we could foresee the ever escalating costs of maintaining our Convalescent Homes. In 1971 the cost of running the Homes was as follows: The York £22,000 and Grove House £21,287, a total of £43,287. In 1974 the costs had risen to The York £43,000 and Grove House £41,729, a total of £84,729. All this in a period of four years. Wages and National Insurance in 1971 accounted for The York £9,180 and Grove House £9,116, a total of £18,296, these rising in 1975 to The York £23,364 and Grove House £19,418, a total of £42,782.

These costs are still rising and will continue to rise and it is estimated that the costs of approximately £85,000 for last year will have escalated to an approximate £113,000 in 1976, with this amount of money providing for a dwindling number of *genuine* convalescent patients. Last year *genuine* convalescent patients were as follows: Male age 20/65 203, Female 20/65 76, a total of 279. Male 66/90 177, Female 60/90 68, a total of 245 and an overall total of 524. Schedule "E" cases amounted to Male 65/90 172 and Female 60/90 158, a total of 330. Thus 854 patients were catered for. These figures represent a cost on each Minor Lodge of almost £80 per annum as against £55 in 1971. Ignoring Schedule "E", the number of convalescents has dropped from 830 in 1965 to 524 in 1975, a decrease of 306. So that in ten years, the need for convalescence has declined by this number, but with a continuing rise in costs. When these facts are considered in relation to what we expend on our 1,250 long serving members (Annuitants), Widows and Orphans, a sum of less than £50,000 per annum, compared with that of nearly £85,000 on 524 convalescents plus 330 Schedule "E" cases, it seems necessary that we should get our priorities right. There is ample accommodation at Grove House at the present time to take care of all our Male and Female convalescent cases without any immediate extensions. Schedule "E" in its present form would, of course, be discontinued, but do not take from this that some other method to provide convalescent holidays will not be found, but most certainly we cannot continue to operate in the present form. In conclusion, it must be said that we have got to change the whole concept of our benevolent activities, channelling the money we have available into the projects which will give the greatest benefit to the majority, and at the same time, keeping in mind that the minority also receive their fair share. It is ludicrous to preach of brotherly love and good fellowship and let such a state of affairs continue. We are a benevolent society, but we must be certain that this benevolence is used sensibly and the closure of The York would be the first step in this direction, to make sure that this great Order of ours is to continue as we know it and to progress in the years ahead. I ask you to support the Executive on the Motion now before the meeting.

Acceptance of the recommendation was seconded by Bro. R. E. Summers (Executive), who supported every word that had been

said. It was impossible to carry on indefinitely at the present rate.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (G.L.O. 1973) asked the delegates to reject the recommendation. No explanation had been given to Grand Lodge until the study document was issued. He referred to the "findings" as given and showing an average donation per member per week of £1.08p. This shows the average registration per week at the figure of 73,896 giving an income from Dues of £76,851.84p per year. He proceeded to give further facts and figures in reference to present and future income and expenditure. He thought that any amount extra that was needed to keep The York open would accrue from the increased Dues approved at the Brighton Convention. We needed two Convalescent Homes to provide for full coverage of the country and the health requirements of all convalescent patients. The Order should be looking for additional incentives to draw in any additional cash which may be called for. The recommendation was a backward step at a time when progress is required in all directions to keep the Order alive. Bro. O'Keefe repeated his call for rejection of the recommendation and appealed to all delegates to urge their Provinces to increase their donations to Voluntary Benevolence.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) was concerned about another aspect. Would the Permanent Residents be affected? There had been no replacements at The York since the last death some three or four years ago. If this Home is closed it would mean that all future admissions would have to be to Grove House, and many could be taken some 200 miles or more from their normal home area. He was also of opinion that more could be done in the reclaiming of costs from the Local Authorities from which the resident had come from. He too appealed for more support to Voluntary Benevolence. The Order had been built on the old penny, let us maintain and even progress on the new one.

Bro. J. E. Edwards (Nuneaton) said he felt nothing had been done to save ourselves from ourselves. To sell The York at this time would be second only to sacrilege, even if it should be temporarily closed, it would be foolish to dispose of it now. In regard to finance, he thought the Order had accepted things too easily, if we wanted two Homes, we must be prepared to pay for them, this was just a matter of common sense.



Bro. Edwards asked three questions in regard to voluntary Benevolence and answers were given by the Grand Secretary.

Bro. L. E. Nye (G.L.O. 1973) asked if his Province submitted an alternative proposal to the December meeting of Grand Lodge, would it be accepted for debate.

The Grand Primo replied that it would depend on whether the proposal was competent or not.

Bro. G. Evans (St. Albans) said we should at least give The York another year of life before making a final decision on its future. He thought our convalescence is being under used and by extending this use, more donations to Voluntary Benevolence would undoubtedly be forthcoming. Further, a sinking fund of £1,000,000 should be raised by the Order to ensure its finances in the coming years, a proposal which his Province was of opinion could be done with the full support of every member.

Bro. W. Stephen-Porter (Peterborough) said he was appalled that after ten years of the Order's second century, we are being asked to sell one of our Convalescent Homes. Our first Convalescent Home was opened in Scarborough in 1925 and in the following year Grove House was purchased. All this was done by the gathering in of the smallest coin of the realm. The members of those days spoke with their money and it must be obvious that today's members could do the same if only they put some determination into their efforts. He asked the delegates to reject the recommendation.

Bro. W. E. P. Dunn (G.L.O. 1971) said the Executive had put forward a recommendation that could not be faulted from a financial point of view; it was sound commonsense. The situation was serious and the only way it could be halted was by the members putting into practice all the things they had been taught from their beginnings, and handed down to us by our forebears. We should all be ashamed of the present position, and whilst the Executive and the Grand Lodge Auditor had been right in their diagnosis, The York could still be kept alive by the members themselves, by putting in the money, guts and enthusiasm the situation demanded.

Bro. S. Smith (London Central) said the Study Document had a very disturbing effect upon him, because it proves that 71% of the Order do not believe in its basic principles. From the time of

initiation we had been taught that the only right we had as members was the right to give. But we find that the bulk of the donations to Voluntary Benevolence comes from 29% of the membership. If the York should be closed, Harrogate was not the answer, and as he felt he could sense the decision of the meeting before it had been made, then the other answer was that the money must be found to keep The York in existence by the greater use of the spirit of Voluntary Benevolence by not just 29% of the membership but by the full 100%.

Bro. A. E. Simmons (Grand Primo 1966) who appeared to be the only speaker in favour of the Executive, said all the previous speakers came from South of Birmingham. He desired to support the Executive in their recommendation and felt that by keeping the York open it would be unfair to the members from the North. The place was obsolete and to keep it would be a millstone round our necks and would in the end lead to the same position arising sometime in the future. He agreed with the Executive and Grand Lodge Auditor and asked the meeting to place their confidence in the present recommendation.

Bro. V. J. Clarke (G.L.O. 1972) moved that the vote now be taken. This was seconded by Bro. A. Jenkins (Rhondda Valley) and declared to be carried.

Bro. R. J. Armes, the proposer, exercised his right of reply, and after replying to some of the points made by speakers, said "I now have the task of trying to convince a sufficient number of the delegates here today of the absolute necessity of disposing of The York. First of all, at the risk of repeating myself, I give you some up-to-date figures relating to Convalescence as a whole (not including the Permanent Residents). In the twelve months September 1975 to August 1976, admissions for working age groups were Grove House 80, The York (male) 104 and The York (female) 79, a total of 263. Grove House could accommodate all these and still have room for a further 23 without any extensions being necessary. If you believe convalescence is intended to aid recovery after an illness so that the patient can return to his normal working life, The York is not required and to keep it for the purpose of Section "E" is not being realistic. Those above retirement age can and will in some way be dealt with by some Scheme under a new Schedule "E" Rule.

It has been said in many quarters that no alternative has been offered to replace the present Schedule "E" Scheme, but I put it to you that no alternative Scheme can be introduced at this stage. First we have to stop the unequal dispersement of our resources and channel our benevolent activities into projects where most good can be done. The level of money being spent now on our older members has not altered from what it was years ago, but the amount of money being used for so-called convalescence has increased far beyond what we can really afford in the present set-up. The middle-age group – that is those who are, at the present time, providing the finance, are being completely ignored and this is something that has to be looked into. At the present time it is possible to have two weeks "E" type convalescence at approximately £70 per person, plus rail fares, without having really earned the privilege by service, whilst Brethren who have devoted a large part of their lives to the Order are restricted to £50 or less per year, because money that could be used for this purpose is running away through the hole in the sack for – in the main – the pleasure of the minority. No matter how much more money is raised by whatever means, the problem will not be solved, it will merely delay the inevitable, because costs are and will continue to escalate. If your decision today is to retain The York, all the extra income (if it is forthcoming) will continue to pour out through the hole in the sack and in the end we will be left with no alternative Scheme and no improvement in our benevolent activities. To put it bluntly, we shall be going nowhere very fast. Let us take a new look at ourselves and our activities so that we of this generation can uphold what our forebears bequeathed to us by their foresight. Let us be forward looking and direct our efforts to meet the every changing demands of today and so make provision for the future. I ask you once again to vote in favour of the Motion as the first step to greater things in the right direction.

A paper ballot was taken and the Grand Primo declared the result of the voting to be: In favour of the Motion 162; Against the Motion 481. The Motion was declared to be lost.

\* \* \*

There have been many instances where the anti York campaigners have sought to close the York Convalescent Home along with many questions seeking to get answers as to why it cost so much for the upkeep and repairs to the building and why it had to be closed for a couple of months as a result of staffing problems.

The following pages index the rather complex debates that took place over many years and are shown only because it illustrates the skillful and sometimes meaningful arguments put across that great debating chamber we call the floor of Grand Lodge and the pressures that the Grand Primo's were under to control such meetings.

Apologies are made if the text of the following pages seem to repeat themselves but I have placed these in the date order that they appeared on the various Grand Lodge reports.

**Walsall 4th March 1972**

**WELLS, GLASTONBURY & DISTRICT P.G.L.**

"That an Appeal Fund be set up to re-furnish the "York", Weston-Super-Mare".

Bro. W. E. Light (Wells, Glastonbury) proposed Motion No. 13. He said that when the Order took over the "York" we also took over quite an amount of very old furniture and which had now become in an even more dilapidated state. He believed it to be time that something was done to refurnish the Home without the necessity of dipping in to our benevolent funds. He wondered if it would be possible for Provinces to adopt one of the rooms so that it might come under their care and give them a personal pride in the upkeep.

Bro. D. W. Morris (Wells, Glastonbury) seconded the Motion, mentioning that many civic dignitaries had visited the Home and that very recently the Bishop of Bath and Wells had been present. He felt that the present state of the furnishings could not have given them a very good impression.

Bro. J. F. Robinson (Merthyr) said that he would like more information before any positive action was taken, thinking the Motion to be incomplete.

Bro. M. W. Payne (Grand Primo 1934) said he had a list of the items required ranging from £5 to £200, sums well within the

capability of willing givers. He would like to revive the old system of allowing gifts to be identified with the givers by means of suitable tabs, as he could see nothing wrong with a little boasting at times. He pointed out that by this method we should be releasing money needed for urgent benevolence at Grand Lodge level. He asked for support for the Motion.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon), S. Smith (London Central) and F. Longley (W.G. No. 6) contributed to the discussion.

\* \* \*

### **Folkestone 3rd December 1977**

#### **NOTICE OF MOTION**

##### **(b) (ii) GRAND LODGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Resolution prepared by Counsel to permit the use of The York for paying guests as per Payment/Holiday Scheme outlined on Pages 18 and 19.

"WHEREAS certain assets and property of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes Grand Lodge of England ("the Order") is held by Trustees of the Grand Lodge of the Order ("the Grand Lodge") upon the Trusts declared in a Comprehensive Trust Deed dated 2nd January 1928 made between Benjamin Innes, John Charles Edgar Cartwright, William Henry Rose, John William Gaze of the one part and Thomas Richard Johnson, John William Dudley, John Wilson, Tempest Smethurst, Edward Isaac Freeman of the other part; and by the said Comprehensive Trust Deed the Grand Lodge has power by resolution duly passed at a duly convened meeting of the Grand Lodge to direct such assets and property or any part or parts thereof and the income thereof to be appropriated applied and held on trust for some particular charitable purpose or purposes for the relief or benefit of necessitous Brethren of the Order and of necessitous Widows, Orphans or Dependants of deceased Brethren of the Order.

IT IS RESOLVED pursuant to the said power as follows:

(1) THE property specified in the Schedule hereto shall be and is henceforth held by the Trustees of the Grand Lodge

UPON THE FOLLOWING TRUSTS namely:

- (a) To use and occupy the same as a Convalescent Home (as heretofore used and occupied) for necessitous Brethren of the Order and for necessitous Widows, Orphans or Dependants of deceased Brethren of the Order and
- (b) To use and occupy such part or parts or the whole of the same as shall not be required (in the discretion of the Trustees of the Grand Lodge) for the last above-mentioned purpose as a holiday centre for the benefit of such necessitous Brethren and necessitous Widows as aforesaid in need of a change of air.

PROVIDED that so often and so long as accommodation in the said property (or part or parts thereof) is not for the time being required for occupation by persons qualified as aforesaid (either for use as a convalescent home or as a holiday centre pursuant to (a) or (b) above) the Trustees of the Grand Lodge may from time to time and as occasion or convenience may require admit to the said property as convalescent home or as holiday centre (as the case may be) persons other than persons qualified as aforesaid upon payment of:

- (i) such charges as in the opinion of the Trustees may be adequate to cover the cost of maintaining such persons so admitted in the said convalescent home or holiday centre; or
- (ii) such charges as in the opinion of the Trustees may be sufficient to cover the said cost of maintaining such persons so admitted and to meet all or some part of any deficiency in the cost of maintaining persons qualified as in (a) or (b) above in the said convalescent home or holiday centre.

BUT in the case of both (i) and (ii) above so that no charges shall be made other than for the purpose of balancing costs and maintaining the said property as a convalescent home and holiday centre”.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **The York.**



Bro. E. Langton (Management) proposed the acceptance of the Motion as printed, pointing out that this was drawn up by Counsel as a pre-requisite to any scheme involving the change of use of The York for holiday purposes. The main provisions of the Management Committee proposals under (b) are the chief requirements of the Motion, and he quoted these in full.

Bro. R. E. Summers (Management) formally seconded.

The Grand Primo said it should be made clear that the present discussion was not concerned with the Holiday Scheme in any way, but was confined solely to the change of use of The York.

Bro. K. G. Hopkinson (Brighton) said he had been mandated to propose the reference back for further discussion in Minor Lodges.

The Grand Primo pointed out that the matter before Grand Lodge was a Motion and not a Recommendation. Therefore it could not be referred back but would stand or fall on the decisions of Grand Lodge.

Bro. P. W. Hebron-Marsh (Fakenham) proposed acceptance of the Motion after Bro. G. J. Masters (G.L.O. 1958) had proposed its rejection.

Bro. T. E. Edwards (Nuneaton) supported the acceptance of the Motion.

Bro. W. C. Hawkins (Grand Primo 1963) wanted to know if the Charity Commissioners had been consulted.

The Grand Primo said he was surprised by the question as it had been stated that Counsel had provided the wording of the Motion.

A proposal that "The Motion be put" was duly seconded and carried.

The Motion itself was then put to the vote and was also carried.

## **(b)      RULE 154(I) RECOMMENDATION PAYMENT/HOLIDAY SCHEME TO REPLACE SECTION "E" CONVALESCENT TREATMENT**

Pursuant to the instruction given by Grand Lodge at the September 1976 Meeting, Grand Lodge Management Committee have to report that they have very carefully considered many

schemes, but in view of the decision taken by Grand Lodge to retain the “York” Convalescent Home consider the following scheme which utilizes the “York” could provide a solution to both problems which will be acceptable to Grand Lodge.

The first obstacle to the use of the “York” on a payment basis was the fact that it is included in the Charitable Trust Deed as a permanent endowment of the Trust and must continue to be used for charitable purposes.

To this end the opinion of Counsel was obtained and the results of our enquiries are outlined in the motion on Page 2A of the Agenda papers which has been framed by Counsel on our behalf and ensures that the Home may be utilized for paying guests without interfering with the permanent endowment of the Trust provided that at no time would a holiday application take preference over a convalescent application.

Conditions applicable to scheme

1. Period of holiday to be not less than one week and not more than two weeks.
2. Charges to be £45 per person per week for first week, with a supplementary charge of £30 per person for the second week if this is required.
3. Basis of charges to be per person. First week Minor Lodge £15, PG. Lodge £17, Member £15, Second week Minor Lodge £10, P.G. Lodge £10, Member £10.

Warrant to be supplied by Grand Lodge.

Example: If a Minor Lodge decided to apply for a member and his wife, the full costs would be  $£75 \times 2 = £150$  in total, allocated as to £50 Minor Lodge, £50 PG. Lodge, £50 Member.

It is also agreed that when a member is granted convalescent treatment at the “York” and wishes to take his wife with him, then he may do so on payment of the fee involved i.e. £75 for a two week period, always providing that the necessary accommodation is available.

4. Full costs to be remitted to Grand Lodge with the completed application form.
5. A simplified booking form will be supplied and no medical certificate will be necessary.
6. We appreciate, of course, that normal convalescent rules could not apply where payment is involved and paying

guests would be supplied with keys to enable them to come and go as they please in exactly the same manner as hotel arrangements.

A choice of menu will also have to be provided and this we appreciate will involve some re-distribution of existing staff and possibly the employment of further staff, who could exploit to the full the letting potential of the "York" to paying guests.

7. Subject to the approval of Grand Lodge we propose to commence the scheme on the 1st April 1978 and we recommend accordingly.

Bro. E. Langton (Management) proposed the acceptance of the recommendation of the Management Committee in reference to the proposed Holiday Scheme. It was a serious exercise and a genuine attempt to solve two problems (a) to implement the decision of Grand Lodge to provide holiday facilities to replace Section "E" holidays taken at the September 1976 meeting and (b) giving the power to the Management Committee to retain and maintain The York and so again implementing an instruction given at the same meeting. He quoted present costs and said that some thought the increase in Dues and monies coming from the Queen's Jubilee Fund would solve all the financial problems in this direction and also gave the figures on the income side and when it had to be taken into account that Grove House had also to be provided for plus Annuities and Special Grants, then the expected proceeds from all income would still fall far short of our total requirements. Grand Lodge had decided that The York should be kept at all costs and so it had to be paid for. The Scheme now before Grand Lodge would enable everyone to do just that, everybody paying their part; the member concerned, the Minor Lodge and the Province. There was nothing to prevent the member from paying more if he could afford it, in fact he could pay the whole if he was in a position to do so. Conversely the Minor Lodge or the Province could pay more. All Grand Lodge were seeking was the full payment on each application. Bro. Langton emphasised that the new Scheme would in no way interfere with our convalescent commitments, which would receive priority. Failure to support this present Scheme could only lead to a further proposal to dispose of The York.

Bro. R. E. Summers (Management) formally seconded the recommendation.

Bro. B. D. Slin (Nuneaton) moved the reference back of this item on the grounds that the Minor Lodges should have time to give full consideration to the full implications and also that it should be written in that the charges between the member, the Lodge and the Province could be variable by agreement.

The Grand Primo said that this was a Motion and there could not be a reference back.

The Grand Treasurer, Bro. A. E. Whitcher, agreed there could be no reference back but there could be a deferment.

Bro. T. E. Edwards (Nuneaton) felt that as the matter stood, many P.G.L.'s would find the contribution beyond their means and there should be a re-wording in reference to the charges.

Bro. R. E. Beetlestone (Kings Lynn) said they were in favour of the recommendation but felt that, with the exception of stating that Minor Lodges and Provinces must contribute to the cost, all other references to charges should be removed.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) was of opinion that the suggested charges were on the high side. At the moment he was providing holidays much less in cost and perhaps offering more for the money than our scheme would do.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (G.L.O. 1973) asked if the Committee were aware that the Weston-super-Mare Council had a scale of minimum charges which operated in the town. In his Province (Bath) they had a scheme to send six couples for a week's holiday in Weston and he could send his six for half the cost Grand Lodge were proposing. He assumed that his costs would be the Weston minimum and at this charge he believed our scheme would work. Anything higher would not.

The Grand Primo and Bro. O'Keefe both agreed that the present proposal was not only confined to the elderly members.

Bro. W. C. Hawkins (Grand Primo 1963) said he would like to see the full qualifications laid down in print, age, service, or what is more important need. He also noted that nothing was said about the cost of the travel warrant and he felt this to be an irregular use of Grand Lodge Benevolent Funds. We should also be very careful not to fall into the clutches of the Income Tax authorities and the V.A.T. men. Extra staff would also have to be

engaged and we may find that they would not come under the umbrella provided by N.A.L.G.O., but the Catering Wages Act would apply. He supported either a rejection or a deferment of the recommendation.

Bro. R. Fawdry (9764 (G.L.D.) Oude Maastreech) on behalf of the G.L.D. Lodges asked whether in the case of an application from one such Lodge, they would be required to pay £30 rather than the £15 charge to the ordinary Minor Lodge under a P.G.L.

Bro. E. Langton (Management) said that if and when such an application was received it would be considered by Grand Lodge acting as their P.G.L.

The Grand Treasurer, Bro. A. E. Witcher, said he was prepared to second the deferment but not a reference back. He felt the whole matter was dependant on the question of charges. So far as he was concerned, it did not matter where the money came from so long as it was there.

Bro. E. G. Page (Luton) asked if he was correct in assuming that the P.G.L. part of the money would have to come from the general funds and not from benevolence.

Bro. P. Hobson (Stafford) thought that the ordinary Lodge practice of limiting benefits to a sum of not more than 50% of the Benevolent Fund would take care of the amount granted at that source.

Bro. P. Hebron-Marsh (Fakenham) said that planning for a member to be sent away under the Holiday Scheme was not finalised from one Lodge meeting to the next. It could take a few weeks or months and in that period surely the benevolent minded members of a Lodge could find the necessary cash. All in all, he thought the Scheme was a good one and that any deferment was simply an excuse to hold up those members who would benefit from it.

Bro. A. Jenkins (Rhonddda Valley) wondered how "necessitous" Brethren would find their part of the money.

Bro. G. E. Hall (G.L.O. 1964) commented that basically the Scheme was prepared with the object of keeping open the doors of The York, for its main purpose would still be the provision of convalescent treatment. Only the vacant places would be available for use under the Holiday Scheme. In his opinion, members desiring holidays in a normal way should not be asking Minor

Lodges or P.G.L.'s to finance such holidays, they should expect to pay. He felt it had nothing to do with benevolence, it was a business proposition and should be treated as such. He supported the deferment and suggested that the Management Committee should bring the proposal back in two parts (a) Convalescence and (b) a Holiday Scheme.

Bro. B. J. Compton (Nuneaton) asked if he was correct in thinking that it would be possible for a member to be refused convalescence on medical grounds and still be eligible to be accepted under the Holiday Scheme.

The Grand Primo thought it may be possible.

Bro. F. Bottomley (Halifax) said he had been mandated to vote against the scheme on the grounds of the method of payment. No Brother in his Province could expect to be paid for.

Bro. A. H. Bardell (Doncaster) asked if the question of the provision of keys for Holiday visitors so that they could come and go at will would not cause a possibility of abuse if those visitors were not segregated from the convalescent patients. Consideration should be given to this point at a later stage. He also wondered if the convalescent patients would be disturbed by the comings and goings of the holiday visitors.

Bro. S. Smith (London Central) was also concerned about the mixing of the two types (a) convalescent patients and (b) holiday visitors. He was not too happy about the possible results of the mixture.

Bro. E. W. Buckingham (G.L.O. 1966) thought that the Scheme failed because of its lack of special provision for holidays for the aged members.

Bro. E. Langton (Management) in reply to the debate, said he would try to answer all the questions put forward, although it seemed most of them had already been answered as they came along. In regard to the care of convalescent patients, he was sure that this matter would be paramount in the minds of all who were concerned, and it may be assumed that the majority of these cases would go to Grove House. If they did go to The York, they would receive preference in all considerations. The method of payment had also been foremost in the debate and he agreed that this might be considered further. There were all sorts of ways this matter could be resolved and a finalisation of any

method could be made in the Minor Lodge or P.G.L. All that was final is that the money had to come from somewhere. To a question asked in regard to why the second week was cheaper than the first, the answer should be obvious, there would be no travel warrant for the second week. He agreed that it might be possible to obtain prices lower than those quoted, but it must be borne in mind that the facilities offered may not be up to the same standard. The Management Committee had an instruction to keep the York open and so the money had to be found from whatever source. He was surprised that no delegate had taken up the point of future costs. Early in 1978 some considerable expenditure would have to be made on repairs and renewals at The York and he himself was in some trepidation in regard to this matter. He asked that the Scheme should be given a chance.

The Grand Primo then took the vote with the result that the deferment to the March meeting of Grand Lodge was carried.

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### **Weston Super Mare 4th March 1978**

Pursuant to the instruction given by Grand Lodge at the September 1976 Meeting, Grand Lodge Management Committee have to report that they have very carefully considered many schemes, but in view of the decision taken by Grand Lodge to retain the "York" Convalescent Home consider the following scheme which utilizes the "York" could provide a solution to both problems which will be acceptable to Grand Lodge.

The first obstacle to the use of the "York" on a payment basis was the fact that it is included in the Charitable Trust Deed as a permanent endowment of the Trust and must continue to be used for charitable purposes.

To this end the opinion of Counsel was obtained and the results of our enquiries are outlined in the motion on Page 2A of the Agenda papers which has been framed by Counsel on our behalf and ensures that the Home may be utilized for paying guests without interfering with the permanent endowment of the Trust provided that at no time would a holiday application take preference over a convalescent application.

### Conditions applicable to scheme

1. Period of holiday to be not less than one week and not more than two weeks.
2. Charges to be £45 per person per week for first week, with a supplementary charge of £30 per person for the second week if this is required.
3. Basis of charges to be per person. First week Minor Lodge £15, PG. Lodge £17, Member £15, Second week Minor Lodge £10, P.G. Lodge £10, Member £10.

Warrant to be supplied by Grand Lodge.

Example: If a Minor Lodge decided to apply for a member and his wife, the full costs would be £75 x 2 = £150 in total, allocated as to £50 Minor Lodge, £50 PG. Lodge, £50 Member.

It is also agreed that when a member is granted convalescent treatment at the "York" and wishes to take his wife with him, then he may do so on payment of the fee involved i.e. £75 for a two week period, always providing that the necessary accommodation is available.

4. Full costs to be remitted to Grand Lodge with the completed application form.
5. A simplified booking form will be supplied and no medical certificate will be necessary.
6. We appreciate, of course, that normal convalescent rules could not apply where payment is involved and paying guests would be supplied with keys to enable them to come and go as they please in exactly the same manner as hotel arrangements.

A choice of menu will also have to be provided and this we appreciate will involve some re-distribution of existing staff and possibly the employment of further staff, who could exploit to the full the letting potential of the "York" to paying guests.

7. Subject to the approval of Grand Lodge we propose to commence the scheme on the 1st April 1978 and we recommend accordingly.

In view of the discussion on this item at the December 1977 meeting the Management Committee would seek to make the following amendments to the scheme:



2. Delete in toto, substitute — Charges to be £37.50p per person per week, subject to annual review.
3. Delete first two paragraphs i.e. breakdown of charges and example.

Bro. E. Langton (Management) said he was now seeking the approval of the delegates to an amendment to a proposal he himself made at the December 1977 meeting. Without going through the whole of the Motion again, he would indicate the details of the amendment which is to delete Item 2 and this read “Charges to be £45 per person per week for the first week with a supplementary charge of £30 per person for the second week if this is required”. This should be deleted in toto and substituted by “Charges to be £37.50 per person per week, subject to annual review”. The other change was in Item 3, where the first two paragraphs should be deleted in reference to the breakdown in charges and the example, these reading “Basis of charges to be per person. First week Minor Lodge £15, P.G. Lodge £15, Member £15. Second week Minor Lodge £10, P.G. Lodge £10, Member £10. Warrant to be supplied by Grand Lodge”. The example which followed should also be deleted.

In other words the new suggested charge will be £37.50 per week and it will be left to the Minor Lodge, the P.G. Lodge and the member to reach agreement on how this is to be paid.

He did not wish to reiterate the whole of the statements he made at the last meeting, but would like to emphasise one particular point, that this was a serious exercise to implement the instructions given by Grand Lodge. They were well aware of the circumstances applicable to The York and most of the members had tried to bring these forward from time to time. If this Home is to be kept open, then it had to be put on a financial basis. Cash had to be found from somewhere to cover the costs. Spending cannot go on without some return. In its present state it is certain to require large amounts spent on it just to maintain it at its level at the moment. He said it was a difficult position for him for he was trying to make a positive Motion in a negative climate, for he was sure that there were many in the hall who felt as he did, that there were considerable doubts in reference to the future of the building. He now proposed the acceptance of the amended Motion as printed and as required by Grand Lodge.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Management) formally seconded.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (G.L.O. 1973) was still not clear on some points. The charge remains as before at £75 but now the issue of the warrant has been cut out. Therefore that would be a plus charge over and above the £75, so the price has gone up since the last meeting, he thought this would limit the area from which members could benefit and if the free warrant had been left in the scheme could be a success. He wondered if the number of extra staff had now been decided and would they be full time or part time. Further, would any additional night staff be required. If these questions could be answered satisfactorily his Province would seriously consider taking part even though their own scheme worked out at £8 cheaper and they allowed £2 for pocket money. Members were now travelling from other parts of the country and not only from their own immediate vicinity.

Bro. E. Langton replied that the Committee had taken serious notice of the various objections which were mentioned at the December meeting and have tried to modify the scheme to suit the majority. It seemed obvious that a breakdown in charges was not wanted but a stated figure was, and we have given one commensurate with the running costs of the Home. The object is not to provide cheap holidays, but to obtain income to keep the place alive which was the instruction given. In the case of the railway warrant, it seemed that most of the floor members were not in agreement with free transport. Staffing could not be dealt with at the moment but it was definitely not being overlooked. Full and part time would be used as required.

Bro. J. T. Weston (Warwickshire) asked the delegates to accept the Management Committee's recommendations. Grand Lodge had already decided that they want to retain The York. He thought the figure of £37.50 to be a good one and he could see no reason for the Order to provide transport for people going on holiday.

Bro. J. Layland (St. Helens) was of the opinion that the Order should wait until such times as we knew exactly what repairs were required before embarking on a holiday scheme such as the present proposal.

Bro. E. Langton said no one need be in any fear that The York was falling down. Those who took the opportunity available to make a visit would be able to see for themselves.

Bro. G. Smyth (West Herts) was against the whole idea. He believed the Section "E" Scheme was going to be re-introduced on some kind of payment basis and did not realise that it was to be thrown open to all and sundry.

Bro. Langton said the Committee were aware that there are needy Brethren, but when their suggestion that the cost could be divided between the Minor Lodge, the P.G.L. and the Member was made Grand Lodge indicated that they did not want that. The present cost of £37.50 could be split up in as many ways as may be desired, so long as the full fee was forthcoming.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) reminded Grand Lodge that it had been said "the structure of our Order is such that to accept payment for accommodation would be private of the advantages we now obtain as a purely benevolent Society". He, like the last speaker, thought there was not sufficient affluence in the Minor Lodges for the money to be found there. Anyone who could afford to find £150 for a holiday should be able to find sunnier climes than was to be found in Weston-super-Mare. He was against this scheme on the grounds of cost.

Bro. R. E. Beetlestone (Kings Lynn) said he was satisfied with the scheme as outlined. It was a business proposition and the more money we could get out of it would mean the longer the doors of The York would stay open.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer) said the meeting had a proposal before it. It should be tried out over a period and then, if the Order did not like it, it could be thrown out.

Bro. J. A. Priestley (Guildford) was against the Motion. Brethren who desired to go on holiday should do so as individuals and not expect the Order to provide the means whereby. He visualised a situation where every member of a Lodge put in applications at the same time, each one being entitled to the same treatment.

Bro. F. Deacon (Mid-Sussex) asked what would happen if the Home was advanced booked under the holiday scheme and a flood of convalescent applications were received. Would children be included in the holiday scheme?

Bro. E. Langton repeated the assurance given at the last meeting that genuine convalescent patients would receive preferential consideration. Children would be included in the holiday scheme at half-price from the age of 3-12 and no charge under three years of age.

Bro. R. Hill (Mansfield) repeated the argument that the Order was asked if they wanted to keep The York and the answer was "Yes". An old Brother had told him that in 1928 the registration fee amounted to 1/80th of his income. Such a figure today would be around 75p. We seemed to be getting our Buffaloes on the cheap.

Bro. P. Hobson (Stafford) supported the Management proposition. He said in his opinion it was an attempt to use our assets to provide income for the Order and should be accepted. A little more communication between Management and the Lodges would have helped to save a lot of misunderstandings.

Bro. D. Baum (Leicestershire) wanted to know if the charges were to be for bed and breakfast or full board.

Bro. E. Langton said the terms were for full board.

Bro. F. T. Palmer (G.L.O. 1967) moved that the Motion be put to the vote.

Bro. G. V. Lee (Swansea) seconded. This was carried. On being put to the vote, the Management Committee Motion as amended, was carried.

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## **Weston Super Mare 4th March 1978**

### **YORK CONVALESCENT HOME**

Grand Lodge Management Committee have to advise that following a report on the efficiency of the Central Heating system it was decided to seek tenders for the conversion of the boilers from oil to gas fired or alternatively the installation of one new gas fired boiler to replace the existing two oil fired boilers.

The tenders when received included a report on so many defects in the fabric of the property it was decided to obtain a full and comprehensive Civil Engineers Report on the complete heating system and the building generally indicating work requiring immediate attention and an estimate of the repairs which will be required over the next five years.

Advance notice of the content of the report indicates considerable expenditure in the immediate and not too distant future.

Bro. G. J. S. Reeve (North Kent) asked for some guide lines as to what the actual expenditure would be.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Management) said contact had been made with a firm in Weston-super-Mare who were specialists in central heating. Their report gave a conclusion that the heating at The York was in a bad state of repair.

The facts were that a budget figure of £5,500 had been given for certain work to be carried out and a further £5,800 could be anticipated for additional extra work. Even this did not allow for another £4,600 being required to ensure a complete overhaul. These figures were alarming to the Committee, for the work itself would indicate the necessity for further expenditure for damage to the fabric during the work of renovation. The Committee asked for a full survey to be made by a local surveyor and his report covered some 16 pages which was now the subject of the Committee's main study. Bro. Harrod quoted some details of the immediate requirements indicated and these showed a very costly exercise during the next five years. Further investigations were proceeding which would cover the next 15 years. Bro. Harrod then read a letter from the surveyor which gave a figure of expenditure of £45,000 to £55,000 to cover immediate requirements, and these were only approximations. Provinces would be circulated in the near future and a decision was not being asked for at this meeting.

Bro. A. E. Simmons (Grand Primo 1966) asked if the Provinces would be prepared to spend the vast sums required to carry out the work on property which would not realise any such sum if sold on the open market. The opinion of Provinces should certainly be sought.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) wondered what figure would be quoted if such a survey was carried out on Grove House. The Grand Primo refused to allow further discussion on this point.

Two questions were asked by Bro. P. J. Whittall (S.W. Gloucester) were answered by Bro. J. W. Harrod, whilst the Grand Treasurer thought the present was not the opportune time to take the discussion further. Any full debate should be deferred until such time as the Provinces had been circulated with the full facts. Bros. C. Keyes (G.L.O. 1974) and Bro. G. Jones (Wrekin)

both supported this point of view whilst Bro. Harrod was of opinion that any report issued should give the details of the surveyor's report.

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### **Weston Super Mare 3rd June 1978**

#### **(b) RULE 154 (f) RECOMMENDATION**

Bro. A. E. Simmons (Grand Primo 1966) said that in view of the serious implications of the forthcoming debate in reference to The York, he wished to propose the suspension of Standing Orders in order that the subject may be fully discussed.

Bro. G. R. Arnold (Grand Primo 1974) formally seconded.

Grand Lodge agreed that the Standing Orders be suspended.

Grand Lodge Management Committee would refer to the Civil Engineers Report on the conditions of the York an edited version of which was circulated to all P.G. Lodges and list below the 57 items indicating by the report, requiring attention during the five and ten year period outlined in the report in the order of priority, as suggested by the Consultant Engineer.

Bearing in mind the figures quoted by our Consultant of the costs of these repairs at between £45-55,000, an estimate based of course on today's prices which could increase substantially over the years, the authority of Grand Lodge is sought by Grand Lodge Management Committee to proceed with the items in the order of priority as decided by them and recommend accordingly.

Bro. J. Askey (Management) proposed acceptance of the recommendation made by the Management Committee under the terms of Rule 154(f) in relation to The York. He said that what appeared on the agenda was exactly what Grand Lodge had asked for over the long term. Firstly we should cast our minds back to the first time the Committee were asked to produce a holiday scheme to operate at The York, when all the usual investigations into the possibilities took place. It should be remembered that Grand Lodge has now a nine man Management Committee and not the three man Executive which operated at that time. With this increase in numbers, it must be accepted that with nine voices to be heard instead of three, discussion time had also

increased, but all were agreed that, having been given a job to do by Grand Lodge they had to do it. Their instructions were to provide a scheme which would partly consider the needs of convalescent patients and the other part the provision of a holiday project. The differences in the two parts had to be figured out, not an easy task. They started back in the days when the Home was first bought and from there studied the amount of money it had already cost in the way of repairs and renewals. It should be taken into account that not one of the members of the present Committee were also there in those days, so there was no long term experience available. All kinds of suggestions were made and many expressions of opinion given. Eventually it was decided to get down to brass tacks and the result was that expert advice was asked for and the report as circulated was obtained. All Provincial Grand Lodges had received a copy of about nine pages but the Committee had to tackle one of twenty-nine pages. Imagine what had to be done, but it was done and the most valuable information was retained.

No question of selling the Home has ever arisen, the discussions have all been centred around the two things that had been asked for by Grand Lodge. The truth has been told and it was now in the hands of Grand Lodge itself to decide what the final answer is to be. Is the money going to be spent or if not, what is to be the alternative.

Bro. J. N. Crump (Management) formally seconded the acceptance.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS IN ORDER OF PRIORITY**

1. Replace all wastes, traps, complete and replace basins, W.C. and baths, where broken.
2. Re-design fire precautions up to present day standards.
3. Re-wire electrical installations.
4. Replace hot and cold water supply pipes.
5. Balcony — to ascertain cause of damp penetration, possibly roof covering replaced but junctions to be repaired and rainwater disposal to be re-designed.
6. Strip, re-felt, batten and re-slate roof over basement areas and staff bathroom.

7. Replace parapet gutters on north side and re-design outlets so that secret gutters are excluded.
8. Strip west end section of main roof, re-felt, batten and re-slate, including recovering copper covered dormers.
9. Replace bolts to rafters in roof space.
10. Replace flat roof covering and renew glazed roof over main entrance.
11. Replace roof covering over still room including investigating condition of roof deck under.
12. Attend to rising damp in walls including investigation to ascertain if caused by broken water pipes. Installation of injection system of damp-proof course and replacing of plaster and skirtings and lower external levels.
13. Re-design outlet for rainwater pipes. Replace rusty eaves gutters with plastic.
14. Investigate drainage system, apply water tests, ensure that drain directs storm water away from building, unclog gullies where full.
15. Repair or renew asphalt covering to bay window, form sound junctions and re-design rainwater disposal.
16. Investigate movement in beam over still room.
17. Provide and fix tell tales to west elevation to ascertain if movement to wall has been arrested.
18. Replace junction to roof over dining room annexe.
19. Re-design urinal and check whether leaking to floor below.
20. Investigate beams over area where dampness found under footpath.
21. Investigate damp penetration.
22. Replace rusting metal windows.
23. Investigate hollow timber floors in basement and possibly replace with solid floor and waterproof membrane.
24. Replace timber windows in basement which are decayed.
25. Obtain engineers report on all lifts.
26. Replace decayed skylights and reglaze with wired glass.
27. Check on timber lintels whether decayed.
28. Introduce ventilation to area under pavement and attend to damp penetration.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE NEXT TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS IN ORDER OF PRIORITY**

1. Check on leaking soil and vent pipes.
2. Additional ventilation to underside of staircase.
3. Treat furniture beetle where seen in doors.
4. Re-design garage floor to prevent water entering garage.
5. Repair asbestos sheets over rear entrance and possibly increase insulation by introduction of insulation and lining sheets.
6. Re-cover slate roof on south slope which is in poor condition.
7. Re-design roof adjacent to rear entrance.
8. Rebuild stone chimney, remove rusting brackets. Re-render chimney or if redundant remove.
9. Replace decayed floor boards and screw down boards.
10. Replace cracked plaster to soffit of staircase.
11. Re-design ventilation to interior bathrooms 8 and 11 so that steam is extracted to exterior.
12. Introduce more warmth and ventilation to those areas affected with condensation.
13. Overcome damp penetration to side and under windows.
14. Investigate why aluminium windows are discoloured, check on anodising.
15. Minor repairs to aluminium windows.
16. Repair terrazzo steps.
17. Repair and re-decorate ceilings on upper floor under balcony and bay roofs when roof repaired.
18. Repair and re-decorate all external doors.
19. Repair interior doors.
20. Re-decorate timber surrounds to window.
21. Line exterior walls where damp penetration, repoint and repaint exterior stonework.
22. Replace wall tiles in bathroom or preferably line walls.
23. Repair damaged stone, replace loose stones, repoint and repaint all exterior surfaces previously painted.

24. Refix loose handrails and "Lead in" balusters which are rusting.
25. Replace roof over external W.C. south of staff bathroom 3.
26. Replace roof over Store room.
27. Replace cracked tiles to fireplace if retained — introduce ventilators in chimneys where fireplaces blocked.
28. Repair gate, stone pier and gates.
29. Repair and repaint metal railing.

Bro. R. C. Killock (Kings Lynn) said his Province had studied the report with some alarm with the advanced state of dampness described therein. In its present state, was it the right sort of place to send people to recover from illness or even to take a holiday. It seemed to indicate that the drainage system was in a sorry state. He continued to criticise the maintenance and felt there had been some neglect.

The Grand Primo requested that Bro. Killock should not dwell on the past, but to confine himself to the future, and if their Province was in favour of the report.

Bro. Killock gave no audible answer.

Bro. A. R. Greet (West Cornwall) said his Province was not only disappointed but also disillusioned. What he would like to know is some detail about the cost of the necessary repair work. He also believed that finalisation was taking too long and should be speeded up to attempt to avoid further delays and subsequent increase in costs. In spite of these thoughts, he felt the recommendation should be supported.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) said not so long ago two very vital decisions were made in Grand Lodge and we have to accept them as our decisions. We are now called upon to support our own actions, and also look back over the years to understand the battles our predecessors probably had to bring all this about in the first place, and whether we still live with the charitable principles on which we were founded. We must try to stand by our convictions and to find means to pay for the decisions we make. It would be Convention Year in 1979 and he thought it certain that there would be many ideas for the upkeep of our

charitable instincts brought forward. He asked Grand Lodge to support the recommendations now before us as an incentive to the future.

Bro. A. D. Stone (Bath) said that the main question arising was to ask ourselves if we were prepared to pay for the long list of necessary repairs as indicated during the next few years. If the answer is yes, then later we shall have to ask if we can afford to keep up with the payments required.

It had been suggested that if such action was not forthcoming, then perhaps we should decide to sell the property. If the answer is no, then it is possible that such a course of action would be forced upon us. Either a "Yes" or "No" decision taken today would bring trouble either way. It may be possible to reduce the estimate of costs by paring away some of the minor requirements or it may be that some cheaper contract price could be obtained. He was in the position of being able to offer to Grand Lodge the services of a chartered engineer who is with a Swiss-American firm of Consultants (who have been responsible for major projects in many parts of the world) and he is prepared to produce a complete report in detail and this would be done absolutely and unreservedly free of all charge. At this moment the weight of argument would appear to be against the retention of The York, so he thought this was not the opportune time to make an irrevocable decision. He therefore proposed the deferment of the debate until a more realistic appraisal of our commitments can be produced.

Bro. S. Smith (London Central) said this was another blatant example of Grand Lodge getting the cart before the horse. It was decided two years ago that The York should be retained and later a holiday scheme was introduced. At the last meeting of Grand Lodge it was again decided that The York should be kept as some form of Holiday Home. All this should have been done two years ago when perhaps it could have placed a completely different approach to the present position. A number of the repairs as now listed should have been done under any general maintenance scheme.

Bro. J. Young (Salisbury) said the estimate of costs as published were not acceptable. These figures spread over 15 years could possibly be in excess of £100,000. The recommendation appeared to be a request for the Management Committee to spend an

unlimited amount of money over a long period and at their own discretion. He quoted comparative figures of upkeep of Grove House and The York which were in favour of the latter named. Salisbury were desirous that The York should be retained and believed that the whole of the necessary repairs should be carried out at once, even if it meant the temporary transfer of some of the amenities. Payment for this work should not be a problem, for a very small amount placed on registrations would easily provide the answer.

Bro. A. E. Simmons (Grand Primo 1966) thought Grand Lodge were being pressurised into making a quick decision. He believed it needed further consideration and therefore seconded the deferment.

On being put to the vote, the deferment of the recommendation was declared to be carried.

Bro. J. Hughes (South-East Essex) said that two Lodges of his Province had organised a Cabaret Night, the proceeds of this being £250. He had pleasure in handing in a cheque for this amount as a donation to The York to assist in its repair work.

Because of the deferment, the same item in its exact form was again discussed at the next meeting of Grand Lodge. In the interests of brevity I have omitted the listings and only added the debated points as follows:

### **Weston Super Mare 2nd September 1978**

Bro. J. Askey (Management) said that his words at the June meeting could be summed up in a nutshell. The floor of Grand Lodge had requested some new scheme for The York and the Management Committee came up with one, that being the Holiday Scheme.

*(An interruption, no number being given, that the matter now under discussion, should be in reference to a re-appraisal and if no such re-appraisal was forthcoming, the matter should be deferred once again).*

Bro. Askey went on to say that a more realistic appraisal could not be given as the member who had made the suggestion had not submitted any further details so nothing further could be

done. They had been depending on the member from Bath to do this and he thought the Grand Primo had written to them asking for the name and address of the member who had made the offer.

*(Another interruption was made with a denial that any contact had been made).* The Grand Secretary then read the letter, but again it was denied that it had been received.

Statement and counter-statement brought no further material progress.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Grand Primo 1976) said a dangerous precedent was being created. If it was decided to proceed with the debate at this meeting and Grand Lodge did actually decide to defer the matter as agreed in the correction to the June Minutes then Grand Lodge stood in danger of losing its right to have a period of six months between debates. *(This brought about a situation almost impossible to report due to disagreement from the floor and the platform).*

Bro. D. Goodall (Dewsbury) said he wrote to the Grand Secretary in February offering his professional service and his letter was acknowledged with the information that it would be referred to the Management Committee. *(A further interruption occurred).* The speaker went on to add that he would not claim to be the only professional man present who could assist and if the knowledge in regard to the number of bedrooms etc had been available to any such member, he could have supplied the answer to whether a sum of £45,000 to £55,000 was any thing like realistic. He thought it to be rather high and agreed with all those whose opinion it was that there should be a re-appraisal.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Grand Primo 1976) asked if the wording of the proposal put forward and carried at the June meeting could be confirmed by the platform.

He then read from the speaker's papers "I beg to move the deferment of a decision until a more realistic appraisal of our commitments can be produced".

The Grand Primo replied that this was correct.

Bro. J Askey (Management) said the final word was approved and not "produced".

The Grand Primo then asked Bro. Goodall when he would be available to discuss the matter with the Grand Secretary.

Bro. Goodall said "Immediately after this meeting".

The Grand Primo said this could be arranged.

Other speakers taking part included Bros. J. F. Robinson (Pontypridd), W. Pilkington (Management), A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer), W. Evans (Wallasey), K. Bennett (Hitchin).

The ultimate decision was reached when the Grand Primo announced that the Report would appear in the agenda papers for the December Grand Lodge meeting.

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## **Weston Super Mare 2nd September 1978**

### **SOUTH EAST ESSEX & WINCHESTER PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGES**

"That a fund be set up and should be known as the 'York' Repair Fund".

Bro. J. Hughes (South East Essex) proposed the Motion. He said that some time ago there was a movement on foot to close the York, but Grand Lodge decided against it. The time has now arrived when we should make sure that this does not occur again, by making certain that the building is always in a proper state of repair and fit for any use we may care to put it to. Whilst he knew we had a Jubilee Fund to be used for Convalescent Homes purposes, it was a fund that could be used for any other purpose. He felt there should be a fund completely reserved for repairs to The York.

Bro. E. W. Woodfield (Winchester) said Grand Lodge had raised money in the past for various purposes, annually for an outside project, for floods as they occurred, for lifeboats, fires and many other purposes. Now he thought we should consider ourselves and support this Motion. He had pleasure in seconding.

Bro. S. Smith (London Central) said there was one more Fund. It was possible to go to the well too often and it was bound to dry up sometime.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer) thought it to be wrong to be discussing a York Repair fund when the whole future of the Home was still in the melting pot.

Bro. W. Evans (Wallasey) was in favour of the Motion. To keep The York open we needed the money and he felt the only thing to be decided was how to obtain it.

Bro. F. Deacon (Mid-Sussex) thought the Fund was not needed. The Jubilee Fund was available for any convalescent purpose.

Bro. J. Askey (Management) also thought the Jubilee Fund covered both Homes and any decision affecting The York only should be taken after the December decision on the future.

The Proposer briefly replied and on being put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be lost.

At this point Bro. E. Langton (Management) announced that the Jubilee Fund at the moment stood at £24,330.

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## **BRADFORD PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE**

“That a scheme be prepared by the Management Committee to replace the discontinued Schedule “E” holidays, to be administered by Provincial Grand Lodges, from an annually approved sum of money from Grand Lodge Funds”.

Bro. G. H. Tinnion (Bradford) formally proposed the Motion.

Bro. R. J. Armes (Grand Primo 1967) said this Motion if carried would put into practice a resolution carried at the September 1976 Grand Lodge. (*This motion was referred to Grand Lodge by the 1976 Convention*). He thought the results desired could best be achieved by the allocation of an amount of money by Grand Lodge (to be reviewed annually). P.G.L.’s could then advise their Minor Lodges of the amount available. The recipients would arrange their own holidays within a framework of simple rules that would conform with the Charities Acts. P.G.L.’s and Minor Lodges should also contribute to the cost, and this would provide a needed alternative to the old “Schedule ‘E’ System”. He also read a number of rules to cover the scheme.

Bro. T. E. Edwards (Nuneaton) was against the Motion. It would cause long and needless delays in administration, be a headache in P.G.L.’s and cost a lot of money.

Bro. R. C. Killock (Kings Lynn) was also in opposition and thought no time should be wasted on it.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer) did not like the idea of P.G.L.'s being involved. If there was to be any such scheme it should be administered by Grand Lodge. He could also foresee jealousies between Provinces arising from the allocation of monies. The scheme was good in principle but was not a practical proposition.

Bro. W. Pilkington (Management) said they were totally opposed to the Motion. He agreed that it was a competent Motion but it was not practical from many aspects.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be lost.

\* \* \*

## **Weston Super Mare 2nd December 1978**

### **MINUTES**

Acceptance of the Minutes (as per printed copy) of the Grand Lodge Meeting held in the Winter Gardens Pavilion, Weston-super-Mare, on Saturday, 2nd September 1978 was proposed by Bro. A. J. Hunt (Grand Primo 1973) and seconded by Bro. G. R. Baker (Exeter) and carried as amended.

Bro. W. Askin (Leeds) drew attention to the recommendation under Rule 154(f) on page 7, concerning the decision made in regard to The York Convalescent Home, wherein it is stated "After considerable discussion, Grand Lodge decided to defer a decision until the December meeting of Grand Lodge". No mention of this appeared on the present agenda and he desired to be informed of the present position.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Grand Primo 1976) also said that in his opinion that decision taken in September should have brought some response.

Bro. D. Goodall (Dewsbury) gave budget details for the work considered necessary for the Second Survey as follows:

The York Convalescent Home

Budget for the work considered necessary by Second Survey

- |     |   |       |
|-----|---|-------|
| (I) | Fire Precautions and Electrical .. ..           | 5,000 |
|     | Install Emergency Lighting. Rewire both         |       |
|     | Stairwells to link all switches. Install 13 amp |       |



	Ring Mains and commence the work of repositioning pull switches and fitting safe shaver outlets.							
(2)	Passenger Lift	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,600
	Major overhaul by Lift Engineers and replacing obsolete switches.							
(3)	Heating	..	..	..	..	..	..	4,000
(4)	Plumbing	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,000
	Commence programme of service to make good poor work, clear overflows, remove urinal drain from ceiling level in the kitchen and redirect overflows from over outbuilding roofs.							
(5)	Drainage	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,400
	Clear all drains some at the expense of previous contractors and start dye tests to check basement problems.							
(6)	Scaffolding	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,500
(7)	Roof	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,500
(8)	External Painting	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,000
(9)	General Repairs and redecorating	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,000
	Total							£25,000

He was of opinion that this work should be proceeded with without much further delay. Mention was also made of certain members from the Halifax area who would be prepared to carry out some work on an expenses only basis.

Bro. C. Keyes (G.L.O. 1974) felt that this figure could be trimmed considerably and was not in favour of accepting the present situation as it stood.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer) moved deferment to the March 1979 meeting and that following a report from the quantity surveyors, tenders be asked for to carry out the necessary work.

Bro. J. Askey (Management) speaking from the microphone, said that along with Bro. Langton, he had been to the offices of Coffin, Jones & Roden, the architects who had submitted the first report. He thought them to be a very efficient firm of repute and that their advice should be accepted. The Management

Committee had not been informed of the Halifax Brethren's offer, but in any case it would bring about complications such as insurance cover, etc. If the business was allowed to carry on it might never be done. One had to allow for the changes in Committee Constitution each year and that in itself would not add to continuity of opinion.

Bro. W. E. P. Dunn (G.L.O. 1971) said the position had not materially improved, we still did not know what was actually needed and he thought the full facts should be known before a decision is taken.

Bro. R. J. Armes (Grand Primo 1967) wanted to know why the matter was not on the agenda. The Grand Lodge decision from September could not be removed so he would second the deferment moved by Bro. Whitcher.

The Grand Secretary intervened to say that the report by Bro. Goodall had not been received until the day prior to the Management Committee meeting and a similar meeting had taken place during the current week.

Bro. J. Young (Salisbury) thought the arguments for and against had gone on long enough and we should now get on with the job. This was supported by Bros. V. J. Clarke (Walsall) and A. R. Greet (West Cornwall).

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer) stood by his amendment and believed we should have all the facts available.

At this point, the Grand Primo put the amendment to the vote and declared it to be lost. He then put as a substantive Motion the confirmation of the Minute as printed and this was carried. This, in effect, means that the Management Committee are now authorised to proceed with the work.

### **Continuing with the same agenda**

Acceptance of the Management Committee Report (b) Benevolent Section was proposed by Bro. W. Pilkinton and seconded by Bro. A. E. Beesley, both members of the Committee.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Grand Primo 1976) referred to Item No. (iv) Holiday Scheme and in particular to the word "people" in the second line. Within the Order we have always used the word "Brother" or their "Dependants". The word "people" arose because of the original Resolution carried in the December 1977 Grand

Lodge meeting to accept a Holiday Scheme. At that time he personally had considered the proposal endangered our charitable status. The original Motion was drafted by Counsel, and said that in the implementation for such a Holiday Scheme it would be necessary to adopt a Resolution to use The York for that purpose. That step was taken in actual fact in two stages (a) to ensure that it would remain a Convalescent Home to provide for the needs of members, for their wives, and for widows who were in need. (b) It could then be taken a step further by providing a holiday centre for those who were in need of a change of air. Then there was a third step (c) and that was to provide accommodation for fee paying holiday facilities at times when the home was not required under (a) or (b).

We have now reached a point when a report is before us in diametric opposition to Counsel's recommendation without recourse to part (b) of that report. He asked that this Report be referred back with the following specific questions and then re-submitted to the March 1979 meeting. The questions are (1) Are all the "people" referred to in the Report members of the Order or their immediate kin (wife with own child). (2) Was it a requirement of the law that hotel facilities should be open to non-members. (3) Did Counsel suggest any proportion to meet the requirement of the charity law. (4) Are the Management Committee to produce a project to implement Stage 1 of the December 1977 Resolution taken in Grand Lodge to provide for those in need of a change of air. (5) Having implemented Stage 2 before Stage 1 had been authorised or implemented by Grand Lodge, will the Committee give a categoric assurance that we are not in breach of our Charitable Trust Deed. (6) Now that The York is admitting fee paying guests does it have any effect on the rates assessment and must we go to litigation if we are re-assessed? In the question of fire assessment did we come under Convalescent Homes or Hotel Regulations and if the latter at what extra cost? Finally, has the Scheme Grand Lodge agreed to been submitted for legal advice and what was their interpretation of Counsel's opinion. The questions have now been asked and they must be answered.

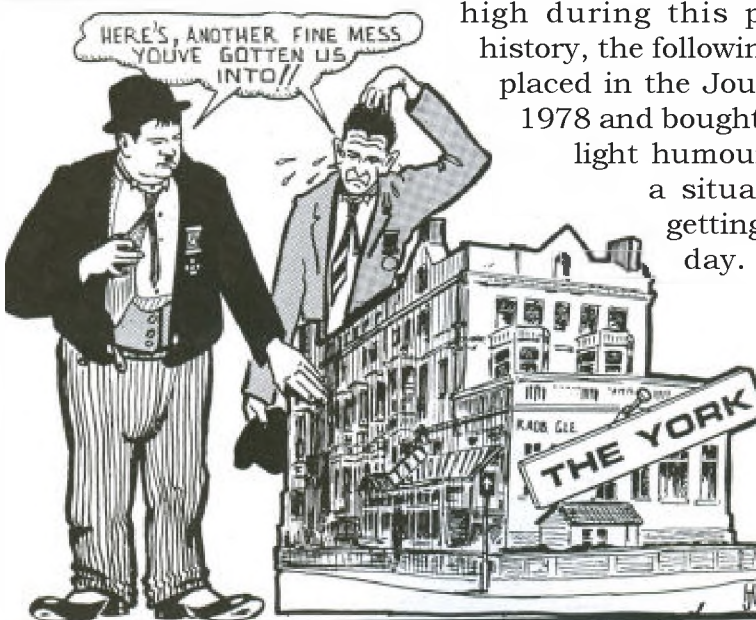
He was aware that he could not expect immediate answers, but he did expect them as soon as possible, for if we are in breach

of our Charitable Trust Deed, then we would overnight become a Friendly Society. It would immediately result in the fact that we would no longer be able to put this question to a prospective initiate "Do you understand that membership confers upon you no right except the right to give?" Without that question, Buffaloism would be quite different. At all costs we must fight to preserve our Charitable Trust Deed. Bro. Harrod then proposed the reference back of Part (iv) of the Benevolent Report.

Bro. A. Jenkins (Rhondda Valley) seconded the reference back.

The Grand Secretary said he could give an assurance that everyone listed under the terms of Part (iv) of the Report were either members or their dependants. On being put to the vote, the reference back was declared to be carried. The whole of the Benevolent Report was then carried as amended.

\* \* \*



Feelings were indeed running very high during this period in our history, the following cartoon was placed in the Journal of Winter 1978 and brought much needed light humour and relief to a situation that was getting worse by the day.

\* \* \*

## Manchester 3rd March 1979

### ITEM REFERRED BACK FROM DECEMBER 1978 AGENDA

During the Quarter ending 30th September 1978. the following members and/or dependants have been admitted to the York as fee paying guests under the holiday scheme:—

Adults accompanying Spouse on Convalescent							
Treatment .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	28
(Plus children at half price)..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Single Adults .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Married Couples .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	17
Children .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	1

The Grand Primo said that the change of order had been done deliberately so that Item (vi) could be done immediately, as by invitation of the Management Committee, the Grand Lodge Solicitor. Mr. Marsham, who also had other business in the city, was present. This item had been referred back from the December 1978 meeting and Bro. J. W. Harrod (Grand Primo 1976) had raised a number of items at this meeting.

Bro. Harrod then asked if answers could be given to the questions he had then asked.

The Grand Secretary said he could give the short answers to the questions.

- (1) Are all the “people” referred to in the Report members of the Order or their immediate kin (wife with own child)?  
*He had already given an assurance at the last meeting that they were.*
- (2) Was it a requirement of the law that hotel facilities should be open to non-members?  
*The Order was not informed that it was a requirement of law but it was suggested by Counsel that such a move might be to our advantage.*
- (3) Did Counsel suggest any proportion to meet the requirement of the charity law?  
*The short answer was “No”.*

- (4) Are the Management Committee to produce a project to implement Stage 1 of the December 1977 Resolution taken in Grand Lodge to provide for those in need of a change of air?

*The short answer is "No". The Committee are of opinion that the Grand Lodge decision on the change of use of The York taken at the March 1978 meeting covers the requirements.*

- (5) Having implemented Stage 2 before Stage 1 had been authorised or implemented by Grand Lodge, will the Committee give a categoric assurance that we are not in breach of our Charitable Trust Deed?

*The answer is that we are not in breach of our charitable trust.*

- (6) Now that The York is admitting fee paying guests does it have any effect on the Rates and must we go to litigation if we are re-assessed?

In the question of fire assessment did we come under Convalescent Homes or Hotel Regulations and if the latter at what extra cost?

*The answer to the first part is "None" and to the second "We are registered as a Private Convalescent Home".*

- (7) Has the Scheme Grand Lodge agreed to been submitted for legal advice and what was their interpretation of Counsel's opinion?

*The answer was "No" because the Scheme was well within the terms of reference and the opinion given by Queen's Counsel.*

The Grand Secretary concluded by saying Mr. Marsham would be prepared to amplify on the answers he had given.

Mr. Marsham (Grand Lodge Solicitor) said he would take the last point first. Counsel had considered the Scheme very carefully and he was now in a position to say that the Scheme was perfectly in order and well within the provisions and the powers of the Trust Deed. The Convalescent Home was one of the assets under the Charitable Trust Deed and therefore we get tax exemption because it is a charity. We must not lose sight of the charitable element being maintained at all times. Counsel advised that so long as we do take in a certain number of those who cannot otherwise afford to enjoy these facilities, then it is perfectly in order to take in fee paying guests because they are merely ancillary to the main charitable purpose. This did not mean that

there must be more of those who could not afford to pay the fees but so long as we have some who are within the charitable purpose, we are perfectly entitled to take others to fill up any vacancies with others who do pay.

The second point in regard to rating, there was the possibility that the Authority may require a wider range of charitable purpose than when limited to just members of the Order. One essential in regard to general charities is that they may be required to be open to the general public and not to a limited section. There was a technical point, but if it were ever taken up by the Rating Authority it might be that it would have to consider whether we could admit people who are not members of the Order. His own point of view was that we should not trouble about the position until it arose. He believed our Charitable Trust was a wonderful tribute to the Order in that such immense resources have been amassed for charitable purposes. He was prepared to answer any questions which may be put by the members.

Bro. J. W. Harrod thanked Mr. Marsham for his presence and for his obvious interest in our charitable work. He was still concerned in reference to a paragraph which read "to use and to occupy such part or parts of the whole of the same as shall not be required in the discretion of the Trustees for the above mentioned purpose, as a Holiday centre for Brethren and necessitous widows as aforesaid in need of a change of air". This is where the crux of the problem lies and the point is "Has the Order complied with this as a pre-requisite in implementing the Scheme we are now operating"? There was nothing in our Schemes to cover those who are in need of a change of air. He asked Mr. Marsham if he was satisfied that the situation is covered by Counsel's opinion.

Mr. Marsham said that so long as the Home was being used for some ancillary purpose we would be covered.

Bro. Harrod said his argument was the fact that Grand Lodge had given no authority to admit such cases, therefore the Management Committee were in no position to argue their right to do so.

Mr. Marsham replied that it was a draft resolution of Grand Lodge which was the basis of Counsel's opinion. The discretion was in the hands of the Trustees and the Management. The day to day running of the Home is in the hands of the Management and they had no need to refer every small matter to Grand Lodge for a decision.

Bro. Harrod still insisted that whilst authority had been given by Grand Lodge to admit fee paying guests, no such authority had been given to admit those in need of a change of air.

Mr. Marsham re-iterated his previous statements and Bro. Harrod indicated that to a certain extent he was satisfied that the discussion had somewhat cleared the air and then made no further observations.

Mr. Marsham finally said that the Grand Secretary was in regular contact with him and apart from the written opinions of Counsel every action necessary is taken to implement those opinions as quickly as possible.

Bro. J. H. Mumford (Grand Trustee) said they had been responsible for Counsel's opinions being sought and were satisfied with the results, but in view of the present debate he would assure Grand Lodge that any further developments would be reported to Grand Lodge at the earliest possible moment.

Bro. J. H. Duggan (Grand Trustee) asked that a verbatim report of the debate be prepared for the use of the Trustees.

Bro. F. T. Palmer (G.L.O. 1967) said he had been interested in the debate just concluded and wondered if it would have any bearing on the West Herts position in regard to their long standing resolution.

The Grand Primo answered that he understood the West Herts letter had not been received by the Grand Secretary, but through correspondence, steps would be taken to have the matter cleared up.

Bro. J. Layland (St. Helens) asked if it could be made clear that fee paying guests would not receive preference over ordinary convalescent patients.

The Grand Primo made it quite clear that at no time would any fee payer receive preference.

Bro. E. H. Steward (G.L.O. 1968) asked if the points put before the meeting by the Grand Lodge Solicitor could be incorporated in the Rule Book so that the information would be available at all times.

The Grand Primo said the situation would be reviewed.

Bro. D. Goodall (Dewsbury) said he had been responsible for the second survey on The York. He raised points in connection with the Fire Precautions and said that his enquiries had led



him to believe that in view of the "fee paying guests" a higher requirement standard could be made. He had also been informed that the Woodspring authorities had made no inspection at The York for the past three years.

The Grand Primo replied that the statement was just not true.

Bro. W. J. Dixon (North Devon) said that our Fire precautions should be examined very carefully for if they were not up to the required standard we could at some future time find that any neglect could be very expensive.

Bro. P. Whittall (S.W. Gloucester) was concerned that it may be possible that due to extra convalescent patients requiring space in The York it may lead to the contractual fee paying bookings being broken in certain cases.

The Grand Primo said that steps had been taken to see that such a position will not occur.

On being put to the vote, the Benevolent Report was declared to be carried.

\* \* \*

## **Scarborough 28th May 1979**

### **YORK CONVALESCENT HOME**

The Management Committee have to report that in accordance with the instructions given at the December 1978 meeting of Grand Lodge at Weston-Super-Mare to proceed with the repairs necessary at the York Convalescent Home, that they have received from the Architects the initial sketch schemes for the work involved which includes the replacement of the passenger lift. The architect has indicated that the cost of the work is likely to be £160,000. (One hundred and sixty thousand pounds) plus the cost of internal redecoration where required on completion of the work.

The Committee has given instructions for the next stage of the planning to proceed. Detailed estimates of the costs will be available in Mid August 1979 and will be circulated to all P.G.L.'s to enable a decision to be taken at the September 1979 meeting of Grand Lodge.

Copies of the Architects drawings will be on display in the entrance to the Futurist Theatre prior to Grand Lodge.

The Grand Trustees made the following statement:

Bro. J. H. Mumford (Grand Lodge Trustee) together with the Management Committee, discussed and examined at length the Schedule of Works and its probable cost with the renovating and restoring The York, and after careful consideration of the matter, we feel that we are not prepared to commit Grand Lodge and the Order to an expense of this nature on a property such as The York. As The Trustees responsible to you in such matters, we have requested the Management Committee not to proceed any further in this respect, a decision with which they are in total agreement with us.

We have now had the matter before Grand Lodge on a number of occasions and have been given various opinions as to the cost of the work in question, but since the Management Committee have obtained from the Architects a Schedule of Works indicating a probable cost in the region of £160,000 added to which will be the cost of a complete re-decoration, plus possible additional costs if and when extra fire precautions are forced upon us, especially as we now are taking in paying guests in addition to our own convalescent patients. The costs will go up and up, so much so that it is a matter of concern to Bro. Joe Duggan and myself as your Trustees, and we wish to submit this short statement to you in the way we have dealt with it. We therefore propose its acceptance by Grand Lodge in session.

Bro. Joe Duggan (Grand Trustee) seconded the proposal.

Bro. W. F. P. Dunn (G.L.O. 1971) said he heartily welcomed and applauded this statement. Now it appeared that we were getting some sense.

Bro. A. E. Whitcher (Grand Treasurer) said that he was at the meeting when the matter was discussed and he fully concurred with the statement made. He believed it to be "a stay of execution" which is in the hands of the Trustees.

On being put to the vote, the recommendation that any action at The York should be stopped was declared to be carried.

\* \* \*

**Manchester 1st September 1979**

**NOTICES OF MOTION  
DONCASTER AND DISTRICT PROVINCIAL.  
GRAND LODGE**

“In view of the cost of renewals and repairs required at the ‘York’ Convalescent Home. Weston-Super-Mare and the considered lack of use of that establishment for convalescent cases, it is proposed that the Grand Lodge Management Committee be instructed to obtain contracts from Convalescent Homes belonging to other organisation (these being on a regional basis) and on completion of these contracts to the satisfaction of the members of Grand Lodge to place the ‘York’ for sale”.

Bro. D. Wilcock (Doncaster) said that we were in the position of being a business that should pay its way and what they desired was to put the Convalescent Section of the Order on a business footing. We were told last year that the cost of repairs to The York would be between £45,000 and £50,000. By this year the estimated cost was in the region of £160,000 plus the cost of re-decorating, this meaning an increase of 300% in twelve months. We should be grateful to the Grand Lodge Trustees for putting a stop to this work and giving us a chance to re-examine the position. The Grand Lodge Auditor said that the average cost of providing for the Convalescent patients was around £130 per person, but the cost of placing them in other Homes not belonging to the G.L.E. could be in the region of £55, and he wondered how much longer we could afford to carry on in this manner. Perhaps contracts could be obtained on a regional basis, which would reduce travelling costs. This would help to use some of the 65% of convalescent costs in other fields of our benevolent activities. The Permanent Residents at The York could be transferred to Grove House, thus making The York obsolete and allowing it to be put up for sale. Whatever might be thought about this does not alter the fact that we would only be losing a luxury that we cannot afford in these days of inflation. To his mind there was no justification for this and he felt that we should not carry on the present pathway any longer. He proposed the acceptance of the Motion.

Bro. J. L. George (Doncaster) formally seconded.

Bro. G. V. Lee (Swansea) asked if Rule 135 was being broken in this case as in his opinion any matter dealing with The York was a decided question.

The Grand Primo said that was an entirely different matter to the one now before the meeting.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Grand Primo 1976) agreed that the decision taken at the last meeting does in fact invalidate the present discussion for a further six months, but he would go further and challenge the competency not only of Item 12 but also the Items which follow. Dealing only with Motion No. 12, if this should be carried, it would be beyond the power of Grand Lodge to implement without the authority of Convention and without an alteration to Convalescent Rule No. 1. He urged that the Motion be ruled non-competent.

The Grand Primo said that we are already admitting our own members to Homes not owned by the G.L.E. and declared that the meeting would proceed with Item No. 12.

There were a number of speakers who desired to move a reference back or make certain representations which were not accepted by the Grand Primo.

Bro. K. J. Reardon (Western Germany No. 6) proposed the deferment of consideration of Motion No. 12.

Bro. H. A. Johnson (Kingston) seconded the deferment. The Grand Primo declared the result of the vote on a show of hands was so close he intended to take a paper ballot.

The result of the paper ballot was; to proceed 244 and to defer 319.

The Grand Primo thereupon declared that Motion No. 12 would be deferred for consideration at a subsequent meeting and in consequence Motions Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 20 would also be deferred. The delegates agreed that this would be accepted.

\* \* \*

## **WEST HERTFORDSHIRE PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE**

“Grand Lodge grant concessions to the aged members, widows and/or aged members and wives to participate in the holiday scheme at a reduced rate during off peak period (October—April)”.

Bro. J. W. Harrod (Grand Primo 1976) said that the present Trustees had discussed this Motion between themselves and are very concerned at the content of the Motion in relation to the Holiday Scheme.

After the Grand Primo requested that the Motion be proposed and seconded as a pre-requisite to the debate. Bro. Harrod asked the Grand Primo to rule the Motion as “Ultra Vires” that is “Against the Law”.

The Grand Primo commented that he would like some advance notice of this type of request in order that he could have the opportunity of giving some consideration to the matter. He then ruled that he would take the Motion and asked West Herts to proceed.

Bro. G. Smyth (West Herts) proposed the Motion as printed. He referred to a Motion submitted to the Grand Lodge meeting in Great Malvern in September 1976, a Motion which had been referred by Convention of that year. Bro. Bob Armes on behalf of the management, proposed that a new Scheme be provided for the aged and infirm to benefit from a Schedule “E” type holiday, and ultimately after debate was declared to be carried, but never implemented. True we now had a holiday scheme, but this does not take into account the meagre financial amount given to those living on State Pension. It may be that The York has not long to live but still in the off-peak periods there could be spare accommodation at Grove House which could be used for this purpose. The following guide-lines were suggested: (1) Minimum age 65 years and retired from all gainful employment; (2) a cost of £20 per head per two weeks stay; (3) travel warrant to be provided either by Grand Lodge or P.G.L.; (4) no further application to be considered for either two or three years interval; (5) normal rules for convalescence to apply including Standing Orders of the Home concerned. Whilst the term “infirm” is not used in the present Motion, it is in the original Motion of 1976. He asked the delegates to put into practice the principles that were supported so long ago.

Bro. E. W. Buckingham (G.L.O. 1966) said that in 1976 he had challenged the then Executive that they were not catering for the aged and Bro. O’Keefe also spoke on behalf of the infirm members. The reply was that it would be borne in mind but nothing had been done and this non-action indicated that something should now be done and this gave him pleasure to second the Motion.

Bro. J. H. Mumford (Grand Trustee) commented that the Trustees had previously taken Counsel's advice and this Motion appeared to him would lead to a dangerous contravention of that advice.

Bro. T. Purdy (Morpeth) asked for rejection on the legal aspect alone. Grand Lodge would be placed in great difficulty if the breaking of the law was a possibility.

The Grand Primo said he would now take the vote but would like to draw attention to the provisions of Rules 130(c) and 130(d).

On a show of hands, the Grand Primo said that undoubtedly there was a clear two-thirds majority, so he would not take a paper ballot and declared the Motion to be lost.

\* \* \*

**Manchester 1st December 1979**

### **REPAIRS AND RENEWALS - YORK CONVALESCENT HOME**

The committee gave consideration to a considerable number of repairs to the passenger lift at The York Convalescent Home and outstanding essential repairs necessary and are of the opinion that it would be wrong to continue spending monies for the repair of an obsolete lift which is likely to become increasingly more expensive to repair. The Committee has therefore approved the installation of a brand new modern passenger lift and its associated building work at a cost of some £30,000 (thirty thousand pounds).

The Committee has also given Consideration to the external redecoration to The York which cannot be delayed any further without detriment to the fabric of the building and has authorised the work to be placed in hand at a cost of some £9,500.

The Committee has also authorised the conversion of the hot water and central heating system from oil to gas and the replacement of the boiler house chimney.

The Committee has further authorised the replacement windows with aluminium frames at a cost of £3,927 in the Dining Room, Lounge, Served, Kitchen, Rest Room and Front Bedroom.

Bro. D. Goodall ( Dewsbury) asked how the figures given in the September forecast tied up with the figures given at this meeting.

The Grand Secretary answered that he had given figures in September taking into consideration the information that was available at that time. Later actions by the Committee made revision necessary. At best, the forecast could never be anticipated exactly as the full expenditure required had not been known at that time.

Bro. Goodall said that many delegates had been under the impression that figures would be obtained by the Management Committee and circulated to Provinces in time for discussion to allow this present meeting to come to a decision on the future of The York. He felt that Grand Lodge had been let down by the Management Committee.

The Grand Primo said the crux of the matter at the moment was that The York was in urgent need of repair work and this must be done as early as possible if the fabric of the building is to be maintained.

Bro. K. J. Reardon (W.G. No.6) formally moved the reference back of Item No. 2. Bro. A. J. Hunt (Grand Primo 1973) expressed the opinion that these expenditures on The York were suggested at a time when the Trustees had barred any such outlay until a decision on the future of the Home had been made. He personally thought it was time the whole matter was cleared up and the place disposed of.

Bro. J. G. Crehan (W.G. No. 6) seconded the reference back.

Bro. A. R. Greet (West Cornwall) said that to him it appeared to be odd that after 31 1/2 years of discussion, the whole subject was again to be the subject of another reference back.

Bro. E. Langton (Management) felt that the legal implications should be considered in any reference back. The Committee had responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 and were the people who had to carry the brunt of that responsibility. The penalties included heavy fines or even imprisonment and any reference back would prevent them from carrying out those responsibilities, and so far as he was personally concerned he would require an indemnity against prosecution under the Act. He gave figures of the amounts spent on The York since its purchase and compared them with the proposed present expenditure and inflation rates. It was very necessary at this time to ensure that the lift was made safe. He asked what was the use of electing a Management Committee and then taking every opportunity of making the position untenable for them.

He concluded by observing that his previous comments also applied to the re-decoration in order to prevent further deterioration of the fabric, the windows and the state of the heating boiler or other heating methods which may be decided.

Bro. A. R. Greet (West Cornwall) after reiterating some previous remarks, went on to say that for a considerable while now he understood that from the Queen's Jubilee Fund an amount of money had been amassed and this would go a long way to provide the necessary cash for this work to be done. He felt that a decision should be made at this meeting.

Bro. G. J. S. Reeve (North Kent) asked if the prices quoted were on a fixed price or on a fluctuating basis. (He was told "fixed price"). He was of opinion that the P.G.L.'s and Minor Lodges should have all the relevant information prior to the Grand Lodge meetings.

Bro. D. Wyburn (South Somerset) who gave a wrong number, asked questions which appeared to be lost in noise created at the time.

Bro. R. J. Armes (Management) said that no reference back meant that the Committee was now in a position to go ahead with the maintenance of The York with a view to its retention. It also meant that Grand Lodge would have to face the recurring problem of repairs and redecoration plus any necessary replacements or improvements. This is a fact of life and must be accepted.

Bro. F. Payne (Warwickshire) asked for an estimate of the cost of replacing the boiler or other heating requirements. (He was told that the cost would be around £5,000 plus V.A.T., a total of over £6,000).

Bro. B. Partridge (Canterbury) said that some time ago he suggested that the Committee should get on with the required work at that time but this was stopped by the Trustees. He would now like to reiterate those remarks and ask that the work should proceed.

The Grand Primo said he intended to take an unusual step and put Item No. 2 to a special vote in order that a specific decision should be reached. The vote was taken and Item No. 2 declared to be carried.



## **Wolverhampton 1st March 1980**

### **THE YORK CONVALESCENT HOME**

Consequent upon the decision of Grand lodge at the December 1979 Meeting to accept item 2 of Grand Lodge Management Committee General Report recommendation reference the York. and in view of the implications of the motions contained in this Grand Lodge Agenda. The Grand Lodge Management Committee request that Grand Lodge reaffirm the decision to retain the York.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (Bath) said that in view of the many motions on this Grand Lodge Agenda there were many questions requiring answering to clarify the position of the York. He wanted to know if a decision was taken to sell it, how much would it bring?, what would be done with the money so gained?, and what are the alternatives to the York for convalescence? He, himself had done a survey and could supply some of the answers. From asking amongst the local hoteliers the amount which could be expected from the sale would be in the region of £200,000; he hoped that if sold this amount would not go the way the proceeds from the sale of Claremont had gone. Finally from investigating other organisations convalescent homes, he had only found one which would match up to the standard we expected and this was in the North East. He said that in the York we had an asset which value could not be calculated in monetary terms and asked Grand Lodge to give the Management Committee the affirmation they requested.

Bro. A. F. Smith (Bath) also asked the Brethren to reaffirm the decision to retain the York saying that over the years it had been mismanaged. What we need now is a policy to make the York a paying proposition.

Bro. C. Mould (Kingston) asked whether the Grand Primo intended to take a separate vote on this item. The Grand Primo replied "No".

Bro. S. Smith (London Central), Bro. J. T. Weston (Warwickshire) also spoke in favour of keeping the York. Bro. E. Clowsley (Wolverhampton) asked that if this item was accepted then did it mean that Wolverhampton's motion later in the Agenda to sell the York would already have been dealt with? The Grand

Primo replied that if this item was accepted, then all the motions later in the Agenda to sell the York would have been covered by this decision. Bro. Clowsley then moved the rejection of Item 2 of the Management Committee Report. Bro. N. Hooker (Limassol, Cyprus) seconded the rejection of this item, saving it would give Grand Lodge an opportunity to vote separately on this. Bro A. E. Simmons (Grand Primo 1966) said that the Brethren in Scotland considered that we were throwing good money away in trying to patch a building which would be better sold and which was becoming a holiday home and not a convalescent home. Bro. A. Hunt (Grand Primo 1973) also asked Brethren to support the rejection of this item.

Bro. E. Langton (Management) said that the object of the Management Committee in placing this on the report was to clear the air. At the last Grand Lodge meeting they had been authorised to spend over £65,000 on repairs, and then at this meeting there were motions on the Agenda to sell the York. It was in March 1976 that the Management Committee came to Grand lodge with a motion to sell the York; after several references back, in September 1976 Grand Lodge decided it did not want to sell it. Since then we have spent 4 years and nine motions trying to decide what we want to do with it. The motion should read 'affirm', not 'reaffirm' the decision to retain the York. On being put to the vote, the motion to retain the York was carried.

\* \* \*

**Halifax 5th September 1992**

## **THE YORK CONVALESCENT HOME**

Grand Lodge Management Committee submit to Grand Lodge for consideration the following reports and quotations:

### **(a) External Facade**

Contractors have carried out a very careful examination of the facade which as you are no doubt aware, was built with bath stone, a very soft sandstone that can very quickly become decayed and crumble. Proof of this is at top floor level where the facade is

shaped to protect and mask end of pitched roof and finished off with bathstone copings. The total surface has been sealed with plastic paint and where it has cracked, water has entered and being trapped, has percolated through main wall. All the various ledges are an invitation to water where not properly pointed. The architraves forming protrusions around windows and other protrusions forming recessed panels, are, we feel, perfectly sound. There are numerous decorative mouldings and a major feature which would have been cut in the solid and which could not possibly contribute to the watering ingress. However, there are many places that would; bad joints in panels, reveals and mullions to windows and ledges and of course, the top copings. It would be impracticable and impossible to render the whole facade in cement and sand as was originally discussed. This we have now had confirmed by Architects. When the facade has been grit-blasted, it is panels and flat surfaces, heads and mullions that will require either facing up or pointing or both. Either way, until surface has been cleaned off, we won't know quite what to expect. Therefore, include a provisional sum to cover anything additional that might come to light. The high level large protruding ornamental cornice is visibly cracked in places and in case some of it should require renewing, therefore include a further provisional sum for this item.

### **Schedule of Work**

Off flat roof, erect independent tubular scaffolding to roof level with protective mesh and screens, to comply with Health and Safety Regulations. Protect paving slabs on flat roof from damage. Grit-blast the whole of the facade from roof level down to flat roof over lounge and dining-room to include heads, mullions, jambs and sills of the two bays, but excluding ornamental bathstone balusters. Bag up and remove all debris. Rake out and repoint all ledges at abutments to main wall and all joints to coping at roof level. Rake out and repoint all loose and defective joints to recessed bathstone panels, joints in heads, string bands, mullions and sills. Thoroughly clean with phosphor brush flat bathstones face generally and face up where required. All repointing or facing to be carried out with bathstone dust and cement at ratio of 8:1. Include provisional sum of £500 for possibly cutting out and replacing sections of heavy cornice at high level. Include

provisional sum of £1,000 for any major repair required to bathstone once plastic paint which has been removed and surface exposed. These provisional sums to be used in whole or in part and only after consultation with Mr. Bevan. If not used, these sums will be deducted. Carefully take out and remove from site, the five aluminium framed windows to two bays, the single window top floor Room 32, and remove access door to balcony. Prepared rebates and provide and securely fix new replacement windows in mahogany wood grain externally and with UPVC internally. The window to Room 32 to have shaped head to suit opening. Provide and hang new door and fanlight to match. All windows and doors double glazed. Generally make good internally to reveals with timber cover heads. Seal windows and door frame externally against reveals with silicone sealant. Apply coat of stabilising solution to facade to include bays and balusters over and roof level coping, followed by two coats Sandtex-Matt. Dismantle and remove scaffolding and surplus material and plant and leave clean and tidy. For the sum of £17,724.00 plus V.A.T.

## **(b) Hot and Cold Water Services**

### **Specification – Vanity Basin (40 in total)**

We would suggest the fitting of new Vanity Basins complete with white tiled splash back, mirror and shaver point/light above mirror. Our price also includes for lead replacement on hot and cold water supplies to within one metre from unit. (Most basins have galvanised steel supplies close to units).

Price as per above specification £496.00 excluding VAT.

Our price assumes the existing electrical supply to shaver points is suitable for the purpose. We would suggest that one room to be done so that yourselves and your Committee would have an idea of the finished product. We have already taken photographs so that if the need arose we would give a presentation to your Committee.

### **Galvanised Pipework**

All galvanised pipework will become redundant and will be replaced with copper throughout. Both hot and cold services will be replaced where lead or galvanised pipework exists at present.

### **Existing Sanitary Ware**

With the exception of vanity basins, all other sanitary ware and sinks will be left in situ and piped accordingly. (A price for replacing baths and W.C.s available on request).

### **Water Treatment**

On completion of the installation the system will be sterilised before completion.

### **Prices**

As requested we have broken our price down to enable each floor to be done separately to minimise inconvenience.

Basement	9,160.00
Ground Floor	7,822.00
First Floor	8,750.00
Second Floor	13,447.00
Third Floor	9,788.00
	£48,967.00 excluding V.A.T.

The above price includes all materials and labour to replace all lead and galvanised pipework on secondary hot and tank cold water services.

If all materials was purchased prior to work commencing the current cost for materials ONLY would be £24,076 excluding V.A.T. Should the work be carried out over a two year period we would expect a saving of between £2,000 – £3,000 if all the material was purchased prior to commencement of work.

Bro. A. Dawe (GLO 1982) pointed out that figures now shown could well be increased before any work was completed and felt it was about time we considered the building of new premises and thereby avoid the costly repetition of making good on older buildings.

Bro. G. J. S. Reeve (GLO 1982) asked if the 'water content' of the item had to be carried out by a water authority, he was answered YES by the Grand Primo, who also said further recommendations would possibly be put forward at the next meeting.

Bro. G. W. Jones (N. Wales) asked if members of the Order who were qualified builders would be allowed to tender for the

work. The Grand Primo said if those members were bona fide businesses they would be permitted to quote and said the Grand Secretary would be pleased to hear from them. Previous jobs requiring to be carried out on the properties had in many instances been undertaken by members.

Bro. R. Clarke (East Cornwall) felt we should keep a close eye on the figures to hand especially when work in the early stages brings up problems.

\* \* \*

**Stoke on Trent March 1993**

With respect to The York at Weston-Super-Mare, it was decided by the GLMC that as the Home is currently under repairs and renovations as already passed by Grand Lodge it was felt prudent to carry out some additional work. The outside exteriors of the side elevation of the complex would now be cleaned and decorated. Certain rooms will have bathroom facilities added. Some bed capacity has been reduced. The Grand Primo answered a question from the floor in relation to the cost of the work and indicated it would be in the region of double the estimate of £70,000 as mentioned in the December 1992 Grand Lodge meeting.

Bro. J.E.F. Askey (Grand Lodge Trustee) rose to say that he has been interested in the work and had visited the site to see the work going on, and he assured all that the job would be a credit to the Order and to the satisfaction of us all.

\* \* \*

**Stoke on Trent 5th June 1993**

**REPAIRS & ALTERATIONS**

(i) York Convalescent Home

As agreed at the March 1993 meeting of Grand Lodge the Committee wish to report that work completed, or authorised, by Grand Lodge or Management Committee is as follows:

Electric rewiring .....	15,359.75
Redecoration lounge/dining room .....	4,697.00

Redecoration facade .....	35,653.00
Repairs to ceiling lounge etc .....	434.00
Repairs to stonework .....	525.00
Alterations to rooms .....	68,059.00
Replace shower (room 27).....	156.00
Draining & moving radiators .....	259.00
New soil vent and pipe .....	350.00
Decorating rooms (3 Off) .....	1,150.00
Making good fire places .....	2,100.00
New drain.....	628.00
Replaster rooms.....	875.00
New emergency lights .....	75.00
Moving guttering (room 314) .....	182.00
Moving pipe-work.....	40.00
Repairs - storage tank (room 313) .....	65.00
New mirrors .....	250.00
Carpets/underlay P.C. sum .....	6,000.00
Redecoration (all other rooms) .....	5,875.00
T.V. aerials.....	385.00
Building Regs. App .....	171.00
New door locks .....	700.00
.....	143,988.75
Less sale of fire places .....	1,275.00
.....	£142,713.00

Plus V.A.T

Bro. A. Dawe (GLO 1982) asked if the figures shown include the sum of £87,000 spent in the last quarter, he was assured that it was. Bro. J. Nicholson (Plymouth) commented on the last speaker not giving his number *(the number was given it was on tape, No. 123, Bro. John you really must listen, but you may rest assured that because there are members who go to the mike on a regular basis their voices become well known not only on tape but at the meetings and one does not have to be told by those persons who they are, but it is necessary that they do clearly identify themselves for record purposes. Ed.)* he went on to say that he had looked at the figures previously and felt that when he looked at the figures shown last

December and then in March it was never going to be done for the prices quoted. The figures now shown looks a little bit more realistic and we are making an investment in the York, those of you who thought there was a hidden agenda to sell off The York might still believe it, but I hope you will not. I think the York should be sold off the same as Bro. Saxton does, but you have decided we will keep it so spend the money and do it.

Bro. J. E. F. Askey (Grand Lodge Trustee) rose to say he had recently visited The York and he assured everyone that the work so far carried out was really wonderful. He gave an outline of the general appearance and said the work was going to cost a 'bomb' when he spoke before but now it was marvellous you should go and see it now. The top floors have been completed and the underlays are down ready for the carpets. Decorations in those areas have been completed sundry little bits and pieces are being completed. The electric's are now down to the ground floor and the basement area. He said he sat outside on the sea wall and looked at it in relation to the Sandringham next door and it was marvellous compared to that place. he expressed appreciation to the Grand Primo, John O'Keefe, and Jack Hook who had not only been making sure the contractors had carried out their work in a proper manner, this apart they had also been doing practical work themselves and were to be thanked for their part. He said it will still be another month or so before it will be ready to open but asked that we consider a proper opening day possibly over a weekend. He said he had told the Management Committee to give the Grand Primo all he needs to make sure that everything possible is done to ensure what is wanted is made available. He finalised by saying he would be going again to see the York and looked forward to the completion of the work. He asked that members should consider going to see what a wonderful and marvellous job of work had been done.

\* \* \*

### **Rule 156 (1) Motion in the name of Grand Lodge Management Committee**

Bro. T.K. Saxton (GLMC) spoke and said it might seem strange to have a motion to spend our own money but the Property Repairs Contingency Fund is identified as a separate fund on the Balance Sheet and therefore needs a resolution of Grand Lodge to take



the money out of it. The motion as it stands means that the amount shown on the balance sheet on the 30th September 1992 is the amount which will be withdrawn (£74,130) the Contingency Fund will still carry on because monies are coming in all the time and that 3 per cent will still be taken out and added to the Contingency Fund, this is what the money was for, you have already agreed to spend the money on The York, and obviously this was what the Fund was set up for by Warwickshire scheme years ago and now we have an opportunity to spend the monies you have put aside, I formally move the proposition.

Bro. J. O'Keefe (GLMC) seconded the proposition which was CARRIED.

\* \* \*

## **Repairs & Renewals**

### **(a) The York**

The Committee wish to refer to the recent undertaking given to Grand Lodge to adapt the York Convalescence Home to take patents who are permanently confined to a wheelchair.

In order to achieve the desires of Grand Lodge the Committee recommends that the following work be placed in hand:

Remove door and frame to bathroom.

Cut away nib to widen door opening, make good plasterwork and fix plastic quoin protectors X4 to 1.0m high.

Remove hand basin, wall tiles, mirror cabinet and shaving light fitting in bathroom. Supply and fix new 'Vanity type' hand basin, supported to allow wheelchair access.

Fix new wall tiles and mirror at low level, refit shaving light with new extended pull cord.

Supply and fix: new low voltage 'Shaver Only' socket at low level adjacent to basin.

Replace wall switch in bedroom with pull cord.

Remove door frame (marked red) and make good to plasterwork. Construct landing in base of stairwell approx 0.5m high x 1.0m square (maintain 2.0m headroom between landing and concrete lintel.

Construct ramp 2.1m in length x 1.0m wide, from landing to lower ground floor level.

Construct ramp, 1.6m in length x 1.0m wide from landing to ground floor level. All in treated timber and cover in on slip rubber matting secured with adhesive. Provide vents for air circulation in ramp.

Make good all damaged paintwork, and remove rubbish to tip. Supply and fix grab rails to ramps, bath and toilet at a cost of £1,617 + V.A .T.

After the subject matter was highlighted earlier in the meeting it was WITHDRAWN by the majority decision from the members on the floor.

\* \* \*

## **Paignton 2nd December 1995**

### **NOTICE OF MOTION**

(a) Kent County Provincial Grand Lodge

“That facilities be made available for wheelchair patients at the York Convalescent Home, Weston-Super-Mare. This to be achieved as soon as possible by the best method(s) available”.

A member unidentified but presumably from Kent County proposed the motion which was seconded by Bro. G. Kent (Kent County).

Bro. J. Nicholson (Plymouth) commented on previous discussions on the item and asked that we get on with it and get it done.

Bro. A. A. Grazette (North Kent) said he was not opposing the motion but he was opposing what was now printed, he went on to speak about the difficulties associated with the building and he felt some more research would have been carried out and the motion should have been more precise about what was necessary.

Bro. M. L. Jones (Devonshire) asked if the local fire prevention officer's views had been sought related to wheelchair accommodation.

Bro. K. Oakden (London S. Essex) said the proposer said it was quite straight forward, but in fact it was not straight forward. He outlined the many problems that could arise in the event of a fire and similar eventualities.

Bro. J. Weston (GLMC) objected to some words used by the last speaker who apologised to Bro. Weston.

Bro. D. Hardy (West Herts) spoke saying he was a Fire Officer and he said there was no legislation covering disabled people in convalescent homes, he indicated that GLMC approach the Local Authority to establish their views and regulations with respect to the disabled persons we wish to accommodate at The York.

Bro A. L. Tarleton (GLMC) asked for support for the motion, he said the necessary authorities will be contacted, but it was essential that approval for the motion was granted before further action with the authorities was taken.

The Kent County representatives did not reply and the members were asked to show whether they were in favour or not, The resultant show of hands showed the members to be in favour of the motion and the item was declared CARRIED.

\* \* \*

**Oldham 6th December 1997**

### **MINUTES**

The Grand Secretary advised of corrections to the Minutes of the 6th September 1997 which were then proposed and seconded and accepted.

The Grand Primo then invited the Grand Secretary to give a report on events which led to a temporary closing of 'The York' Convalescent Home in the past weeks. Before giving the report the Grand Secretary advised that the Grand Lodge Management Committee desired him to point out that the GLMC wished it to be made known that the Committee had no desire or intention to dispose of or close permanently any of the Homes, they are fully aware that they are bound by the decisions of Convention on the subject. He went on to say the Committee felt it was necessary to acquaint the Members with some of the background information leading to the present position of 'The York'. Way back in 1990/91 the Management Committee of the day were concerned with the escalating costs of running the Homes and instituted a series of studies into these costs. It became apparent that both Homes were substantially overstaffed to a financial level that the Order could not continue to maintain, in 1992 the staffing levels were

re-appraised and Grove House was the first to be addressed and a number of redundancies took place to achieve the desired staffing levels and working procedures were changed. These culminated with the retirement of the then Matron and the appointment of the present Manager, as a result no one today can say that the efficiency of Grove House has deteriorated in any way. In addressing the matters at 'The York' the Committee decided that progressive reduction in staffing levels through natural wastage could be achieved rather than large scale redundancies, therefore as staff retired or resigned they were not replaced. Staff contracts of employment at 'The York' were changed to enable them to work at the same levels as at Grove House with the same workload, the running costs at 'The York' at that time were nearly twice that of Grove House, with only a difference of an additional 10 beds at 'The York'. During a further study carried out in 1995/96 at 'The York' the hourly paid staff said they were not happy with the requirement to work on either a Saturday or Sunday, the GLMC agreed and then by mutual consent the contracts of employment were changed to provide for the staff at 'The York' to work an eight hour day Monday to Friday only, the last employee to be changed to a five day week was the cook. The Committee believed because of the employment nature in Weston-Super-Mare it would be easy to obtain part time staff at weekends on a regular basis, these plans were only partially successful and some but not all of the necessary staff required were engaged. Of those required and engaged some candidates proved unsuitable for a number of reasons, this required supervisory staff to provide emergency cover and without the necessary skills required in some instances. This later strain was to be a contributory factor why two supervisory staff terminated their employment with us. Matters came to a head in May, June, July and August last when no part time staff were available and none of the other staff were prepared to do weekends. As a short term and temporary expedient the Committee authorised Agency Staff to be engaged whilst an extensive recruiting campaign went under way through the Press, Job Centres around the District, and Shop Notice Boards. The result was that not one suitable application was received, indeed,

in three cases the applicants were most unsuitable. During this time we spent well in excess of £4000 in Agency Staff Fees and the Committee felt obliged to close the Home on a temporary basis. Because we could not engage the required number of staff for weekend cover. GLMC has entered into negotiations with our present staff to change their contracts of employment to provide this cover. In doing so a substantial increase in pay has been offered, both in the hourly rates of pay and enhancement to cover weekend work. The scheme at Grove House has proved so successful the Committee are of the opinion that it should also be implemented at 'The York', therefore the position of House Manager with Spouse to assist has recently been extensively advertised, both within and outside the Order. At the closing date for applications for these posts some 65 had been received, many from members of the Order, a further number have also been received since the closing date. GLMC will be undertaking interviews of the short list now drawn up, very early in the New Year and providing that satisfactory candidates can be appointed and our present hourly paid staff decide to accept the new contract of employment, the Committee hope to re-open 'The York' Convalescent Home during January 1998.

Bro. J.E.F. Askey (G.L. Trustee) spoke making a number of observations on the matter finishing by saying that the Management Committee were doing their best and must be supported, but he also said this was one occasion that the Committee did not have the Trustees support.

Upon being proposed and seconded and put to the floor, after asides from Bro. J. Nicholson (Plymouth) and the Grand Secretary the Report was accepted.

\* \* \*

That then seemed to end the saga of the York, it is well catalogued that the Order spent many thousands of pounds "tarting it up" but there always seemed to be something that went wrong with the place that was going to cost a lot of time and money.

Many motions were placed on various Grand Lodge agendas to sell or get rid of it, but nothing came of such motions, they were

either defeated, declared non competent or overtaken by events, until we hear of the account leading up to the sale, given by the Grand Primo of 2006 which is graphically recalled in the following pages.

The names have been changed to Mr. "A" and Mr. "B" to protect the author and the Grand Lodge of England.

\* \* \*

## **March 2006**

The very first approach was made when Alan Gower the York House Manager, brought to the notice of Stuart Steele the Grand Secretary, plans for the redevelopment of numbers 4 & 5 St. Margarets Terrace by Mr. "A" trading as an Investment Properties Company.

The Grand Secretary contacted me with this information and I asked for a set of plans and instructed the Grand Secretary to make contact with Mr. "A" to seek his views as to buying the York for further redevelopment, seeing that we own two thirds of the footprint of the site.

His first contact with the Grand Secretary showed he was interested and offered a pre inspection price of £850,000.

After he had sent in his own Surveyors/Valuers he reduced that offer to £775,000 mainly because of the extensive damp problems with all of the rooms and kitchen that comprises the basement.

In the meantime the Grand Secretary contacted a Commercial Estate Agent in the area (based in Bristol) and asked them to have a look at the value of the York and they advised that a good deal of interest would be shown if we put the property up for sale on the open market in the region of £1,000,000.

I called a meeting with Mr. "A" at the York on Wednesday 12th July 2006. Present at that meeting were M. Walker, D. Pryer, E. Herbert, J. Weston and S. Steele.

M. Walker who chaired the meeting, introduced everyone and gave Mr. "A" a lead in to explain why he wanted to purchase the York, he laid out his plans for No.s 4 & 5 St. Margarets Terrace, which will mean that he wants to convert the existing building into luxury flats, I believe that as the plans submitted were for only 5 or 6, he will erect more than that, more like 18 to 20.

He said he had identified a need for a Nightclub for younger people that had accommodation facilities with room for a restaurant and bar in Weston-super-Mare and he wished to put the York onto his portfolio to use it as a Hotel for the time being, then for long term redevelopment.

I have to say at this point that the buildings that are in St. Margarets Terrace are in an area that is known as a conservation area which I am given to understand means that whatever you want to do with the inside is OK but the fabric of the building must remain the same.

He tried to run down Weston Super Mare as a dump and gave several reasons why he should not buy it. For example - no car parking - not big enough to take coach parties. He was under the impression that the York was only an 18 bedroom place, he was corrected to read 26 bedrooms. When we pressed him for more money he came up with an extra £50,000 but said that this would be his top figure. He was told in no uncertain terms that we were looking for at least £1,000,000. He mulled over this and suggested a business plan that would take us over £1,000,000 and would enable him to make his allotted share of the profits.

The question of rising damp and roof leaks were discussed, he had experienced problems of this nature with his property next door and was convinced that this building suffered the same condition.

After lengthy discussion he agreed that he would draw up a business plan to redevelop the site over a period of time and that it would be a joint venture at no cost to the RAOB and that at the end we should realise the £1,000,000 we were looking for.

We left it at that and looked for further correspondence from him.

A business plan was subsequently drawn up and proved to be as he had anticipated, the final figure to the RAOB would be £1,047,000. The sting in the tail is that it would be dependant on being able to obtain planning permission, which could take up to 2 years, with no certainty that it would go through.

This offer was left for discussion at a later date by the Financial Officers of the Order. This was duly done and we decided to seek a valuation of the property before any decision was made.

\* \* \*

The following is a letter from a Commercial Estate Agent based in Bristol and dated 11th May 2006

Dear Mr Steele

Re: The York, 1-3 St. Margaret's Terrace, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Further to my recent visit to The York Convalescent Home and our subsequent telephone conversation, write to confirm my thoughts in regards to a suggested asking price should you decide to put the above business onto the market.

I have based my figure on comparable evidence from our very experienced Hotel department and the vast database of comparable evidence from our Valuations Services department and feel that the initial asking price should be in the region of £1,000,000 (one million pounds).

As we discussed there are a number of possibilities for the building, subject to the necessary planning permissions, one of which would be a bar with restaurant facilities and terrace to the front elevation, and a combination of residential flats above and behind.

The other option would be for complete internal redevelopment into residential flats. The residential market remains strong at the moment and this would be an attractive option for any developer or investor.

I feel the best way to go forward would be to put the property onto the market asking for offers in the region of £1,000,000. I am confident of achieving interest at around this figure. Taking into consideration the property's prime location and potential, we may end up with more than one interested party and therefore a figure slightly in excess of £1,000,000 (one million pounds) could be achieved.

We currently have on our database a number of trusted buyers looking for residential development opportunities along with buildings to convert into care homes and or hotels and if you would like me to approach these people on your behalf I would be more than happy to do so.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of appraising The York and I would be very happy to take your instructions with regards to marketing should you wish me to do so in the future.

\* \* \*



The story continues with an email from Mr. "A" in the following terms.

Sent: 31 July 2006 11:08

To: 'Stuart Steele'

Subject: Re: The York Floor Plans

Morning Stuart, just an update on the York, I have had a lengthy meeting with the architect and our initial thoughts are we may be able to convert the building into flats if we can obtain planning.

We hope to get about 19 1 & 2 bed flats in total, the problem we foresee is the cost and this is what will determine the final price we are prepared to pay, with this in mind we feel that a fair price for the resale of the flats with no parking will be £150,000 per unit (i.e. some at £130,000 others at £170,000) giving a total resale value of £2,850,000 The building conversion costs will be £1,400,000, professional planning, £106,000 fees and stamp duty will be £145,000 and agents selling fees will be in the region of £30,000 our development margin is 8% of the resale value which will offer us a gross profit £228,000. Total cost £1,803,000 the difference between the sale price of £2,850,000 and development costs of £1,803,000 is £1,047,000. This amount we would offer to pay subject to obtaining planning permission, if this figure is to be accepted by committee then we would need to proceed as follows, our company would instruct our solicitors to arrange a contract between both parties to create an option to purchase the property at the said amount once planning was gained, it would lock both parties into selling and purchasing the property until the planning was gained, the option would run for a minimum of two years as this would allow enough time for us to obtain the planning and resolve any appeals for the development that may be needed, our company will bear all the costs of obtaining planning permission i.e., surveyors, engineers reports, applications this would be with no financial recourse to yourselves should the planning application fail. I await your comments.

Best regards

Mr "A"

\* \* \*

It was whilst I was at the Rules Revision Committee meeting at the York on Wednesday 2nd August that the Grand Secretary called me into Alan Gower's office and told me of a strange phone call he had from a guy called Mr "B", he had, out of the blue offered to purchase the York for £1,100,000. The Grand Secretary told Mr. "B" that he should put that offer in writing, which he did on 8th August.

I subsequently contacted Mr. "B" and arranged a meeting at the York on Friday 18th August at 10 a.m.

Present at this meeting were M. Walker, J. Weston, D. Pryer, A. Patel and E. Herbert.

M. Walker introduced those present and asked the first question "what is your interest in this property" he replied that he was in the Restaurant/Hotel/Holiday Homes business and wished to purchase the York as a going concern.

Asked how he got to know about the possible sale of the York he replied I just came in off the street and asked, thats what I do, I make it my business to know about everything that goes on in Weston-super-Mare.

When asked about the starting price of £1,100,000 he replied that this was his offer, not a starting price, when questioned about the legal fees he thought about it and then said yes, he would be happy to purchase at £1,100,000 with the legal fees on his side.

He explained that he had 43 properties in Weston-super-Mare and surrounding areas.

He seemed very sure of himself and I thought him to be a typical flamboyant entrepreneur of today's people.

Many questions were asked of him and his replies were all in the positive. The property would probably be bought in the name of himself and his wife.

He did not want it in the public arena as this, in his words, would open a can of worms, in that we might get offers in which would never see a completion date and when pressed as to his own completion date he said, this afternoon if you like.

At the conclusion of the meeting with Mr. "B" we gave the impression that we were interested in his offer and he agreed that he would send in another letter setting out the details of which we had spoken and also giving the name of his bankers and of his solicitors so that these could be researched via the internet.

He also stated that he would send in his surveyor to have a look at the building to see if it was up to his expectations. This surveyor would be visiting the York under the guise of an insurance assessor.

When I asked him about the flood area he seemed to think it was of no consequence and I asked him if he wanted to buy it “lock stock and barrel” with warts and all, he said yes. The only items we would take with us would be the crockery and items which have the RAOB logo on.

We bade farewell to Mr. “B” and we settled down to discuss the outcome of the meeting. All of us were happy with the way Mr. “B” conducted himself and that a recommendation to sell the York would be a matter of sooner than later.

On the 29th August 2006 the Trustees, Treasurer, Grand Secretary and Mick Walker received a fax from The Mr. “B” Group in the following terms :-

Dear Sirs,

Re: Purchase of the York Convalescent Home, Weston-super-Mare.

Following our recent meeting on the 18th August, I am happy to review my offer of £1.1 million plus costs for the purchase of the above address.

I am sorry for the delay but unfortunately the valuer I deal with is off sick so I am still awaiting a date for re-valuation.

Thank you.

The fax is signed Mr. “B”.

\* \* \*

Further contact with Mr. “A”

Monday 4th September 2006, I received a call from the Grand Secretary explaining that he had a call from Mr. “A” reference the purchase of the York, he indicated that his offer would include the retention of the staff. Stuart told him to put this further offer in writing and email it to him. Mr. “A” phoned later in the day to say his email was not getting through. I asked Stuart if he was willing to let me speak to Mr. “A” the following day, so that I might be able to get the email and forward it on, this he readily agreed to.

I subsequently phoned Mr. "A" on Tuesday 5th September at his office when Mr. "A" told me a very interesting story about Mr. "B", it would appear that Mr. "A" and Mr. "B" had done several deals together but not all have met with tremendous success, there appeared to be a fair amount of animosity between them. Mr. "B" owns the freehold of what used to be the bar called Route 66 at the end of St. Margarets Terrace, and Mr. "A" owns the 99 year lease as well as owning numbers four and five St. Margaret's Terrace.

The redevelopment was to have been a joint effort between Mr. "A" and Mr. "B" but something went wrong when Mr. "B" put in his offer for the York.

Mr. "A" told me that Mr. "B" has often used tactics that when it comes to the final signing he will suddenly drop his offer for no reason.

I asked Mr. "A" what would he be prepared to offer as a final bid to secure the deal, his answer was:-

1. One million one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.
2. Purchase lock stock and barrel to include all fixtures and fittings to enable them to trade as an Hotel immediately, the only non included items would be personal effects monogrammed with the RAOB emblem.
3. Retention of the existing staff, run it as a hotel until such time as alternative use, i.e. total regeneration of the whole block, can be gained and at that point, offer the necessary redundancy packages or retain the staff for the new development.
4. Meet our legal costs to the tune of three thousand five hundred pounds.

The time scale he quoted would be in the region of two to three months.

I forwarded this email to the Grand Secretary and asked him to arrange a meeting with Mr. "A", M. Walker, J. Weston, D. Pryer, A. Patel, E. Herbert and S. Steele on Friday 15th September in order that we can progress to a final settlement.

This was duly done but as there was no accommodation available at the York he arranged rooms for us at the Royal Hotel Weston-super-Mare on Thursday night of the 14th September for a 10 a.m. meeting at the Wild Coyote Bar on Friday 15th.

A further incident arose after these arrangements had been made, with Alan Gower phoning me on Wednesday 6th September saying that he had “bumped” into Mr. “A” and Mr. “A” had told him of the deal to retain the staff, he said he was worried about it because he didn’t want to work for Mr. “A” but wanted to move down as manager of the Britney. I managed to placate him by telling him that things were still in the negotiating stage and he would be informed of any possible outcome by the Grand Secretary.

\* \* \*

The following is a fax from Mr. “A” setting out his terms for the proposed sale.

Dear Mick,

Further to our conversation regarding the York Convalescent Home, I can confirm as follows that subject to contract our company is prepared to offer £1.15 m for the purchase of the aforementioned property at 1-3 St Margarets Terrace, Weston super Mare.

I can also confirm that it would be our intention to retain the existing staff, run it as a hotel until such time as alternative use, i.e. total regeneration of the whole block, can be gained and at that point, offer the necessary redundancy packages or retain the staff for the new development.

As I am sure you are aware, this is likely to take 2/3 years before such development would even progress.

I can also confirm that we would be prepared to meet your legal costs not to exceed £3,500 for the purchase of the said property.

I believe it should be agreed by us that the sale would include all fixtures and fittings in its entirety to enable us to trade it immediately as a hotel and that the only non included items would be personal effects monogrammed with the RAOB emblem.

I believe that on the timescale issues, subject to satisfactory searches and pre contract enquiries that this transaction should not exceed more than 2 months however perhaps realistically due to solicitors, holidays, etc one should realistically allow 3 months.

I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. “A”.

\* \* \*

Friday 15th September saw the six of us meeting with Mr. "A" in the Wild Coyote Bar at 10 am to discuss this deal and after a lot of discussion confirming the terms we were of the opinion that he was an honourable man with the right package for us and we all signed the fax letter and shook hands on the deal. I have to say that at this stage we all thought we had done the right thing for the Order.

We all agreed that the York should be closed with effect from the 31st October and that we would retain the staff, bearing in mind the offer from Mr. "A", the probability that he would use the existing staff, and the deal that was so close to finalisation. How wrong this assumption turned out to be!

The saga continued with Mr. "A" hedging for time, saying that the Bank had valued the York at only £940,000 and he had to find the other money from several projects that he had going in other parts of Weston-super-Mare. The Mare part turned into a right nightmare for the RAOB and those affected by this "done deal", a real mess with him continually hedging for time and finally reneging on his offer that he would retain the staff, a consequence of which cost the Order a lot of money in redundancies.

The final chapter in this particular saga turned out to be a phone call from Mr. "A" setting out a plan wherein he could still purchase the York but with a delay of up to two years, he proposed renting out the same for £2,000 per month with a guaranteed sale price at the end of £1.15 million. I spent quite a time whilst on convalescence at the Britney, sorting out a meeting with all parties concerned resulting in a meeting to coincide with the weekend of the official opening of Britney House in Paignton on 30th June 2007 when everyone would be there at no cost to the Order.

Subsequently I arranged with the Grand Secretary that he should contact the Financial Officers and inform them of such arrangements, *he then told me that none of them would be attending the Official Opening that weekend, that is, none of the Trustees, the Grand Treasurer or even the Grand Secretary himself !!* to say I was annoyed would be an understatement. I telephoned the Grand Primo and informed him of the same and I told him I was so annoyed that I wished to wash my hands of the whole issue and to leave it to the Trustees.

This proved to be a fatal mistake on my part for we had told the floor of Grand Lodge that it was definitely sold and that if we had to put it on the open market we could expect more than we had originally told them. The Trustees have never had dialogue with Mr. "A" over his latest offer and had accepted a reduced offer from Mr. "B" of £940,000 (funny sum isn't it after Mr. "A" had said the banks would only lend him that exact sum).

The place was put on the open market with a firm in Bristol who had and still have Mr. "B" as a client and have done many deals with him. Now I do not want to make speculations but surely a conflict of client interests is here!

Anyway, back to the story, many prospective clients visited the York to view the building with a couple of them making offers which I think were rejected out of hand by those concerned, however we, that is the Grand Lodge Management Committee were not given any information on any of the prospective clients, in fact we were like mushrooms, kept in the dark!

During all of these negotiations the Grand Lodge Management Committee as a body were never involved but it has to be said that when they were told they gave those who were acting on the Order's behalf the utmost backing, this to me showed the calibre of the brothers who comprised the GLMC and who were involved with the running of the Order. Good luck to all of them in their future progress.

The saga of Mr. "B"s offer was still on going with him stalling for time and making further lower offers when, at the December 2007 Grand Lodge meeting 7 new members were elected, along with 2 existing members to form the 2008 Grand Lodge Management Committee.

The new Management Committee then took over the marketing of the York and placed it with Savils Auctions to be sold on 12th May 2008 with a reserve price in excess of £1,000,000.

It is a matter of record that when it went to auction there were no bids but a post auction offer of £950,000 was accepted by the representatives of the RAOB GLE which consisted of one member of the Grand Lodge Management Committee, one Trustee, the Grand Secretary and the GLE Solicitor.

This was subsequently reported to the floor of Grand Lodge at the June 2008 meeting with the stated facts that the buyers had deposited a cheque for £95,000 under auction rules with the

proviso that we allow them 90 days to complete. This meant that the handing over of the York should take place on 12th August 2008, if not then the buyer would be given a notice of completion or he would forfeit his deposit.

Well, the 12th August came and no completion with it and as I was now out of the loop, as it were, I can only guess that a letter was sent to the buyer advising him of the notice of completion. Further to the notice of completion I was informed that the full and final amount of funds had been transferred to our solicitors on Thursday 28th August 2008, so officially, on that date, we no longer owned the building and the sale of the York had been completed.

The picture shows the Grand Secretary, Brother Stuart Steele, R.O.H. along with Brother Arvind Patel, R.O.H., Grand Primo 1999, Grand Trustee handing over the keys of the York to the new owners.



This deal /sale had taken over two years to sort out and at the end it was a relief to see the back of it. Many thanks ought to be given to the various committees who had a hand in the marketing of the site and to the efforts of those who were ultimately responsible for the completion of the sale.



A special thank you should be given to Brother Tony Allen, R.O.H., Grand Chamberlain 1996 and a member of the Grand Lodge Management Committee 2005 - 2007 who did the unenviable and splendid task of being our house sitter and security man for nearly fifteen months while the various negotiations and viewings were taking place. It was a job that not a lot of people would have taken on given the nature of the party going and rebellious element in Weston super Mare.

Pictured right is Brother Tony Allen locking the door of the York for the last time on Friday 29th August 2008.



This ends the story of one of the most controversial purchases the Order ever made. The saga should really continue with the purchase of Britney Hotel (which we renamed Britney House) in the English Riviera resort of Paignton, but that is another story and may be told in another Museum Collection. I also doubt that this publication will ever make the front page of the R.A.O.B. G.L.E. website.

I realise that maybe I have criticised the Trustees in the last dealings in this saga but perhaps it should also be recognised that they gave me tremendous support during the difficult periods.

Also I must re-iterate my thanks to Bro. Dave Moses ROH who was my Deputy during 2006, he was my rock, the one person I could rely on to put me back on my feet. We spent many hours in conversations, sometimes lasting well into the small hours, many thoughts were bounced off him and he was one who came up with many ideas and support especially regarding the purchase of Britney to replace the York. He of course was the person who had to carry it through as Grand Primo 2007, and when Brother John J. Wilson came into the equation as Grand Primo 2008, he also continued with the same enthusiasm as Dave.

When finally the keys were handed over, the York was virtually empty, devoid of furniture and fittings, this was because when the place went to auction it was stated that fixtures and fittings were not included in the sale, and so it was that both Grove House and Britney House benefited from the surplus stock of beds, linen, kitchen equipment and fittings which were to have been included in the original sale.

I suppose there were many lessons to be learned from this episode in our history, least of which is to get proper professional advice and not to be carried away by the euphoria of doing the best for the Order, but it has to be said that when we did turn to the so called professionals, their advice was not always the best.

The Trustees came under a lot of fire during the subsequent Grand Lodge meetings when the sale and purchase was under review and such was reported in the Grand Lodge minutes, verbatim!

It is nice to recall that the floor of Grand Lodge gave their support to all the negotiations which led up to the final sale/purchase.

My personal thanks go to all those members who gave me so much support during 2006, especially the good wishes and help when things didn't seem to go right and I seemed to be in despair and was in danger of making myself ill over the whole issue.

Perhaps now the final whistle is blown on the York, I can look back on the part I played in building up it's history and can sit back and say "I was bowled over by a Yorker".

Whilst clearing out some old papers during his stay as security at the York, Brother Tony Allen came across some old postcards and pictures, a few of which are reproduced on the following pages along with some of the special images which were used in the York promotional brochure a few years ago.

Some of the older pictures of the York are very hard to place, given the alterations that have taken place over the years, the only way I could place them was to stand where I thought the photo was taken and imagine what it was like if the walls were removed.

The final four images sees the fire which destroyed the Grand Pier on Monday 28th July 2008, the pictures were taken by Bro. Tony Allen and subsequently appeared in National Newspapers, monies raised for the purchase of these photographs by the news agencies were donated to the RAOB GLE Education Fund.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this Museum Collection as much as I have had in the writing of it, the research has taken me to new heights in the history of our Order and I am grateful for all the help that has been afforded to me in the production of this document.

# TARIFF.

## TERMS.

Per Week, from 2½ Gns. to 8½ Gns. Per Day, from 13s to 70s.  
Bath Inclusive.

According to Season and Bedroom Accommodation.

Gas or Electric Fires in all Bedrooms. Hot and Cold Water.

Early Tea, 6d.

## HOURS OF MEALS.

Breakfast	9.0 a.m.	Tea	4.40 p.m.
Luncheon	1.0 p.m.	Dinner	7.0 p.m.

Kindly observe hours.

**VISITORS.** Luncheon, 2s. Tea, 1s. Dinner, 4s.

Meals served out of time or in Bedroom, 6d. extra.

## HOTEL NOTICES.

All Accounts rendered weekly. No reduction for temporary absence.

**N.B.**—The Proprietress will not be responsible for valuables left in Bedroom or in any Public Rooms.

Dogs not permitted.



*Entrance Lounge.*

# THE YORK HOTEL.

## SITUATION.

The York Private Hotel is most centrally situated facing the sea and Winter Gardens, close to the Post Office, The Grand Pier and Pavilion. Within five minutes by car or 'bus are the Knightstone Pavilion and Baths, Clarence and Grove Parks, the Golf Links and Bowling Green. Buses pass the door to all parts of the town, including the Great Western Railway Station. Opposite the Hotel are five Hard Tennis Courts and the 18-hole Putting Green. It will consequently be seen that the establishment is ideally placed for those who wish to enjoy the many amenities which Weston-super-Mare offers its patrons.

## COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE.

The Hotel is thoroughly up-to-date in all those features which ensure for the guest the greatest possible comfort and convenience. Hot and Cold Running Water and Gas Fires are fitted in all bedrooms, while the beds themselves are equipped with the latest type spring mattresses. The rooms are tastefully furnished, the important matter of cuisine is given special attention, and the aim of the staff under the supervision of the resident Proprietress is to give complete satisfaction to each visitor.

## GARAGE.

There is a large Garage close to the Hotel.

3



*The Dining Room.*





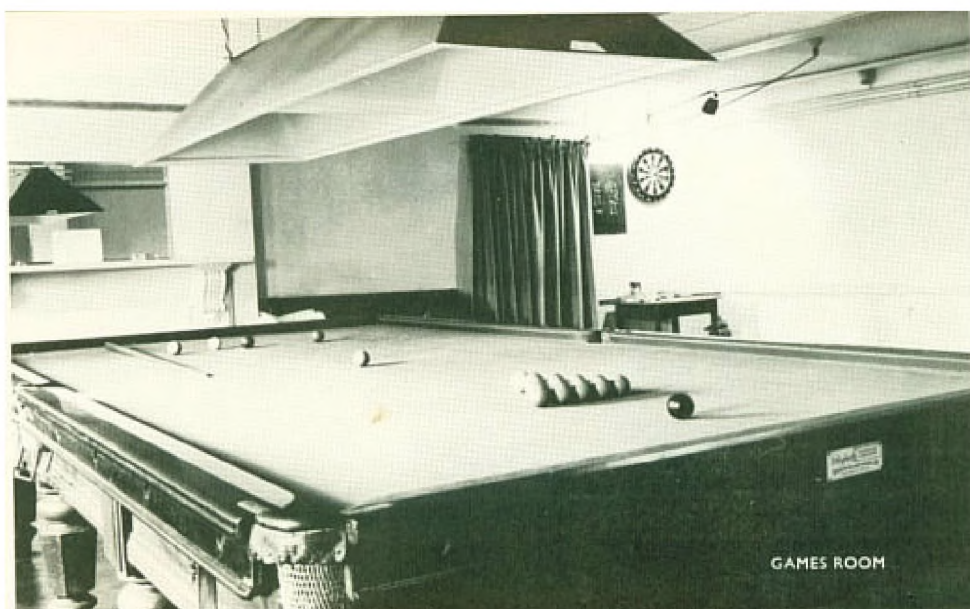
*The Lounge.*



*The Recreation Room.*







Room 11

Phone or Wire 132.

# YORK HOTEL,

Weston-super-Mare.

Mr & Mrs. A. J. R. R. R.

April 6<sup>th</sup> 1939

1939-35

BOARD RESIDENCE	PERSONS	PER DAY.	PER WEEK.	£	s.	d.
10/10	2	9/6			19	
Visitors ...	...	...	...			
Early Tea ...	...	...	...			
Meals in Room ...	...	...	...			
Minerals ...	...	...	...			
...						
...						
...						
TOTAL					19	

YORK HOTEL  
PAID WITH THANKS  
WESTON-S-M.







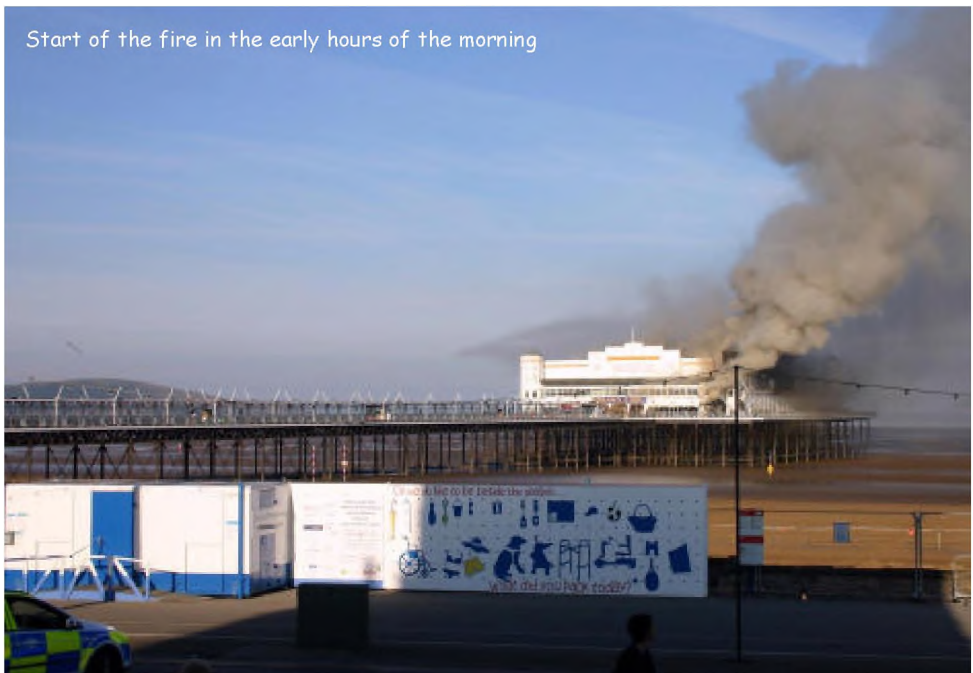




Image of the Pier taken a few days before the fire



Start of the fire in the early hours of the morning



Midway through the blaze



Blaze now extinguished  
End of the Pier gone completely

