

The Museum Collection

No.3

The Story of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes



Compiled from the authentic records
of
Brother William A. Culshaw, R.O.H.
of Sunderland

With a foreword by
Brother William H. Rose, R.O.H.
Grand Secretary 1908 — 1929

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Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, Grand Lodge of England

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Dedication

To those old Stalwarts - past and present - who through good and evil report, have kept the Grand Lodge of England flag flying, and carried through many trials and difficulties, to its present pre-eminent position as a Philanthropic Institution.

"When men are thus knit together by a love of society, not a spirit of faction, and do not meet to ensure or annoy those that are absent, but to enjoy one another, when they are thus combined for their own improvement, or for the good of others or at least to relax themselves from the business of the day by an innocent and cheerful conversation, there may be something very useful in these institutions and establishments".

Addison in the Spectator. March 1711

FOOTNOTES

The hand written manuscript of this work was found amongst papers accumulated in the R.A.O.B. Museum collection at the Grove House Convalescent Home and have been transcribed by Brother S. Stirman, Museum Curator in August 1999.

The manuscript is undated, but is probably around 1920. Brother W.H. Rose wrote the foreword in 1925. Brother Culshaw was expelled from the Order sometime between these two dates. However, he sold the copyright of his book "The Story of the Buffalo Order" to Grand Lodge.

Brothers W. H. Rose, and W. O'Rourke (P.P.G.P. Worcester) subsequently completed the story up to the end of 1927 as "A Historical Review of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, Grand Lodge of England" was published in 1927 by Grand Lodge, and giving authorship to Brother W. H. Rose, Grand Secretary.

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18, Thelma Street,
Chester Road,
Sunderland.

7th August, 1925

W. H. Rose
Cheltenham.

Dear Bro. Rose,

Please find enclosed agreement for the sale of the copyright to "Story of Buffaloism" duly completed which I hope you will find in proper order.

Thanking you etc.
Yours fraternally,

W. A. Culshaw

This Indenture made the 7th day of August One thousand nine hundred and twenty-five between WILLIAM ALFRED CULSHAW of 18, Thelma Street, Sunderland in the County of Durham, Author of the one part (hereinafter called "the vendor") and WILLIAM HENRY ROSE Grand Secretary for the time being of the Grand Lodge of England of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes of Cheltenham in the County of Gloucester (hereinafter called "the purchaser") of the other part.

WHEREAS the vendor is the author and proprietor of all rights in the manuscript of a book at present entitled "The Story of the Buffalo Order" and has agreed to sell the same to the Purchaser for the consideration hereinafter appearing NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in pursuance of the said agreement and in consideration of the sum of Fifty Guineas paid by the Purchaser to the Vendor (the receipt whereof is acknowledged) the Vendor as Beneficial Owner hereby assigns unto the Purchaser ALL the right title copyright and interest of the Vendor in and to the said manuscript, including all rights of publication and performance whatsoever free from any royalty or other charges thereon whatsoever ALL details as to the manner of production, publication and advertisement and the delivery of printed copies and distribution of free copies to be left at the sole discretion of the Purchaser who shall bear all expenses of publication production and advertisement PROVIDED ALWAYS that the author shall be presented with twelve free printed copies and that the Vendor shall have the right at any time to call for and buy from the Purchaser any number not exceeding twenty further printed copies of the said book at two thirds of the listed published price AND the Vendor hereby warrants that the manuscript of the said book has never been published and is the original work of the Vendor AND IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the transaction hereby effected does not form part of a larger transaction or of a series of transactions in respect of which the amount or value of the aggregate amount or value of the consideration exceeds Five hundred pounds.

IN WITNESS whereof the Vendor has hereunto set his hand and seal the day and year first above written.

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the)

Above named WILLIAM ALFRED CULSHAW)

W.A. Culshaw

In the presence of)

*James Wilson
Wine and Spirit Merchant
1, Peacock Street West,
Sunderland*

PREFACE

Brother Stan Stirman, the curator to the R.A.O.B. Museum, has since his appointment undertaken an extensive examination of the documents, manuscripts, files, Minute Books and other non regalia items which have been donated to the Museum.

Amongst the papers that he inherited are a considerable number of manuscripts, many hand-written in pencil, some over one hundred years old, which are now so old and worn I fear that their likelihood of surviving for much longer is in doubt.

Brother Stan, has transcribed these into computerised copy in an attempt to preserve them for future members of the Order, since they have an important story to tell in the origins of the Order

Progressively these will be published as fund-raisers for the Museum under the banner title of "The Museum Collection".

This edition deals with the first official history of the Order undertaken in the early 1920's by Brother William Culshaw of Sunderland.

William Culshaw can legitimately be described as the first R.A.O.B. Historian to fully research the early details leading to the formation of the Order, he was able to personally authenticate everything that he wrote from records in his personal possession at the time or fully accredited by his close friends and acquaintances. The original manuscript is currently preserved in the R.A.O.B. Museum, at Grove House.

Regretfully he was expelled from the Order in 1925 before his work could be published. Grand Lodge purchased the copyright of the book for fifty guineas (£52-50p). The deed of transfer of the copyright has been reproduced as an appendix to this book.

The book was officially published by Grand Lodge under the title "A Historical Review of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, Grand Lodge of England" with Brother W.H. Rose quoted as the author, ably assisted by Brother O'Rourke, who was later to become the founding Editor of the Buffalo Quarterly Journal.

Such was the thoroughness of Culshaw's research that it was used as the basis of the book "Origin and Development of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes" by Brother Mervyn W. Payne, (Grand Primo 1934) the first volume of which was published by Grand Lodge in 1953.

Our position remains today, exactly as it was at the beginning of the 20th Century. In the absence of any proof to the contrary, 1822 must be accepted as the birth of the Order. If at some future date someone finds information leading to our antecedents at an earlier date than 1822, I am sure that our leaders at that time will give such evidence all the due care and consideration it deserves.

W.A.C. Hartmann.

Grand Secretary

Foreword
By Bro. W.H. Rose, R.O.H.
Grand Secretary (Eng.) 1908 - 1929

There can be no doubt in the minds of all thinking members, that an authentic History of our Order is long overdue. We have had at various periods during the last few years many so-called Histories of the Order published, but they have been far-fetched and so improbable that those who really knew something of the inner working of the Order immediately treated them with something of the contempt that such books deserve. There is no doubt whatever that Brother Culshaw has been successful in compiling a book that will undoubtedly appeal to all our members, as bearing upon it, the marks of truth in every direction. As a matter of fact we are certain that Brother Culshaw has chapter and verse in proof of every statement he has made.

Although many claims have been made as to the antiquity of the Order, we are prepared to say that there is no trace or knowledge of the Order prior to the date mentioned by Bro. Culshaw - 1822. If any member, or anyone away from the Order, has any definite record of our existence prior to that date, we shall be indeed very pleased to see it, but I am afraid that nothing of the sort exists, and therefore we can only presume that the date mentioned by Bro. Culshaw must be more or less taken as representing the inauguration of the Order as at present known.

Brother Culshaw has dealt very lucidly with the interest of the Order practically up to date, but in dealing with the Order from a historical point of view, it has been impossible for him, naturally, to detail many things that have taken place during the last few years and I have been desired to, if possible give some idea of the finance and the principle doings of the Order during this period.

There can be no doubt that the greatest event of recent years was the 1897 Cardiff Convention, when a few Lodges situated in London, decided to start up on their own, breaking away from the G.L.E. and forming themselves into a Limited Company. But this did not deter the Grand Lodge of England continuing the work they had set out to do. It is regrettable those Lodges broke away, as unfortunately, they are in little better position today, than they were when they started their own section in 1898, whilst the Grand Lodge of England has gone from success to success, starting with three hundred odd Lodges in 1897, they are now approaching their 5500th Lodge.

It was prognosticated that taking the Order from London to the Provinces would mean it's doom, but it has proved that this was not, and has not been the case, as there is no doubt whatsoever that from the start of the first Grand

Lodge in the Provinces at Birmingham 1898, that the resolution passed at the Cardiff Convention has been fully justified. Undoubtedly it was a tremendous fight between the London members and those from the Provinces, although we find that a seconder of the resolution "That Grand Lodge should remain in London" was a Brother from Bournemouth. Still we can only think that he did not thoroughly grasp the situation, and our Provincial Members would be the first to acknowledge now the wisdom of those who took part in this memorable discussion. The result of the voting was - for Birmingham 86 votes, and for London 60 votes.

There is no doubt many important things took place, and much progress was made during the time the Grand Lodge was located in the Metropolis of the Midlands. For one thing it was during the Birmingham Grand Lodge that Bro. Leonard Aulton R.O.H. first brought forward his scheme for the erection, or the formation of an Orphanage for the Order.

The next Convention took place at Middlesbrough in 1900 and here again much good work was done. It was decided that the Grand Lodge should hold its meetings for the next three years in Sheffield. Sheffield, then as now, was full of members determined to push forward the good work of the Order, and many reforms took place during the time Grand Lodge was located in its midst. Bro. T. Johnson R.O.H. was unanimously elected as Grand Primo for 1901.

Perhaps an interesting item showing the rapid strides that this Order has made since 1901, from the financial point of view - is the fact that the balance sheet for the period ending 31st December 1901, and which appears to be for 12 months, shows receipts of £246-10s-8d. Reference to the balance sheet issued for July 1924 will show that the same item for six months for sales was £4,858-9s-7d, and in the 12 months nearly £10,000, as a matter of fact, the excess of income over expenditure for the last half year, was double the whole amount collected in the period we have named in 1901.

Brother T. Johnson was followed by Bro. Herbert A. Gillatt, R.O.H., the Grand Lodge again being held in Sheffield, and it was at that time the Convention decided the place of Grand Lodge for the next three years.

It is pleasing to note, in looking through the old reports, the success attending the indefatigable efforts on the part of Bro. Leonard Aulton R.O.H. for the Orphanage, as we find that early in 1902 Bro. Leonard had been successful in collecting £617-4s-3d. We must remember of course that in that time no 1/2d's (half pennies) were paid by Minor Lodges as is done at the present time.

In Truthful History, the same as we claim this to be, it is no use barking the fact, that at that time the Grand Lodge was in a very precarious condition. As a matter of fact we find in a statement made by the late Bro. Lionel Jacobs, "That the Order was bankrupt to the world", certainly at that period the Order had nothing to pride itself upon so far as its financial position was concerned. However we had in Grand Lodge those who were determined to keep the flag of Buffaloesm flying and we hold in deep reverence those who have been taken from us, amongst them we might mention the names of the late Bro. John Archdeacon R.O.H., the late Bro. Fred Sheard R.O.H. and the late Bro. Lionel Jacobs R.O.H. We have of course many others who are fortunately still with us, and who have taken a leading part in the uplifting of the Order. It would seem invidious to mention any names of our living members who assisted the three members named, who have gone over to the Great Majority, but whom we shall ever remember for the work they did at that time.

With all due respect to the Brethren implicated, it seemed to be the fashion in those days to suspend a member if he was too insistent in seeing that the Rules and Regulations were carried out. We have living with us today Bro. T. W. Boden R.O.H. a member who was suspended for this reason, but who it is well known, was subsequently re-instated and was made the Grand Primo of England.

The same thing applied to Bro. Fred Sheard R.O.H. who was also suspended because of his efforts to place the Order upon a solid foundation, but who was subsequently re-instated, and who also became Grand Primo of England. It therefore appears that at that time if you desired to hold the highest position in the Order, you should first be suspended and then re-instated and the highest position would automatically come your way.

Brother Herbert Gillatt R.O.H., was succeeded by the Late Bro. George Wanty R.O.H. who was Grand Primo in 1903. The late Bro. Wanty was well known amongst the members and his name even now is held in very high regard by many of his friends. Bro. Wanty was the President of the Worcester Convention and it was at this Convention that the resolution to pay 1/2d (Half penny) each registration on behalf of the Orphanage was passed. The resolution was placed upon the agenda by the Royal Duke of York Lodge, Cheltenham and was brought forward by Bro. George Pearce R.O.H.

The application at the Worcester Convention for the place where the next Convention should be held were Hull, Portsmouth, Manchester, and Plymouth, and the voting for Hull, 182, Portsmouth 95, Manchester 38, Plymouth 3. But the resolution for the home of the Grand Lodge for the following three years was in favour of Manchester 173, against Nottingham 84, and Bath 42.

The Rules Revision Committee elected at the Worcester Convention were - Bro. J.W. Dudley 106 votes. The Late Bro. Porteous Bell 63, Bro. T. W. Boden 60, and the late Bro. John Archdeacon 60

These facts are presented in this short history to enable the young members of the Order to be somewhat conversant with those who took part so many years ago.

In connection with the Trustees elected we find that Bro. T. Johnson had 98 votes, the late Bro. Chas. Milsom 91 votes and the late Bro. A. G. Beacon 80 votes. Many amendments took place at this Convention in connection with the First Degree Ceremony, was considered altered as result thereof.

Arrangements were made during this year for the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Orphanage by the late Lord Chief Justice, Lord Alverstone R.O.H.

In this year (1903) the first Dispensation granted was No. 888 and the last one was 964, thus making 76 Lodges opened during the twelve months. This as against over 600 last year (1924) will show the progression of the Order that is taking place.

The late Bro. George R. Wanty R.O.H. was followed as Grand Primo for 1904 by Bro. John W. Dudley R.O.H, our present Grand Trustee of England. The Deputy being Bro. John E. Wardingley and the Grand Secretary, Bro. R. Wilson-Marsh. The Grand Lodge being held at the Albion Hotel, Manchester. Bro. Dudley had a very busy time during his year of Office.

That the Order anticipated subsequent events is evident by the fact that in March 1904, a protest was made against the printing of the Grand Lodge stationery in Germany, and it was then decided that in future British productions should have first choice.

In this year 1904 the Opening Ceremony and Bazaar in connection with the Orphanage was held, this was on Monday and Tuesday May 30th and 31st and which is known by members, turned out to be a fine success. The Ladies particularly being very prominent in support of this undertaking. The Institution was opened by the Rt. Hon. Lord Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice, in the presence of a very large number of members.

Bro. Dudley having completed his year of Office and received the thanks of the Grand Lodge for the splendid manner, in which he had got through his business, was followed by Bro. E. Wardingley R.O.H. of Sheffield for 1905. The Deputy being Bro. T. W. Boden R.O.H.

It was in 1905 that the idea was first promulgated of having a Trust Deed for the Order prepared and this was left to the General Purposes Committee for their consideration, and they recommended that, considering that a Trust Deed for the Orphanage is being settled by Counsel, a copy of this proof be asked for and submitted to this Council to form a foundation for the consideration of the groundwork of the proposed Trust Deed for the Order and thus save expense.

W. H. ROSE. R.O.H.

Introduction

By the Author

I believe that this brief outline sketch of the History of the Buffalo Order, containing, as it does a straightforward answer to the oft repeated question as to, how, and when our Ancient and Honourable Order came into existence? will be welcomed by many.

It is a plain and unvarnished story, showing how it arose from a Convivial Social Club, formerly held in a London Tavern and after passing through many trials and difficulties, emerged therefore weakened perhaps with its past troubles, but nevertheless possessed of sufficient vitality to “carry on” and eventually prosper to such an extent that it exceeded anything which its original founders and workers could possibly have anticipated.

I make no apology for the contents of this brief essay, I set out to please no particular party, my whole endeavour has been to give truthful narration of the facts as they have come to my knowledge through a careful search of contemporary literature, and documents of undoubted authenticity, connected with our Order. I have added nothing to affect the issue, nor have I suppressed anything that would materially effect the issue. Every statement I have made can be vouched for, by some record that I have personally examined, and is, or at sometime has been in my possession. I can therefore accept full responsibility for all that is here as fact.

I have only to add that I thank all who loaned me documents, for their kindness I am deeply grateful, for without their aid this book would not have been written. To the many “Old Stalwarts” who have given me information, I must express my heartfelt thanks, and if this little effort of mine, only gives half the pleasure in its perusal, as I have experienced in looking up the material facts for its compilation, I shall not laboured in vain.

Particularly I must thank our Grand Secretary Bro. Rose, for his contribution of a “foreword”.

W. A. Culshaw R.O.H.
18, Thelma Street,
Chester Park,
Sunderland.

Chapter One

London in the Olden Days

At the time when our story opens, London wherein our Order first came into being, was a much different sort of place to that which we know today, as the greatest city in the world.

True, it was then, as now the place wherein the largest number of people live together in Great Britain. But during the years which have intervened since then and now, many changes have taken place. The town has extended its boundaries on all sides, much of the old place has disappeared.

Many of the old wooden houses which dated back to the Elizabethan period have been pulled down, and their places taken by newer ones of brick. Where there were once green fields, is now covered by new buildings, the streets and roads, now so wide and spacious - were then only narrow, they were ill paved and, should two coaches meet, the greatest possible care had to be taken to allow their passing each other without accident. There were no raised sidewalks with kerbstones marking off the space allotted to pedestrians, instead, a few metal posts, about a yard high, marked off the footway over which they might pass, so they would push and jostle each other as they went along.

From the front of each house and shop, a signpost would stick out, swinging and squeaking in the wind - for although the houses were numbered, most people preferred to give their address as say, the sign of the "Red Dragon" or the "Spotted Leopard" or some other animal that they had painted on the sign.

Sedan Chairs had not gone out of fashion, and here and there you might see one standing at the door of one of the shops or houses with its two bearers waiting to take some passenger on his, or her, journey, or perhaps, you may see them carrying their burden on two long poles that stick out in front and behind the vehicle, you may also note how they roughly jostle the crowd as they carried their burden along.

Umbrellas had not yet made an appearance, and should by chance a sudden shower of rain come on, you might witness an amusing sight, there would be a mad stampede of the pedestrians for the nearest shops for shelter.

The buildings had no pipes or drains to catch the water which fell onto the roofs and it came splashing down into the roadway - deluging all who were unfortunate enough to be caught therein. The shops usually had goods outside the business premises for exhibition and soon the proprietor or his

assistants had to leave his customers and get these goods under cover to protect them from the wet.

As you crouched in some doorway for shelter, you might possibly see someone hurry by into a side street and perhaps hear the cry of “stop thief”, - either some goods had been purloined, or somebody’s pocket had been picked during the confusion which the shower had caused

But not only was the town different, but the habits of the people were different, in those days the tradesmen, who occupied the some business premises did not then, as they do today, live in some suburban villa on the outskirts of town - but resided, generally with his apprentice, in the rooms above his shop and he was wont, when the day was over, to put up the shutters and repair to some nearby Tavern, as part of the daily routine of his social duties.

I have referred to a “nearby tavern”, for as I have already said the streets were narrow and people jostled one another as they passed, consequently, they did not make long journey’s on foot, but used, the river, even when they wished to cross it, for there were only two bridges over the River Thames. Both were narrow and crowded. London Bridge was still there, but the houses on it were being pulled down, the arches through which the water passed, were only narrow, and the water rushed through so fast, that boats could hardly venture through with passengers. The bridge itself was not destroyed until 1826 so passengers took the boat so far, and when they reached London Bridge they got out and waited at the other side until the boat had got safely through, then they embarked once more to finish their journey. There were hundreds of boatmen, always plying for hire, always on the alert for passengers. But there was another cogent reason for his picking a “nearby tavern”. It was not safe to travel in London streets after nightfall, gas and electric lights were not known then, true, in some of the main streets a few oil lamps were hung on posts, or projected from houses, but they were placed at long distances apart from each other and their dim flickering light was only sufficient to make the darkness appear more intense. If you wished to get to any particular place for certain, then, your best plan was to hire a link boy to carry a burning torch to guide you to your required destination. But this would be of no protection in case you were attacked by night prowlers - some ruffianly band of hooligans - or gay sparks out on a spree, out for a lark, and footpads who paraded the streets in gangs, and woe betide the solitary traveller whom they met. Consequently our tradesman did not wish to run the risk. Therefore he did not venture to travel alone very far from his homestead, but generally went in groups. And he was wise, for there were no policemen in those days,

their places were taken by a number of decrepit old men - “City Watchmen” or “Charley’s” they called them. Their duty was to parade through the streets with a lantern and as he passed each house he would cry out: -

“Past twelve o’clock and a moonlight night”

or

“Past twelve o’clock and the stars shine bright”.

As you lay in bed at night you might be disturbed by a rushing of someone dashing past your windows and then hear loud shouting of “Stop Thief”, and every hour or so you could hear the sleepy voice of the watchman calling out the time and state of the weather. But the street is dark and you cannot see who is calling, his voice alone indicates who is there, but he himself, is lost in the darkness. These ‘Charley’s’ were no real protection. Robberies were frequent. Outrages occurred often. Highway Coaches were stopped and their occupants stripped of their valuables. The culprits were rarely brought to book, so our tradesman takes the precaution of not going far from home.

“Can you blame him”

Chapter Two

The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes

It's First Beginnings

When for a lengthy period a number of individuals have been accustomed to meet as members of a particular society, and generation after generation has passed away leaving few, if any records, to show how that society came into existence, a number of legends, traditions, and fables, will invariably be found clustering around that venerable institution, investing it with a veil of mystery and giving it an appearance of antiquity, which, possibly, were the true facts concerning its origin known, would be altogether absent.

It is thus with the greater majority of our great Orders. They started as a coterie of a few convivial souls, - a convivial club - often held in some out of the way obscure tavern, probably about the end of the eighteenth century, their founders, convivial souls, whose main purpose was to establish something which would give opportunities for their assembling together, and allow their spending an enjoyable evening.

The society thus formed grew in strength and magnitude, became popular, and passed from one generation to another, and from one place to another, until it had spread itself over the length and breadth of the land. Those who had founded it, had no thought of this, hence no proper records either of its doings, or of its wandering, had been taken, therefore the account of its origin, or its history do not accompany it on its travels, fictitious stories arise, the true history becomes obscure, or lost sight of, with the result, that there are thousands of members of various societies in existence today who, if questioned concerning their own particular fraternity, would be unable to give a satisfactory account as to how, why, when, or where, that society had started its journey.

The Buffalo Order is one of this class. Its early history is shrouded in obscurity. Questions relating to its age and origin are sure to provoke controversy, even among its own members there is not unanimity on the subject. Some very vague and conflicting views are held. The title takes us back to a very early but improbable date in the worlds history, while certain "historical" statements made in its "Lecture" would, if accepted as literal facts, show it to have existed from a very ancient date indeed and thus give justification for the use of the phrase that its "Origins were lost in the mists of antiquity".

Myth and Legend

While some would have us believe that these “historical” allusions are fully justified and must be accepted as literal records of something which has actually occurred, there are others who claim they are only allegories, or legends, to which we must give a symbolic interpretation. Another party, pointing to the absence of any indisputable document to support these allegations, claim that they must not be taken seriously. They assent that they are parts of an original spoof character which the Order possessed at its formation, and say that these things were not originally believed - were not intended to be believed - but were introduced by our rollicking, roistering, theatrical promoters and worked for the fun of the thing.

Bullism

Latterly another school of thought has arisen, led by an old Primo of the Grand Surrey Banner, they would have us seek for the origins of Buffaloism 'neath the shadow of the Pyramids of Egypt, or 'midst the shifting sands of an Assyian desert. They confuse the buffalo with the bull and see - or fancy they see - in our ritual and ceremonies, certain things which they assert are shreds of a former Bull Worship and deduce therefrom a theory that present day Buffaloism, is a survival, or has some sort of a connection with, the ancient Apis, or Bull worship of Egypt and elsewhere. They claim as a consequence, that in our ritual there is a certain amount of symbolism which, they assert, can only be explained by this reference to the practice of a bygone generation.

The Earliest Reference

Leaving those who advance these various theories, to substantiate, harmonise, or explain them as best they can, we quit the realms of fancy and come down to actualities.

The earliest reference that we have to the establishment of our Ancient and Honourable Order, is that contained in Pierce Egans's "Finish to the Adventures of Tom, Jerry and Logic", published in 1828 by Virtue and Co. It is then stated that one Joseph Lisle an eccentric but talented artist, now practically forgotten and unknown by all save a few collectors of rare and valuable engravings, assisted by a comedian friend named W. Sinnett, at the Harp Tavern, Russell Street, near the Drury Lane Theatre, London, during

August 1822, established a society, from which has since evolved, **The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes**.

There was nothing either remarkable or wonderful about this society or its formation, it was just one of the many established about the same time, and with the same object, i.e. having a good time together. At that time practically every tavern had one or more clubs of a similar class meeting on its premises, nor was there any mystery attached to the name, for the more peculiar the title, the more it was appreciated in those days, and just as Edmund Kean in 1815 founded at the Coal Hole a theatrical association for “good fellowship, harmony, and charity”, and called it “The Wolves”, so Joseph Lisle, some seven years later established a similar society at the Harp tavern and called it “The Buffaloes”.

Egan goes on to say that the name was suggested by an old ballad “We’ll Chase the Buffalo”. He also informs us that the patrons of “this most eccentric *society* was composed of numerous performers and other comical Wight’s resident in the metropolis”. We are at the same time favoured by a very graphic description of the initiation ceremony as then practised, which shows it to have been of a burlesque character. It is full of buffoonery and rough horseplay. Its comicality being apparently only limited by the wit of the “orator” and simplicity of the noviciate. The candidate was subjected to a series of tests which while trying his temper, would provide an amusement for the onlookers. He was unmercifully spoofed, among other things he is told of the celebrities who either are - or have solicited to become - members of the Order. To mention a few, The Duke of Wellington, The Lord Chancellor, The Twelve Judges, Mr Cobbet, Mr Kean, Mr Peel, Mr Brougham, Mr Liston, Old Townsend the trap, were all declared to have been made Buffs.

These apocryphal assertions concerning the celebrities, who even at this early date are humorously claimed as being members of the Order, are as nothing to those who at a subsequent date are included in the “Lecture”. There practically every historical character of note from the patriarchal Noah, to King George IV of England are included, either as members, or claimed to be connected therewith.

It is however, worthy of note that in this early account of the Initiation ceremony as given here by Egan, these strangely fantastic stories, which later became so closely identified with the Buffalo Order, nowhere find a place. For example we do not here read of the “many Buff Knights” who were present at the signing of the Magna Charta in 1215. In fact there is no mention of any Knights at all in this account. The presentation of a “Silken Banner” by Queen Elizabeth is also omitted and singular to state there is no mention

of that strangely illusionary being known as “George Cooper Murray, of thrice Blessed Memory”, nor is there any reference made to the initiation of George IV “when Prince of Wales” by Richard Barnsley and Sheridan at the Harp Tavern. Evidently these stories have not at this time been included.

Effect of the Union

Unfortunately the lack of system during the earlier career of the Order, prevented the whole of the lodges throughout the country from federating as one great body. At first the union did no more than bring together the Metropolitan lodges. Those in the provinces were not seriously taken into consideration, many felt aggrieved in consequence of what they considered to be a slight, they not being taken into consideration, and much controversy was the result. Eventually things settled down, and though the Provincials did not at once enter into the scheme and continued their original system of grouping around some parent or district lodge, adopting various names according to their fancy or geographic situation to distinguish themselves from other groups, and thus remained for a while as independent bodies, outside the jurisdiction of Grand Lodge of England, they to a great extent gave it their sympathetic support.

But the Federation prospered and eventually became the strongest group of all, and so far as influence went in this country, there was no other body to compare to it for it was the predominant factor in Buffaloinism and by common consent was accepted as being representation of the whole, its lead was followed to a great extent, by the majority of the smaller groups, who in time did not fail to see, and appreciate the advantages to be derived by being connected with a central executive, and one by one began to join it. Meanwhile all worked in harmony.

The New Position

Let us view the situation as it stood after the federation of the Metropolitan Lodges had taken place, particularly how it affected the subscribing lodges. Great changes have been made. Practically the whole of the lodges throughout that district have jointly and several agreed to sink their individuality and act through an Executive as a combined whole. They agree to submit to the government and guidance of a Grand Executive body, which they themselves had mutually formed, and of which they are a peak.

Through their authorized representatives they have cast off many of their previously existing rights and privileges, and transferred them to the newly formed Governing Authority, and this body is now by common consent recognized as the one and only body which can legally grant Dispensations, open, or constitute new lodges, make rules, or govern the Order. Henceforth the individual lodge must be subservient to the will of a majority of the representatives of all the lodges in Grand Lodge assembled.

Through their recognized and legally appointed delegates, ratified and conformed by resolution in their own lodge, they have agreed to abide by a ruling of that body. To use a Yankeeism, they have “delivered the goods”, taken pay for them, and cannot take them back again, or rehabilitate themselves into their former independent position, they have signified their acquiescence of all these proceedings of the Executive body by taking part therein. Henceforth they are bound by it. We shall later see how some of these lodges kept their solemn pledge.

Consolidation

But apart from these considerations this Metropolitan Federation was a great step and had a tremendous influence in the consolidation of the Order. The lodges were now able to act as one whole, great changes were at once made, and others set into motion. No longer was it possible for lodges to do as they pleased, individuals who acted contrary to rule might now be called to count. They must all be guided by the rules and regulations agreed to. The lodges became regularly organized bodies, with set officers, set duties, and times of meeting. The whole system of working has been gone through and made uniform. Much of the buffoonery was abolished, and the power of admitting and raising brethren to higher degrees was regulated and to a certain extent restricted. The days of “go as you please” and “do what you like” was gone, apparently for ever and to one supreme ruling power all might turn to for instruction and guidance, also assistance and protection in all matters appertaining to the Order. Another point to which attention may be drawn is, that at this date (1827 or 8) the Order is simply “The Buffalo Society”. It does not claim to be either “Royal” or “Antediluvian”, showing clearly that these titles are not something which has been handed down to us from the past generations, but are spoof creatures of a later date than the account given by Egan.

Could Egan know the Truth?

Egan was favourably placed for obtaining accurate information concerning the Buffalo Order, he lived at the period, and was on the spot when the event he alleges to have taken place, happened. He was a “man about town” and a prominent member of another social club known as “The Owls” held at the Sheridan Knowles Tavern, Bridge Street, Covent Garden, opposite the Box entrance to the Drury Lane Theatre, and therefore quite close to the Harp Tavern where the Buffaloes held their meetings. As a theatrical critic, his duties would often cause him to frequent the Harp where the Theatricals congregated. His circle of acquaintances embraced many probable members of the Buffalo Order, and though he does not expressly lay claim to being a member himself, it is quite probable that he was.

But this latter point need not be pushed, it is one of no consequence, non-membership would not prevent his being informed as to the facts by others, and as a journalist it was his business to have knowledge of such events. Furthermore, in the very early days of Buffaloes, non-members, when introduced by a brother of the Order, were allowed to be present at its meetings. The secrets being communicated to the Candidate privately outside the general meeting. Such being so, there was nothing to prevent Egan being present on the occasion he speaks of, even though he was not a Buff.

Egan’s evidence bears the impress of truth. It contains nothing improbable and though published within six years after the date of opening, there is no record of his assertion ever being contradicted, and everything that we *really know* concerning the early history of the Buffalo Order goes to corroborate the statement he makes. For example, tradition has all along consistently pointed to the Harp tavern as the *fauns et orig.* of all things Buffaloistic. The first authentic record that we possess of the Order shows it to have been located there. That it was a spoof society as Egan’s description says needs no corroboration from me, all our old veterans know this to be a fact from personal experience. Certainly the theatrical element patronised it extensively during its earlier years and the Chorus “We’ll Chase the Buffalo” was sung in our lodges up to quite a recent date.

With reference to the date of its original formation, I know that some claim an earlier one than 1822, but the fact remains, you may search through Buffalo records, or the records of any other society Ancient or Modern or Mediaeval and fail to find any mention of the R.A.O.B until you come to the year 1822. Surely if the Order existed at an earlier date than that, there would have been some reference made to it somewhere, but neither in Manuscript

or in print, in Magazine, Newspaper or Book, is there any indication of the existence of any such society before then. These things being allowed we may reasonably conclude that there is no reference because there was no Buffalo Society to refer to, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. We may accept Egan's statements regarding the formation of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes as uncontradicted facts.

Other Writers not so favourably placed

So far so good, but what about those who claim an earlier date of origin? They are on an entirely different footing. They write years after the event, when everybody who could possibly have had any personal knowledge of the formation has passed away, and when even hearsay evidence is more or less forgotten, further, when repeatedly challenged to do so, they have failed to bring one single particle of evidence to support their allegations, they rely, not upon historical records, but upon some supposed resemblance in our ritual to certain things which they assert happened thousands of years ago, but which are themselves purely conjectural events.

But even these resemblance's are doubtful. They can only be recognised by those whose minds that have been prepared for their reception, others fail to observe them, and even if allowed, the most that can be reasonably claimed for them is that they are coincidences due to mere chance, and not design and of wit. There the idler lounged and where the business man found a mart for his wares. It was made a rendezvous for appointments. People had their letters addressed there, all sorts and conditions of men, with all shades of opinion foregathered and ventilated their views. They sorted themselves into little groups or coteries - like to like by degrees - and the excellent rules then governing tavern life prevented any ill effects from the odd mixture of the classes.

Tavern life was different in those days, few people living today can realise or understand the great part which the tavern played in the lives of those who lived say a century back. There were no "Picture Palaces", the variety show had hardly come to the fore, whist drives were unknown, and the only place where a man could turn for a little relief from the monotony of his daily existence was the tavern.

Our forefathers having a business in the City did not then live in a suburban villa on the outskirts of the town. There were no trains, buses or trams to take him away, and roads were bad, travel was dangerous, hence, they had their residence over his shop or place of business, and when the days toil was over,

they were want to put up their shutters and repair to the nearest tavern as part of their daily routine of social duty. Then, without distinction of class, they could meet together on common ground, read the news - sheet, smoke and over a tankard of ale, talk over the events of the day. The brightly lighted room, together with the general air of good fellowship and good will, made a strong appeal to them in their otherwise drab, monotonous existence.

From the foregoing we can readily understand that the tavern in those days was a free and easy sort of place, where a man could get a drink or a meal or have a conversation with his neighbour as suited himself. Then he could enjoy himself as his inclination tended, and be in good company all the time. He was not looked down, for frequently rather it was those who did not attend who were regarded as unconvivial souls, hardly fit to associate with.

Some of these old taverns still exist and where they are absent we can turn to the description given in the literature of the period, glance at the prints illustration of life at that date, or read the songs and ballads then sung, and then have a good idea of what tavern life was like in those happy days of Merrie England.

Let us visualise the scene, a large room with tables and chairs, a comfortable settee, a great fire always burning, and a kettle ever ready to make Grog. The floor sanded, and a lamp, or a number of candles, illuminating the room. Such was the setting for the tavern scenes of the olden days. And the company. It consisted of those who dined, those who smoked, those who drank, and those who sang, for the song went round freely in those days, one after another would raise his voice and give some popular melody, to be followed by another warbler who would endeavour to continue the harmony. This is one of the changes which time has wrought; only a little while ago men were accustomed to meet together every evening, and over their pipes and ale, tell stories, and sing songs. Not only the young man, but the middle aged, and even the old man would join in the harmony, and make the rafters ring with their jolly choruses. They would clap their hands, and boisterously bang upon the table with their fists, and laugh until their sides ached. And the choruses! What were they? Not the elaborate compositions of today, but a good old fashioned melody with more music than words, the fol-lol-la-di-ido, sort into which all might join without the trouble of learning the words.

Congenial Groups

As I have said all sorts and conditions of men met at the tavern in the olden days, and there sorted themselves into congenial groups, each individual

of a group having some interest in common with the rest. Thus Artists, Dramatists, Architects, Poets, Travellers, Ecclesiastics, Statesmen etc., all frequented the tavern.

Where the district was thickly populated and there were a number of taverns, it was the custom for each particular group to attach themselves to a particular house, and thus it came to pass that certain houses became noted as the rendezvous of the class which frequented it, the artisans in one, the professional in another and so on.

Slang Phraseology

These various groups carried with them the peculiar phraseology of their own particular class. Thus in one house you would hear the jargon of the trade, profession or class of those frequenting it. A knowledge of this was necessary if you would join in with any of the groups, it served as a sort of a password an “open sesame” which permitted your entrance into the inner circle, and without which you remained an outsider, if not an interloper.

This slang phraseology might, as I have said, be the technical words used with a particular trade or profession of those assembled, or it might be the patios of the common people adopted, and used for the fun of the thing. The use of these flash, or slang terms became quite an art about a century ago, among a certain smart set. It was looked upon as a sign of good breeding. Its use was compulsory when on certain occasions they assembled together, and a penalty was inflicted if it was not used.

As an example of this latter class I give a few terms used by one of these groups. That adopted for malt liquor was an expression often heard in the neighbourhood of the Seven Dials, “Gatter”. Gin was spoken of as “Juniper”. Tobacco was referred to as “Weed”. The pipe naturally became a “Weed Consumer” and Matches were known as “Weed” or “Stick” lights. Pence were called “d’s”. A collection for any special purpose was a “Whip”, and the common fund described as “The Treasury”.

The Formation of Clubs

Naturally the same individuals meeting together at a certain house, night after night, came to be looked forward to by those participating as a pleasant break in their otherwise monotonous lives and the agreeable visits were repeated so often until they became habitual. Then perhaps the intrusion into their own particular circle of some uninvited, and unwanted individual

suggested the idea of making their own group select by the formation of a club. This being acted upon, the group for the future, met in some special room, at stated periods by arrangement with "Mine Host".

Once started the fashion grew apace, filled with hilarity (and Beer) these old time revellers formed clubs for every conceivable reason. It became the age of clubs, practically every Inn and Tavern in the Metropolis and the large towns of the Provinces had its own room, in some cases three and four met in the same house on different nights of the week, when brimming glasses of Juniper and foaming tankards of Gatter had to be crossed by a churchwarden variety of weed consumer, and consecrated by solemn ceremonies of incantation 'not necessary to mention', before they were considered fit to be swallowed.

Club Procedure

It is not going too far to say that the majority of clubs were opened and closed on their meeting nights by some sort of ceremonial proceeding, and the admission of new members in into their midst was made the occasion for the performance of a formal ceremony of Initiation, for which a fee was charged, and this together with the "D's" collected for breaches of their recognised rules, with perhaps an occasional "Whip" for some special or urgent cause, constituted the wherewithal by which they paid the expenses of their meeting together, or contributed to those cases which made a claim upon their Benevolence or "Treasury". As a rule the liquor consumed on the occasion of a levy, or contribution of so much per member together paid for their meeting, as circumstances warranted.

With this galaxy of talent, of wit, of an extensive knowledge of mankind, its habits and customs all over the world, it is not surprising to find that they brought into their secret conclaves a ritual and a ceremony which one or more of the members had picked up in some out of the way place.

They invented curious legends, shrouded their proceedings in mystery and endeavoured to add to the attractions of their society by aping the forms and usage's of older orders, generally making a claim to be of ancient foundation. No doubt some of the much travelled would bring in a knowledge of ancient and tribal ceremonies from lands far afield. They delved into the records of ancient mysteries, and produced initiatory rites at once theatrical and terrifying, often they went to the opposite extreme and introduced ceremonies of a ludicrous and hoaxing character, which however pleasing they might be for the onlooker were extremely humiliating to the poor victim.

It was a period of heavy drinking and a roistering, rollicking crowd which assembled in the old taverns to honour to Bacchus, a happy go lucky lot in which jokes were cracked, health's drunk, and some songs sung to enliven the proceedings, a minstrel being almost invariably present to accompany the singers.

Public meetings were looked upon with askance in those days. The Government had a suspicion that all such assemblies were simply breeding places for plots, and taverns supplied a place where a body of men could meet and discuss their views, air their grievances, hatch their conspiracies, arrange strikes, or devise some other less drastic means for the betterment of their condition, hence, a ban was placed on all such gatherings. Therefore to camouflage their proceedings, the meetings were often called by some name, which would give little or no clue to the business really transacted.

Such clubs were however the exception, and taking them on the whole, the majority were harmless convivial gatherings, eating and drinking were the foremost objects, the spirit of good fellowship always predominated and was everywhere evident, philanthropy though practised was not a main feature, it was a sort of a "make-weight" thrown in, which might be pleaded as an excuse for their assembling together. Individually the members might be, and in the majority of case undoubtedly were, charitable, but the society, as such was not a provident, no funds were specially earmarked for that purpose. The main object was enjoyment, assistance to less fortunate members was a personal matter for the individual member, and no part of the objects of the club. In the few cases where such objects were part of the admitted purpose of the assembly, there was always a fear of an unjustifiable interference with their funds. The recollections of the earlier confiscations of guild property had not died out, hence they accumulated no capital, held no reserve, and when such did occur, generally dispersed them by a good dinner at stated intervals.

Friendly Rivalry

We can readily understand that there would be much good humoured rivalry between these clubs, that they would vie one with another as to which could have the most spectacular and theatrical display in their ceremonies, or the most fantastic title. They would copy one from the other, the Freemasons being the society most usually imitated, hence the resemblance's in phraseology of the various rituals - the sameness in some ceremonies - which we so often notice.

This spirit of rivalry would result in extravagant language and claims with regard to age and origin, a great antiquity being usually asserted. To support these claims some sort of a legend would be incorporated into the ritual or initiation ceremony. This would usually be "Set" in some remote period, and there would generally some scriptural subject referred to. The Patriarchal age, the Garden of Eden, the Noachian Flood were favourite subjects. In cases where these societies have survived, later generations have endeavoured to obliterate, or explain away these "legends". In some cases they have been dropped altogether and all references to same removed from the official documents, but traces still remain, and even in the revised of such fraternities as have managed to survive until today, you may still see references to these old time fables, they are relics of a Bacchanalian age, and though interesting to the student, often prove misleading to ordinary members, who are inclined to give them a literal interpretation, and to believe them to be facts instead of a spoof, as they undoubtedly are.

Conclusion

The foregoing may be taken as a fair description of the average club of the eighteenth century, and to a certain extent the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it is from such sources, and from such an environment that the majority of our Great Orders and Friendly Societies have been evolved. They may occupy exalted positions today, but it is not going too far to say that the common room of the tavern has been their cradle, for there was evolved the nucleus of the sick and burial clubs which have since grown into such splendid institutions. The Freemasons, in consequence of their association therewith, have given their name to a whole series of taverns, and many other Orders, such as the Druids, Oddfellows, Foresters, Shepherds and Buffaloes, together with a host of others, owe their existence to the old time Tavern, had it not been for the good offices of "Mine Host" the publican, it is doubtful whether one would have survived.

There can be no disgrace or disappointment in the tracing of any particular society - however exalted it may be today - to one of the old Tavern Club. The taverns of bye-gone days were highly respectable, and played no small part in the social history of the country, they were frequented by the highest, and the lowest in the land, every rank and every profession went there, and rubbed shoulder to shoulder within its walls. There was not then any prejudice among the ultra respectable, or "unio quid" about being seen in a tavern, and its frequenters were not regarded with suspicion, rather it was

those who stayed away who were ostracised. Today the point of view has changed, the world has adopted much of a temperance idea, but we must not judge of things of a century back by these present standards. The old time tavern played an important part in the social life of the community once, the Tavern club was the beginnings, and showed the way for many of the duties now performed by public institutions. The majority of our Great Orders sprung therefrom, and the work they do would not have been possible had it not been for the tavern.

Tempora Munantor Et Nos Mutamur In Illis

The times are changing and we with them. The old Inns with their sanded floors, great open fireplaces, and rafted ceilings are nearly all gone, and with them has disappeared much of the tavern life. The good company, and songs. We do not now meet the occasional guest breaking his journey by staying the night at the village inn. No longer do we listen to the news which these travellers used to relate concerning the strange happenings in distant parts, of the difficulties they experienced in finding their way across trackless moor, of the troubles due to the bad state of the roads, the breakdown - the adventures with highwaymen, and providential escapes therefrom. These are all things of the past, gone never to return, nothing but the memory remains but what memories they are, and what living man can tell of the things that were without a sigh.

These things all went when the railway train came rushing along over the iron rails. It drove the stagecoach with its living freight, and all its romance, off the road. Then came better roads which made travelling safer, and easier, than it had ever been, and with these came the motor, dashing with breakneck speed, paying little heed to either romance, or the picturesque, speed! speed! speed! Ever in a hurry, and the old tavern is of the past, obsolete, derelict.

Historical Allusions and Legends

The Clubs once formed, there would be much rivalry between them as to which could have the most spectacular display in their ceremonial and the most wonderful incidents connected with their history. Kings and Queens would be referred to, who could not possible have ever heard of the Society who now claimed them, incidents would be recorded - generally connected with Biblical stories, - The Garden of Eden, The Noachian flood, The Building of the Temple, are the ones most plagiarised.

That part of our Title which describes our Order as being “Antediluvian” is often brought forward and ridiculed. But this nothing to the claims made - for example - one of the most serious and respected of our Societies which are never so much mention, I allude to the Masonic Order. In 1723 Dr. James Anderson compiled a new constitution for this Order, he furnished it with a revised history, and a fresh set of charges, which were to replace the traditional ‘Old Charges’ of the craft. He wrote an account of its history from the days of Adam! He introduced us to our first Grand Master, Moses and tells us that he often marshalled the Israelites into regular Lodges during their sojourn in the wilderness. He made Nebuchadnezzar into another Grand Master. Solomon is also given as a Grand Master of a Lodge in Jerusalem. Thus he bequeathed to us an extensive history, which can only be regarded as pure fiction. But evidently he did not, in tracing Freemasonry to Adam, go far enough back. William Preston in his *Illustrations of Masonry* attempts to trace the Order back to *the commencement of the world*, and Dr. George Oliver with his *Antiquities of Freemasonry*, tried to make out that Masonry existed in the older planetary systems before the formation of the earth.

In these wonderful stories, a great part is played by Jabal, the son of Lamech, (Enoch, Genesis iv). The builder of the first house of stone before the flood, and also his brothers Jubal and Jubal Cain. They knew that the wrath of God would destroy the earth, so they hid their knowledge in two stone pillars, one which was found after the flood, by the Great Grandson of Noah, and the other by Pythagorus who, according to Anderson brought this Wisdom of the Orient and communicated the Great *Secret*, which is the foundation of Masonry. Prophet Jeremiah is presumed to have introduced Masonry into Ireland, and so on, and so on. I say these things concerning Freemasonry with no desire to disparage or discredit it’s achievements, for from whatever point of view we observe it, there is no social phenomenon so remarkable as that of the growth of this society during the last century under its acgia. Men of every colour, religion, and clime have been ranged. As an operative Trade Guild, Freemasons were organised bodies of skilled workmen engaged in the erection of Stately Buildings. But when the need for these ceased to be any longer required, the society shook itself clear from its trade connections, and gradually became a *Social Club*. Possessed of all the glamour of a secret society with none of its drawbacks, and it became fashionable. Nobles and Princes joined it. They became interested, and Kings did not think it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the Sceptre for the Trowel and joined in their assemblies. Theirs is no idle boast, when they present an array of crowned heads. We may not accept the romantic stories which Dr.

Anderson incorporated in his second book of Constitutions, such as Nimrod the mighty hunter, King David, Charles Martel, James I and Charles II being members of the craft, but it does seem possible that the young pretender was - and though he denied the fact, that he was Master of a Lodge in Rome, Napoleon too was a Grand Master of the Order in France, but I have not yet ever heard anyone claim that the Kaiser was a member of the craft. Today no brother of intelligence gives credence to the stories that St. Alban in 287 formed the first Masonic Lodge in Britain - that Edwin the first Christian King of Northumbria became a patron of the Order - that King Athelstone granted Masons a Charter in 936, or that his son, Prince Edwin presided over a Grand Lodge in York - or that Edward III revised the Constitution two years after the victory of Pointiers, and we assign into limbo the fable of the initiation of Henry VI in 1450, and William III in 1690. These stories are pure imagination, and have no place in an authentic history, such as which the History of Masonry ought to be.

Royal

To continue with our Title. It describes our Order as being 'Royal'. Well Royal was not at its inception the word used. It was said to be LOYAL. Why? Because during the period when it first came into existence the country seethed with seduction, and the Government looked with disfavour on all societies which met behind closed doors. So to disburse the mind of this idea the title Loyal to display the loyalty of its members, but this was quickly changed to royal, which is not a very apt title for a society with such a lengthy list of Kings which the Buffaloes displayed in its Ritual and a title which the government has since given the Order the right to use on account of "Long Use".

The next is "**Ante-diluvian**". This if true, would give the Order an antiquity of origin which is certainly not correct. Its date of origin is definitely known. It commenced its existence during August 1822, and the presence of this word is apparently due to the 'spoofing' character of its initiation ceremony, probably a 'Gag' made by one of the orators that Buffaloism started in the days when there was no 'A' and 'B' was the first letter of the alphabet. We must keep in mind the fact that the Ritual was originally not printed, and rarely reduced to writing, the old time 'Orator' generally an old actor, usually committed it to memory and embellished it by additions limited only by the extent of his wit and the simplicity of the Candidate, We can only presume that this is a sample of his wit.

The next word is “Buffalo”. I well remember the time when I was first initiated. In congratulating me they said, “Now you are a Buffalo”. To which another spectator added “No, not yet, he is only a Kangaroo”!! I could not be both a Buffalo and a Kangaroo. Then it was explained that before I was entitled to the full privileges of a Buffalo, I must undergo a certain period of probation and during this period, I was considered to be only a ‘Kangaroo’. After this, presumably my character and conduct having been satisfactory, I would be changed into a Buffalo. How this strange metamorphosis took place, I could not understand, but after I had read the whole of the old ritual, and seen what the **Kangaroo March** was like, I began to comprehend why a Kangaroo is referred to. The **Kangaroo Leap** makes this point clear.

The next and last term in connection with our title is that of “Buffaloes”. Why should we be called “Buffaloes?” There seemed to be no connection between the two - the Biped variety which I met in Lodges, and the Quadruped animal I had seen and read about.

There was the American kind, which is a large wild animal which used to roam over the prairies of the eastern hemisphere. It is very like a bull, with shaggy hair, and a fatty ‘Hump’ on its shoulders. But this is not really a Buffalo, its correct name is a Bison. So we can dismiss this from our comparison. Then, there is the ‘Water Buffalo’, but a brief acquaintance with my Lodge members soon assured me that this did not really tally. The members of the Lodge were not usually particularly fond of water as a beverage, so I turned to the real Buffalo. They are fierce animals, they differ from the Bull, their horns are not rounded but flattened, so they differ from the Oxon kind and I could trace no resemblance. I made further enquiries and got little satisfaction. The nearest was a suggestion from one brother who stated that both Biped and Quadruped Buffaloes are alike in one particular way, in as much as both have usually got the ‘Hump’.

The thought came into my head that the Buffs who originally founded our Order were the Theatrical Profession, and I remembered the “Buffoon”, the chief actor in a burlesque or comic play, who was known as a ‘Primo Buffo’. The proceedings of our old-time Lodges were burlesque, and the principle officer, when presiding, must, if he is to be successful, be of necessity be one who has his wits about him and be always ready with a repartee. When he was made Primo, he was dubbed “Primo Buffo”. The original name given to members of the order was “Buffs”, and one of the earliest documents we possess refers to a society known as “**The Carlisle Primo Buffo Society**”, which claims to have been founded in January 1831. So I concluded that the title Buffalo is really derived from ‘Buffoon’, and ‘Primo

Buffo' is a survival of the individual we once knew as 'King Jester'. The change to Buffalo is quiet easy and natural. The old ballad known as "We'll Chase the Buffalo" was once very popular. It had originally introduced in a play at the Haymarket Theatre in 1792, thirty years before the Buff Society was started. It had still retained its popularity, and was sung regularly at the meetings of the musical club "The City of Lushington", which the Buffs had been accustomed to attend.

But the change from Buffo to Buffaloes is not to be despised. The Buffalo is a brave, strong and self denying beast, ever ready - even to death - to save its own kind, living in herds but never deserting its cows or calves, always prepared to protect and defend them to its last gasp.

A splendid example to follow, 'Primo Buffo' may be good, but 'Buffalo' is not far behind.

Chapter Three

The Old time City of Lushington and the Harp Tavern

When men are knit together by a love of society, not a spirit of faction, and do not meet to censure or annoy those that are absent, but to enjoy one another, when they are thus combined for their own improvement, or for the good of others, or at least relax themselves from the business of the day, by an innocent and cheerful conversation, there may be something very useful in these little institutions and establishments.

Spectator No.9

“The Harp Tavern is well known as a house of call for Actors, here you have an opportunity of viewing, and interviewing, players in and out of engagement, stage struck youths anxious to become actors and other perfect enthusiasts, together with mummers and spongers without end, ever ready to Lush out of you or make you a member of the City of Lushington”.

Charles Brinsley Sheridan “True History of Tom and Jerry”

The Harp Tavern, and the old time City of Lushington Club which was formerly held there, are the generally recognised starting points of the Buffalo Order, it has therefore been thought advisable to include a short description of the procedure of this famous club, as it was immediately prior to the establishment of Buffaloism in 1822 in this series, as being one of interest to present day members of the Order. Let it however be distinctly understood that no connection is claimed, the Lushingtons were not Buffs, but a rival society, from which the Buffaloes were derived.

The Harp Tavern was in its day a famous house of call for theatricals, it stood in Russell Street, Covent Gardens, London, almost opposite to the pit entrance to the Drury Lane Theatre, was in its day a well known house for the theatrical profession. It was, for over a century the home of a social club of no small celebrity, patronised by the theatricals, singers, literary men, dramatic critics, and others. This convivial crowd met in a square oak panelled room behind the bar, and called themselves, “Citizens of the Ancient and Honourable City of Lushington”. The presiding “Officer” was humorously addressed as “My Lord Mayor”, clad in mayoral robes sat on a raised dais along with four “Aldermen” a “Sheriff” and the other officers, usually found on a City of ancient foundation.

Although it is not possible for me to give a detailed history of this celebrated club, I may say that it was of ancient foundation, having been established somewhere about the year 1760. Its title is hardly necessary to add to, being derived from a very useful and important beverage commonly called “Lush”.

The Four Wards of the City

The members called the room wherein they met a “City” and divided it into four “wards” which they named “Poverty”, “Juniper”, “Suicide”, and “Lunatic”, effects usually produced after there has been a rather too free imbibation of that from which the club derived its name.

From an account of the club published more than a century ago, I learn that the right hand corner of the room (City) on entering was the part designated as “Suicide Ward” and the explanation given for this curious appellation was that a number of “Citizens” were accustomed to meet here, each of whom had bound himself by a solemn oath, that, however much he might feel inclined to lay violent hands on his glass, he would never lay violent hands on his own existence.

The left hand corner was known as “Poverty Ward” and was so termed because of its close proximity to the door permitted a “Citizen” who’s apparel was somewhat shabby to make his entry and exit, without subjecting himself to the embarrassing gaze of his more fortunate fellow citizens.

In the corner directly opposite Suicide was situated “Lunatic” or “Imbecile Ward”, indication no doubt of the mental character of some whose conviviality during the time they were in their cups, outstretched the bounds of propriety, and encroached on the sympathetic forbearance of their fellow citizens.

The Aldermen

For each of these wards an “Alderman” was appointed and these, along with “Lord Mayor” were annually elected to their positions by certain Burlesque ceremonies, but which notwithstanding their burlesque character were carried out with as much decorum and pomp that would have done credit to the City of London itself.

High Bailiff

Among the officials was a “High Bailiff” who at certain appointed times would issue his “writ” for an election of which the following is an example:

Election “Writ”

City of Lushington “to wit”

The High Bailiff having received requisition to convene a meeting for the purpose of nominating Aldermen to represent the different wards and from them elect a Mayor for the above City for the year ensuing.

The High Bailiff in pursuance thereof fixes Saturday the 22nd December inst., to Nominate for the purpose aforesaid, and from thence proceed to election, which election is to be continued till the following Monday, being the 24th, when the poll is to be closed.

Given under my hand this the 18th day of December 1821

Signed. *F. Sims.*

Lushington Hall
High Bailiff

The election is to commence at 7 o'clock. The poll to be closed at half past 10.

The Election

These preliminaries having been attended to, preparations were at once made for the Election, and hustings were erected, from which speeches were delivered and committees formed for the advancement of the claims of the various candidates. The citizens were canvassed by the friends of those who sought suffrage of the inhabitants of this important city, and if during the course of these, some promises were given, and some pledges made which were impossible of fulfilment, “we may point out that the same thing is done under circumstances of much greater gravity than the one under consideration, where the office held is purely of an honorary character”.

During the time that the election was in progress “Constables” guarded the “gates” to prevent the intrusion of any unauthorized person. They were armed with staves, but instead of a crown, these staves were surmounted by a quarter measure, which produced a most striking and novel effect.

Naturally within the city itself all was bustle, canvassers were continually bringing in voters from the surrounding “Habitations” who with colours flying were introduced to the “Clerk of the Poll”.

The Oath

Before any citizen was allowed to record his vote, he was first called upon to take an oath of a most solemn and serious character, and which, not withstanding any “conscientious” objections which he might hold, must be taken with suitable gravity before he is allowed to poll.

In substance the oath was as follows: -

I do swear that I have been an inhabitant of the City of Lushington for the space of years, and that I have taken within its walls pots of porter glasses of Jackey and smoked pipes.

That is to say one pot of “heavy wet”, one glass of juniper and one load of “weed” at least annually, and have been the cause of such acts in others, or have been present when such acts have been performed, and that I have not polled at this election.

(The blanks were filled in according to circumstances)

This oath was sworn with the due solemnity by kissing the foot of a broken glass, after which the vote was recorded.

The Dedication

At the appointed time the poll was declared to be closed. The votes recorded were counted and the High Bailiff would then declare the name of the successful candidate.

This called forth a unanimous burst of applause from those assembled. The Victor would then return thanks to his supporters and usually make a request, that the company assembled indulge in whatever the house provided.

The unsuccessful would also thank those who had given them their support assuring them that though defeated they were not disgraced and would come up to fight again. A scrutiny not being called for, the elected was called upon to take the official oath, after which he was invested with the cloak of magistracy and duly installed as “Lord Mayor” for the ensuing year.

Liberty Hall

The meeting then passed into “Liberty Hall” when harmony and conviviality would prevail, sparkling decanters, foaming bowls and flowing glasses decorated the tables and song interspersed with speech and toast became the order of the evening, there was free exchange of compliments and good fellowship, and not until the “Wee Small” hours of the morning did the meeting terminate and the citizens depart to their various homes feeling thoroughly satisfied with themselves, their neighbours, and the world.

The account related above has been culled from the description of the 1821 election, published in 1822.

Sixty Years ago (1860's)

I will now supplement this with an account of the same club as it appeared in the “Sixties”, of the last century, kindly given to me by a dear old pal in the Buffalo Order, who has now, sorry to say has gone to his rest. During his lifetime he was a regular attender at this famous club.

He describes the room where the club was held as being fairly commodious and comfortable. He claims that though the title might lead to suppose that the proceedings would be mixed with a certain amount of levity and drunkenness, the facts were directly to the contrary, everything was conducted with the strictest propriety and decorum. It was a convivial gathering of actors, newspaper critics of the theatre, wits, and jovial tradesmen, whose hands were ever ready to help when it became known that some member was down on his luck.

The “Lord Mayor” clad in his mayoral robes, and attended by his aldermen and “Sheriff” used to enter the city about eight o’clock and slowly walk in procession to their seats on the raised dais. The Mayor in the centre, presiding. Immediately in front of these was a mahogany table bearing certain creature comforts in the shape of bottles and drinking glasses (not always empty), together with long churchwarden weed consumers and weed, the latter being there for the accommodation of the Civic Magistrates, Officials and Citizens alike.

The Commemoration Tablet

Four large framed and glazed notices displayed, one on each wall, informed all and sundry that the Lushingtons divided their city into wards, the name of each ward was stated thereon. A large pair of Spanish Ox horns were suspended over a brass tablet commemorating the services of a former member.

The following is a copy of the inscription: -

A Tribute of respect to the memory of Sir William Sims Theatrical agent.

Obit. Feb. 9th. 1841. Aetat 54. He was for 35 years a distinguished member of this City, and thrice Lord Mayor. Many successful aspirants to historic fame are indebted to him for their advancement in the profession, and can look back with gratitude to his advice and assistance.

My friend, whose connection with the City of Lushington was long and varied, states that the club had ever been the haunt of the great and celebrated in the theatrical world. Here Sims the elder flourished for many years. To whose memory the above tablet was erected. He was succeeded by his no less distinguished son, whose election to the chair we have already described. Edmund Kean was at time a regular attender, his corner was scrupulously maintained to the last, as a place of honour. J. L. Took, Sir Henry Irving and a host of other famous “Stars” in the theatrical firmament were also members.

The City Of Lushington is now gone. It continued its existence until the 1880’s, but not with the vigour of its early days. It sadly degenerated towards the end and became an open “Free and Easy” when anyone might go, who were respectfully dressed and had the money to spend.

The old Harp Tavern has also passed away, it had to make way for City improvements in early 1900.

Conclusion

The Harp Tavern and the City of Lushington, are now things of the past. The former was as I said demolished in early 1900, to make way for city improvements: the latter some twenty odd years previously. Both live today only in the memories of a few old stagers to whom the present day, up-to-date London cannot be compared to the convivial days of a generation or so back.

Today, only the memory of these things survive, but what memories they are, none living can have the experience of the old time Harp, or the Lushington club, therefore, we can form little idea of the amount of mirth, wit, and humour, displayed within the walls and gates of that ancient and honourable city. So those who were so privileged, as to have been able to participate in this merry making, would have looked back upon them, as pleasing interludes in their journey through life.

So the old world wags, old customs die out, old institutions pass away, and quietly, and unobtrusively, new ones take their place. But as we look back over the past, and remember the things that were, and are no more, we cannot help occasionally expressing a regret at the change, and wondering whether after all, these things are for the best, whether the world is not the poorer by the loss of such social institutions as these old time tavern clubs, and particularly such as the City Of Lushington was in its prime.

Then, when everyone seemed to be desirous to: -

*Wreath the bowl with flowers of soul
The brightest wit can find us
We'll take a flight towards heaven tonight
And leave the dull earth behind us.*

Chapter Four

The Freemasons

I have already alluded to the fact, that practically the whole of the old-time clubs, in sampling their Initiation Ceremony, copied from those of other Societies and stated that the Freemasons was the one used for this purpose, and as I am dealing more particularly with the origin of the Buffalo Order, it may just be as well to examine the history of the Order in Question.

This history of the Freemasons, may be divided into two periods. The Ancient and the Modern. The Ancient may be called the “Operative” period. The Modern, refers to what is known as the “Speculative” period. This is the one we know today. It is claimed that the modern are a continuation of the old operative class, but there are critics who say that as a “society” the operative class died out sometime during the Reformation Period, when the building of Churches, Abbeys and Castles practically ceased and the old craft guild of the Masonic body was broken up, and a new body of men, not necessarily masons at all, took possession of their name and clothing, and carried on with quite a different object - It was a case of an artisan becoming a social club. It is suggested by the prefix ‘Free’ conveys an indication of the change from the operative to the speculative class. But this is not the case. The term “Freemason” was commonly used long before the Order became ‘Speculative’ and was applied to the operative masons, for example, it is a term used in many of the ancient charges of the operative masons, and at the conclusion of an oath taken by the operative mason, we find, “These are the words and signs of a *free*-mason”.

The operative mason was that of a highly skilled artisan, and a long apprenticeship was imposed. It was a calling which required a lot of technical knowledge. There were secrets which were real and valuable, and the craftsman was bound by a very solemn oath not to reveal the mysteries of his craft to any outsider, so they organized themselves into craft - guilds, and had signs and modes of recognition by which they could know one from another and thus be aware of impostors, and hoped in this way to make their calling an exclusive monopoly of their own.

The prefix “Free” to their title denoted that they were “freemen”. Privileged to wander in any part of the Country - They were ‘free’ to ply their calling and work without interference, when, and where they pleased, and no outside authority, or guild could dictate or prevent them working.

They had their own “Lodges”, generally within the precincts of the building they were engaged in erecting, and none but members of the craft were permitted to enter, for therein were stored all their plans, with design of building along with many secrets of the Order. They were intensely religious, and many monks and ecclesiastics were members of the Order. Their ‘Old Charges’ usually commenced by invocation or reference to the Trinity. They had their own patron Saint, and paid periodical subscriptions into a common fund from which the sick were assisted, and in case of death, his widow and orphans cared for. Masses for the dead were said, and an altar in the church maintained, at which their own chaplain ministered. They held periodical meetings and feasts, observed saints days and festivals, the “Volume of the Sacred Law”, which is our bible was very highly venerated and highly esteemed as a guide through life, and they often devoted part of their funds to objects of a social and religious character. In many cases the funds which they had accumulated amounted to large amounts for they were generous donators. But when at the Reformation, the Building of Churches and Abbeys ceased, their funds were confiscated and their organization broken up and disappeared as a district society.

But some of the individuals formed groups in various parts of the country, they began to admit other trades into their ranks, they commenced to hold meetings in Taverns, and became a social club, each lodge had its own ceremonial, but was an independent unit, without any recognized head, and with little analogy to the old freemasonry, with exception of the name, they were just social gatherings, or convivial clubs and imposed fine for breaches of their rules, failing to bring their badges of membership, aprons or regalia. But they did maintain an exclusive membership, and their selection of members was generally of an excellent order, and composed of the elite of society, and thus they managed to maintain a certain amount of dignity, and kept in touch with the few lodges in various parts of the country, and this continued for close on a couple of centuries. Then there was a departure from the old regime and a new order sprang into existence.

Modern Freemasonry

Four lodges holding their meetings in taverns within the Metropolitan area, decided to combine and form themselves into a Grand Lodge, this took place on St. John the Baptists day in the year of 1717. This “Grand Lodge” claimed to have jurisdiction over the whole of the then existing lodges. For a time however it restricted itself to the Metropolitan area, then in 1724 it

granted charters to several provincial Lodges, and from that time, the craft as they called it began to spread rapidly.

Then in 1725 they committed a great blunder, apparently they forgot that Masonry was not confined to England, but was universal throughout the civilized world, and its signs of recognition could not be arbitrarily changed or interfered with. Admittedly, several, so called exposures of the secrets of this craft had been published, and to thwart these they made many alterations. In 1725 Dr. James Anderson compiled a new constitution. He furnished the new body with a revised history and set of charges which were to replace the traditional “Old Charges” of the Craft.

He wrote an account of its history from the days of Adam. He introduced us to the Grand Master Moses, Nebuchenezzar was another Grand Master, Solomon was also referred to, he bequeathed us an extensive history, but what he wrote can only be regarded as pure fiction or legend. But, there were “Experts” in the eighteenth century, Anderson had gone back to Adam but evidently he had not, to please these gone far enough. William Preston, for instance, in his **“Illustrations of Masonry”** attempts to trace the order back to the commencement of the World, and Dr. George Oliver’s **“Antiquities of Freemasonry”** tries to make it clear that it existed in the older planetary systems, before the formation of the Earth took place.

In these wonderful stories a great part was played by Jabal, the son of Lamech i.e. (Enoch, Genesis iv), the builder of the first house of stone before the Flood, also his brothers Jubal and Tubal Cain, they knew the wrath of God would descend upon the earth, so they hid their knowledge in two pillars, one of which was found after the flood by the great-grandson of Noah, and another much later by Pythagoras who, according to Anderson brought the wisdom of the Orient and communicated the great secret which is the fundamentals of Masonry. Prophet Jeremiah is presumed to have introduced Masonry into Iceland, and we are told that Grand Master Moses often marshalled the Israelites into a regular lodge whilst in the wilderness. Amongst the changes introduced were those of recognition and admission to lodges, with the result, that several masons coming into the district from Scotland and Ireland, could not gain admission. They therefore took strong steps to remedy this, they formed a Grand Committee in 1752 and two years later, they made a Grand Lodge of their own and, as this lodge was a protest against the innovations made by the Grand Lodge of England, they called themselves “The Ancients”, and the original Grand Lodges “The Moderns”. They very soon had a Grand Master of their own, The Duke of Atholl. They attracted to themselves many who were dissatisfied with the Grand Lodge of England

and its methods, but let it clearly be understood the Ancients were not a seceding lodge, but an independent body. Then commenced the struggle which lasted for over half a century. Towards the close of the century the two rival bodies began to draw closer together and in 1809, the Moderns called upon its several lodges to revert back to the ancient landmarks. They thus admitted that they had made changes, but claimed that they had done so to protect the craft against irregular Masons. This concession cleared the air and a lodge of Promulgation was set up to restore the True Ceremonies. After this, both bodies set to work to decide upon terms of union, and in 1813 the two bodies under the Duke of Sussex became one **United Grand Lodge of England**. As Foreign lodges followed suit, the United Grand Lodge of England may claim to be the **The Mother Grand Lodge of the World**. There are few variations, for example the English Constitution recognises only three Craft Degrees with the royal arch as the completion of the third degree. The Mark Degree it ignores, but admits its ancient character. One occasion in Grand Lodge a motion was moved “that this degree should be recognised”, was carried, but at the next meeting it was pointed out that the Constitution forbade it, and the motion was rescinded as being **Ultra Vires**. In Scotland the Mark Degree is admitted, but the Royal Arch is not. In Ireland both are incorporated and the same applies to America.

Modern Freemasonry is completely different to the Old Freemasonry in as much as the latter was intensely Christian in character, where as Modern Freemasonry is deistic, it does not demand any definition as to the Deity, it may be Trinitarian, or strictly Pantheism, any thing will pass, Brahmins, Mohammedans, Buddhists and Parsees, can all claim to be Freemasons. The Bible used to be considered the Word of God and the guide of Life, today the Freemason are prepared to accept any book which recognises any theme which acknowledges any being or power over nature, The Vishnu, The Koran, ah! even the Book of Mormon will pass.

They will accept any, and every Creed or Religion under the sun, the Old Operative Freemason had to be a Christian and a Trinitarian, the Jew in particular was debarred from joining the Order, further the Operative Guild was a highly technical artisan occupation and interested itself in the quality of work done. It demanded both Master and Man to act fairly towards each other.

The 1717 revolution has ransacked and changed the Order of Freemasonry from end to end, its objects are different today from what they were in the in the olden days. Its members are a cosmopolitan crowd, with

neither a religion or country - you must abide by the laws and regulations of any country, which for the time affords you protection or gives you habitation.

Rudyard Kipling gave you the composition of a lodge in India today:-

We'd Bola Nath accountant
An' Saul the Aden Jew
An' Din Mohammed Draughtsman
Of the Survey Office to
There was Babu Chuckerbutty
An' - Amis Singh the Sikh
An' Castro from the fittin shop
The Roman Catholick

The changes in religion did not take place without opposition, many operative masons could no reconcile themselves to the Constitution which so expressly stipulated **“The Religion in which all men agree”** and not all the lodges existing in 1717 joined the new Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge of England stuck out for toleration in religion. A Native Prince in India, a Mohammedan, was initiated in 1775, and the Hindus and Parses have been admitted to the craft since the middle of the last century if not earlier. At the time however the policy was one that by no means found universal favour, and it was not for instance, altogether acquiesced in by sister Grand Lodges. The vast majority of Modern Freemasons believe that the craft is a continuation, a descendant of the Stonemason, the remarkable thing about this theory is that this idea did not gain currency in the initial years of the society, but was first proposed by the non-Mason **Abbe Grandidier**.

But from whatever point of view we may care to observe it, there is no special phenomenon so remarkable as that of the growth of freemasonry during the past century. Under its banner range men of every colour, religion, and clime. As an operative trade guild, Freemasons were organized bodies of skilled workmen engaged in the erection of Churches and other stately buildings, but when these buildings ceased to be any longer required, the Society shook itself free from its trade connections and gradually became a social club. It possessed all the glamour of a secret society with none of its draw backs, and it became fashionable. Nobles and Princes became interested, and Kings have not thought it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the Sceptre for the Trowel and have joined in the Masonic Assemblies within its lodges. This is no idle boast, seeing the wonderful array of crowned heads

which Dr. Anderson incorporated in the Second Book of Constitution, such as Nimrod, The Mighty Hunter, King David, Charles Martel and others too numerous to mention.

No Brother of intelligence today gives credence to the stories that St. Alban in 287 formed the first Masonic Lodge in Britain, that Edwin the first Christian King of Northumbria became a patron of the Order, that King Athlestan granted the masons a charter in 936 and his son Prince Edwin presided over the a Grand Lodge at York, or that Edward III revised the constitution two years after the Victory at Pointiers. They consign to limbo the fables of the initiation of Henry VI in 1450, and of William III in 1690. They do not accept the romantic stories of James I, and Charles II being members of the Craft, but it does seem probable that the Young Pretender was, though he denied the fact he was Master of a Lodge at Rome, Napoleon too was a Grand Master of the Order of France, but I have never heard that The Kaiser was a Master.

Foot note

I hold in my profane hands authentic and real records, dating more than three centuries back which enable us to see that this much boasted Society of Freemasons, is but a servile imitation of an Ancient and useful fraternity of actual Masons.

The first historian of the Craft is Bro. Anderson, who, with the sanction and approval of the first Grand Lodge, compiled a book of Constitutions. It began with Adam. A Learned Brother Rev George Oliver with all gravity, places the origin of the Freemasons, even prior to the Creation, tracing its germs back to the very honeymoon of Paradise, and also informs us that Moses was Grand Master, Joshua his Deputy and Aholiab and Bezalel, Grand Wardens.

Chapter Five

The Lodge at the Harp Tavern

*Harponians list to me,
And Kangaroos Rejoice!
And Buffaloes lift up your horns,
Whilst I lift up my voice.*

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

Old Buffalo Chant (date 1828)

Any one making a study of the origin of the present day philanthropic Orders in England cannot fail but be struck by the great inconsistency that there is. Though in the majority of cases we can with certainty state the exact year when these orders came into existence, and this date is in many cases officially accepted, yet, in their ritual these various societies make extravagant claims to great antiquity of origin, and though the more enlightened of their members may use their best endeavours to explain that these assertions are only traditions, or legends and posses of no historic value, yet among the rank and file there is a tendency to ignore these explanations and demand what we give them a literal interpretation, and these will not be appeased by anything else.

Another point is similarity, they all appear to have been founded upon some common model and the only explanation we can offer of this, is, that the founders must have borrowed very considerably from the stores of one of the older societies. An examination and comparison, of the whole goes to show that this explanation is a very likely solution for they have all points in common with that of the Freemasons.

To give main features. The alleged origin of the majority of cases is connected with a Biblical event. There is a tradition concerning the admission of a woman, the one and only female member. The intrusion of this individual into their assembly while the celebration of some of their awful mysteries was taking place, and, as none but the initiated might witness these stupendous mysteries, the only way to repair the sacrilege was to initiate the profane intruder, this without further ceremony was immediately done with happy results.

There was an initiatory rite which is at once theatrical and terrifying, Signs and Passwords were used as modes of recognition.

Even in the alleged “history” of their Order there is much sameness. The events of the one are parodied, or plagiarized by the others, King George IV, when Prince of Wales was somewhat of a remarkable character, he was said to always be on the lookout for adventure, hence he supposedly had many escapades. It was reputed that for a time he was the Grand Master of the Freemasons in this country.

On examination of the “history” of many of the lesser orders it is surprising to find the number who claim that he was a member of their own particular fraternity. In connection with this, the chair in which His Royal Highness sat during the time that he presided over their proceedings, or, some other moments of his membership is generally asserted to be still in existence but when sought for, it is never forthcoming.

Even the ritual, and the ceremonies of these orders are found to have been compiled on initiative lines, the phraseology, in many cases being without doubt, a deliberate copy.

But though the ceremonies etc., of these orders are very similar to those of the Freemasons, we must not therefore claim that they are descendants of that order. The evidence goes to show that the resemblance is due to imitation. Often we can produce the very edition of the book wherein these things have first been introduced. Older editions of the same ritual do not contain them.

I do not wish to cast any slur upon the traditional history of Buffaloism, but I do point out that ours is one of the Orders, which in its ritual claims great antiquity. Its title dates from a Biblical period. Queen Elizabeth offers a parallel to the Hon. Miss Elizabeth St. Ledger incident of the Craft. King George IV “when Prince of Wales” is traditionally reported to have been initiated into our Order. Our present ritual shows undoubted signs in many places of having been copied from that of the Masonic Order. The old Initiation ceremony was “Theatrical and Terrifying”. We are a great society with passwords, grips and signs peculiar to ourselves, and the candidate passes from Darkness into light.

How the Buffalo Order Started

The more zealous of the members of our order make claim that Buffaloism has an origin stretching back into the remote past, and to substantiate their assertions they point to the “historical illusions” in the ritual. Particularly do they stress the point where it is asserted that “Many Buff Knights”

were present at the signing of the Magna Charta in 1215. Unfortunately, however it can be pointed out that Knighthood in the Buffalo Order was only introduced in the eighteen sixties, so that if any Buff Knight was present at Runnymede it is certain that they had nothing to do with the Buffalo Order. Further this incident was only inserted into the ritual during recent years. Early copies make no mention of any knights at all. It was the "English Barons" who forced King John "to sign that great bulwark of our English Liberty" (vide old ritual)

As a correction of this we have the most clear and succinct account of the formation of the Buffalo Order in one pierce Egan's books published in 1828.

At the Harp in Great Russell Street, opposite Drury Lane Theatre, the Buffalo Society was first established in August 1822, by an eccentric young man of the name of Joseph Lisle, an artist, in conjunction with Mr. W. Sinnet, a comedian, to perpetuate, according to their ideas the subject "that hitherto neglected Ballad of 'We'll Chase the Buffalo' "

No earlier reference to the Buffalo Order other than 1822 has ever been discovered, though a diligent search has been made for the same. We may therefore in the absence of anything to the contrary, accept as authentic this account of our origin, and allow the story to unfold. The formation of the Buffalo Order is said to have been due to a refusal of members of another social club, also held at the Harp, to admit certain gentlemen into their midst. This club "The City of Lushington" was one of great celebrity in its day, and rumour has it, that though somewhat burlesque in its procedure it was particularly select in those whom it admitted as members. The "great and shining lights" of the then Theatrical firmament were its principal patrons, and they did not apparently desire the "lesser lights" - the stage hands etc. - should belong to it, though they were ready to admit them as "visitors" if introduced by a member.

This arrangement did not however meet with the approbation of the majority, and because of something bringing this feeling to a climax a resolution was moved that in future only actual members should be allowed to be present at its meetings. Subsequent refusal to admit several well known members of the Drury Lane Theatre staff, who had been previously been in the habit of attending, was strongly resented.

These gentlemen considered that this action was a personal affront to themselves, for the practice had been for so long in vogue as to be looked upon, not as a privilege, but a right. Together with a few sympathizers they held an indignation meeting in a room immediately above that of the

Lushingtons to decide upon some course of action which would allow them to score against those who had offended their dignity. The result of their deliberations was a decision to form a rival society which they called the Buffaloes, a decision that was immediately acted upon.

The prime mover in the formation of this new social club was an eccentric Bohemian Artist named Lisle. He was assisted by a comedian friend W. Sinnet. Between them they evolved a ceremonial which displayed to the full the eccentricity of the one, and the buffoonery of the other.

In many respects the new society followed on the lines of the old. True, its procedure might, and in all probability was more boisterously burlesque, and it was perhaps not so exclusively select in the choice of its members as its predecessor had been. Its patrons were principally from the theatrical profession, but other were not excluded. It was perhaps essentially a society of good fellowship, consisting of members drawn from the same rank of life with common interests, and convivial tastes and had a casual method of assisting its distressed brethren.

The Title

The name by which this newly formed society was first known was the "Buffalo Society" and as the patrons of the house had for years past been known as "Harponians" so the lodge held there received that name. The title of the Order however underwent several changes ultimately becoming by a process of evolution and natural selection, that by which we know it today.

The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes

A variation of the same was long in use, **The Ancient and Honourable Order of Buffaloes.**

It ought to be explained that the title "Royal" was not the first selected, "Loyal" was the term originally applied, but this by an easy process of transition speedily gave way to that at present in use, and the legal right to use the word Royal was granted to the Order several years ago on the grounds of Long-Use.

A City

The old idea of likening their meeting place to a "City" was retained. In the literature of the period it is often referred to as such, the old rules speak

of its lodge - room as the city offices and the term is prefixed to the official title of the officers. It may also be noted that many of those formally in use in the City of Lushington were retained. To illustrate this I append a list abstracted from what I believe to be the oldest original rulebook in existence that of the Regenerator Lodge, dated 1849.

Sitting Primo	City Constable
Alderman of Poverty	City Marshall
City Taster	Alderman of Lunacy
City Secretary	City Barber
Alderman of Suicide	City Waiter
City Physician	Alderman of Juniper
City Tyler	City Scavenger
City Host	

Primo Buffo

My readers will note that while the “Aldermen” are retained the chief officer of the Lushingtons - “My Lord Mayor” has been dropped, and in its place we have a theatrical term introduced, “Sitting Primo”. An officer who is elsewhere referred to as “Primo Buffo”. This latter term though it may resemble, has no connection with the word “Buffalo”, but is an abbreviation of “Buffoon”. It was the title of the chief male singer in a Comic Opera. The jester or clown of modern days. This term is not used in Theatrical circles of today but a century ago it was in common use and its meaning fully understood. We still however have “Prima Buffa” the chief lady singer in comic operas, and “Prima Donna” the leading lady in Opera as common parlance even today.

Curious Titles

The twentieth century Buff will no doubt find some difficulty in placing, or assigning duties to such officers as “City Scavenger”, “City Barber”, “City Physician”, and “City Taster”. He will also be puzzled and perhaps a little amused at the Titles of some of the “Aldermen”. The nature of their jurisdiction over certain wards of “Suicide”, “Insanity”, “Poverty”, and “Juniper”, can only be guessed at but not rationally solved.

Then there is the furniture alluded to much of this has now disappeared. The standard “Making Chair”, “Making Gatter”, “Physicians Medicine”, “Incense Bowl”, “Spirit Fire”, “Salt Bowl” and other things that need not be

referred to. All these tend to show the great change that has come over our Order since its original formation, also the great difference in its procedure.

The next document which comes under our consideration is the Old Ritual, or first degree "making book" I have a number of these in my possession, they vary in several particulars, and it is interesting to note the additions as time proceeds. The copy, which I here publish, is in manuscript form and illustrated, as the majority of them were, by pen and ink sketches, some of which are very amusing. I shall give the text of this, but some explanation is required, to explain some of the phrases, and items used, as an introduction to the Ritual itself. I give these, explaining that they belong to the boisterous days of Buffaloism, and are unknown in our present day procedure.

Ceremonial

This was for several years in use in a North Country Lodge about 1857

We may begin by stating that the ceremony was at best theatrical and terrifying, practical joking and leg-pulling was indulged in freely. The candidate had a bad time of it. He was admitted blind folded, one of the first questions asked was "What is his height?" He was then passed under the standard and measured, no matter the answer was, he was deemed "Too Tall", and the order was given "Cut him Down" when a burlesqued pretence of doing this was gone through, the question was asked "What height is he now?" and on this occasion it is declared "Too Short", and instructions are given to "Stretch Him". This being done, the height was now stated to be correct, but is followed by an order for the Kangaroos to "Bind the Wretch", when the candidate is seized and bound, only his right arm - which is bared to the elbow is free. He is then ordered to be led through "the Kyber Pass", and the candidate passes slowly round the darkened lodge room. While this is being done, tins are rattled, to create as impression of thunder, lights are flashed before his face, to make him imagine lightening, brethren push out their feet for him to stumble over, other obstructions are so placed that he will bump his head against them. These things are done to make him believe that he is traversing a rocky pass, often he is told to "lift his feet", to get over obstacles which do not exist. This part of the ceremony terminates with what is known as the Kangaroo leap, which is stated to hop a great height, but is really only a few inches.

The Bleeding

The candidate is then led to the Royal Making Chair, where he listens to a long address, after which he is examined by the City Physician who declares him to be excited and orders that he must be Bled. His bare arm is then held out and a warmed knife drawn across it, or it is pinched at the bend, while a few drops of warm gatter is poured over the spot, to create a feeling that blood is really flowing. During this time members pass remarks as to the quality of the blood, the amount that should be taken - usually a pint. After this comes the bandaging, when the "Physician" examines his patient again, this time he suggests a little refreshment and the candidate takes a drink of what he presumes to be beer, but really proves to be salt and water, and immediately on his tasting it, the brethren pass the remark that he is "drinking his own blood". No wonder that he spits this out, and here, the City Scavenger's services are called into requisition. Next comes the order "Prepare the Holy Incense", when brethren fill their pipes and get them aglow, at the words "Administer it" they blow the smoke lustily into the candidates face.

The Burning

After the physician comes The Barber who declares that there is "too much hair" he suggests that this be burnt off, a hair brush is singed, by passing a hot poker over it and held under the candidates nose to make believe that his hair is really being burnt off, and the members sing during the burning "See them a galloping, a galloping, Hi gee whoa!".

When the ceremony is drawing to a close, the candidate states a request to see "Light", spirit is poured into a bowl containing salt, this is then set alight, then, as the bandage is removed from his eyes, he sees in the lurid glare of the spirit fire, the smiling faces of his new brethren. No wonder that when this nerve racked and perspiring candidate hears himself declared to have been initiated a good and worthy Buff, "that the closing words appeal strongly to him", they are that he will look back upon this ceremony "with feelings of sincere pleasure, gratification, and joy". He will - because it is all over, take a drink from the half gallon of 'Making Gatter', (paid for out of the fee) to complete the ceremony.

The list of Officers and also the names of the various lodges comprising the Grand Lodge. Together with the names of the Delegates representing the same are here appended.

Officers

Grand Primo of England	Primo	G. T. Wright
Deputy Grand Primo of England	Primo	E. T. Scates
Grand Tyler	Primo	W. Winspear
Grand Constable	Primo	Hildreth
Grand Physician	Primo	J. Allen
Grand Barber	Primo	Bingham
Grand Minstrel	Primo	S. May (Junior)
Alderman of Juniper	Primo	Ledger
Alderman of Poverty	Primo	Kell
Secretary	Primo	E. B. Mitchell

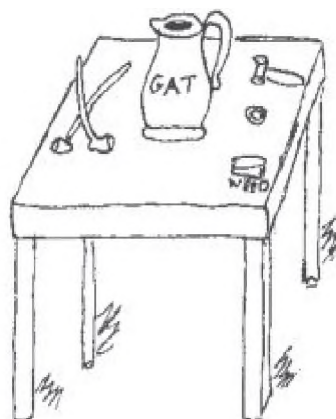
Lodges and their Delegates

Grand Surrey Lodge	Primos	Ledger and Grieg
Britannia	Primos	Harris and Hildreth
Bloomsbury	Primo	Mitchel
Walworth	Primos	Kell and Winspear
Beehive	Primos	Scates and Burton
York Minster	Primo	Bingham
Flowers of the Forest	Primo	Wade and Bro. K.Jones K.O.M
Sampson	Primos	Dare and Harrison
Shakespeare	Primos	Lock and Carcass

Lodges which later seceded from the Grand Lodge of England and formed the Grand Surrey Banner.

In the rules passed on the 9th of October 1866, and to which the whole of the officers and delegates subscribed, there is a sameness with those of the Manchester Mother Lodge. District Lodges are to be created in the same way, and possess much of the same power. Goods are to be purchased from the Grand Lodge and all Dispensations, vital decisions relative to Expulsions, etc., are to be forwarded to Grand Lodge for confirmation or rejection. They agree that for the future the Order of Merit and Knighthood should be a recognised degree of the Order, and such members who already received

Lodge furnishings of the early 1800's



Some of these articles were used in the ceremony of Buffalo making used by the Harponian Lodge

same, should have his rank ratified. (Roll of Honour, or Fourth Degree, did not become a recognized grade of the Order until 1895). The officers of a minor lodge were somewhat different to those at present in use. They were. Sitting Primo, City Marshall, City Tyler, City Waiter, City Constable, City Physician, City Minstrel, City Taster, City Scavenger, Alderman of Poverty, Alderman of Juniper, and City Secretary. The Host might not preside over his own lodge, except under certain restricted conditions. The degree of Primoship might be Purchased, at a cost of Ten Shillings, five of which had to be placed in the "Treasury" and five spent as the lodge directed. Such are a few laws and regulations laid down sixty years ago.

Thus we see those who are responsible for these divisions now realize that they have made a mistake and deplore their own lack of unity. They realize that "Unity is Strength" and that strength lies in combination. They appreciate that the spirit of true Buffaloism cannot possibly be saved by Banners and Sections, the whole principle is inconsistent with Buffaloism, there should be but one Banner "The R.A.O.B". Pity is that they cannot see that the way is open for the realization of their ideal, they can all join the Mother Order and become members of the G.L.E.

Some day it may be a matter of vital importance for the whole of the Buffalo Order to stand shoulder to shoulder to meet attacks made against it. This is now recognized and the sections are endeavouring to draw closer together, they are federating among themselves, some nine or ten of them have lately combined to maintain an Orphanage to be used by the whole (singly no section could have done this, hence the benefits of union). If this is successful they hope to carry the federation scheme further afield for their objects - Good Luck to them.

That this desire for unity is being strongly felt is also evidenced by the numbers who are returning to the fold of the original Grand Lodge - the G.L.E. Many individuals and many lodges, in some cases whole Provinces, and even Banners, have thus returned. And why not, this is the only way that re-union can come. To talk of a United Order, without taking into consideration the Grand Lodge of England is farcical, for the G.L.E represents more than half of the Buffalo World, the path is easy, no brother, or lodge can possibly lose by thus reuniting with the parent stem. They are not "Absorbed" - they do not lose their identity - but by coming back of their own free will they combine under equitable terms, which gives to every lodge and every brother, the status they formally held, they can each find a place in the organization - all given representation in the Provincial Grand Lodge and through that to the Grand Lodge - they have voting powers accorded to them

as represented by their attendance, and benefits for their members which smaller sections cannot possibly offer.

In consequence of these amalgamations and other causes the G.L.E. is (as already stated) by far the most important of the sections. She has made a wonderful progress of late - numerically and financially - and thus great strides have been made towards the attainment of that ideal. Of all true Buffs, that every Banner and every section shall be gathered together and sheltered "neath the protecting wing of our Great grand Lodge", and the name R.A.O.B be sufficient for all. The G.L.E has now over 5000 lodges and millions of members, situated in every quarter of the civilized globe giving their allegiance, and these numbers are continually increasing. Soon perhaps the realization of the hopes of so many Buffs may be preached and our Grand United Order of Buffaloes become an actual fact. And why should they not unite. They all belong to one Order, have the same Signs, Tokens, and Passwords and the same ideals. They are not like sects where the difference of faith may keep them apart. Their objects are the same and the difference in their ceremonies is only slight. Personally, I see nothing except the personal interest of a few wearing Grand Lodge Collars which stands in the way of their joining forces.

Then let us pray that come it may
As come it will a' that
That sense and worth o'er a' the earth
May bear the gru and a' that
For a' that and a' that
It's coming yet for a' that
That Man to Man, he walked o'er
Shall Brothers be for a' that.

In no single instance do they prove a identity, or even a relationship or establish a connection between modern Buffaloism and the Bull worship of a former age. The Buffalo is not a Bull, and there can be no Worship in our Buffalo Order. However can it be possible for us to claim origin from something where in religion and worship are "Paramount"?

Conclusion

We may perhaps be allowed to conclude this part of our Essay by saying, that while there is a flood of evidence to support the 1822 statement of Egan, there is absolutely nothing beyond the most vague hypothetical assertion, resting upon men's conjectural surmise, so far advanced in favour of an earlier origin and until the advocates of this allegation can bring forward something better, we are justified in rejecting their theories in favour of the more probable 1822 claim.

*Then off he went quite full of glee,
Strutting towards the Harp,
In hopes some Manager to see;
Mixing with Flat and Sharp!*

Pierce Egan's "The Show Folks".

Chapter Six

Tavern Clubs

How many of our great Philanthropic Orders arose

Man is said to be a sociable animal, and we may observe, that we take all occasions and pretences of forming ourselves into those little Nocturnal Assemblies, which are commonly known by the name of Clubs. When a set of men find themselves in any particular, tho' never so trivial state, they establish themselves into a kind of fraternity, and meet once or twice a week. On Account of Such Fantastic Resemblance. About the end of the sixteenth century, Shakespeare, Raleigh, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Sheldon were members. Ben Johnson was founder of a club at the Devil Tavern. Addison, Steele, and others frequented Button's Coffee House. There were hundreds of other clubs held in various taverns, too numerous to mention.

It has been said that the rise of these clubs

Addison in the Spectator March 1711

Talking, Drinking, and Smoking are those things that go better together than any other things I know, and they are best enjoyed in company. The gregarious instincts of man have ever caused him to seek the companionship of his fellow mortals, hence, from the very earliest days of civilization we find societies of men formed for the promotion of some social object. They met together at stated times for social intercourse and from the sixteenth century right down to the middle of the nineteenth the Coffee House or Tavern has been the rendezvous of such assemblies.

Particulars relating to many of these clubs in the London district have come down to us. The club at the Mermaid Tavern was established due to the suppression of the Monasteries and Guilds at the Reformation. Prior to this date there were a few taverns. The Traveller was accommodated at the Monastery, each of which had a hospitum, or guest house, these people were accustomed to meet and enjoy themselves in their guild house. When the Tudors suppressed the Monasteries, drove the guilds from the churches, took possession of their halls, and confiscated their funds, these people gathered together in the village inn, and their social and philanthropic instincts found expression in the formation of the Tavern Clubs. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw these clubs in full operation and at the zenith of their prosperity. In London, and in practically every town, village, and hamlet

throughout the country clubs were formed, it is said that there were few places consisting of twenty dwellings and a beer house that did not possess one. Many being got up by the speculating publican as an aid to business, for as Addison says “-all celebrated Clubs were formed on eating and drinking which are points upon which most men agree, and on which the learned and the illiterate, the dull and the airy, the philosopher and the buffoon, can all be a part”, hence a great proportion of the funds went into the coffers of “Mine Host”, therefore his desire for a club.

Tavern Life in the Olden days

The tavern was then quite a different sort of place from what it is today, it was an important institution in the social life of the community. Around it centred the chief events of the day, often it was the only place where a news sheet could be seen, or news gathered. It was the haunt of men of fashion.

The lodges thus formed possessed all the characteristics of the original Harpionian Lodge. The meetings were hilarious symposiums, full of conviviality, but philanthropy was not neglected, though it was not placed so prominently to the fore as it is today. Then there was no systemised relief. The Order though charitable was not provident, such cases as came before it for assistance were dealt with by the voluntary contributions of those assembled when the appeal was made. The thought of establishing an institution which would last for all time did not apparently enter into the minds of its founders. The one idea appeared to be, to supply the requirements of the passing moment, with the result that the lodges were, in the majority of cases amphemeral in character, or as an old writer puts it, Evanescent, transitory, and episodic.

Formed as they were of members of the theatrical profession - here today gone tomorrow - it was found that when a touring company had visited a town, and established a lodge there, that they had not interested the general public in sufficient numbers to make the lodge a success after the withdrawal of the theatrical support, consequent on their removal to another town, with the result, that more often than not the lodge passed out of existence immediately the founders left.

True in some of the larger towns where lodges were established, and when there were several theatres, the stream of theatricals coming and going might be sufficiently regular to allow of a lodge becoming a permanent institution. In such cases it is probable that the order might spread among friends of the professionals, and thus allow the spread of Buffalo principles to permit of other lodges being opened in the immediate vicinity, and a colony of Buffaloes be established working in harmony one with another.

The Old London Lodges

Whilst these things were taking place in the provinces, the order began to spread in London, but very slowly. Theatricals carried the order from the Harp Tavern to other houses of call more or less distant. Lodges were established on the Surrey side of the Thames and elsewhere in the district. Thus, the Vampire Lodge was formed, and continued a spasmodic existence till comparatively recent times, but is now extinct.

The “Royal Regenerator Lodge” was opened at the Canterbury arms under Host C. Morton. This has also passed away. Thus London and also the provinces came to be dotted over with Buffalo Lodges, when the brethren followed a procedure much the same as that of the original Harponian Lodge, and all professed to belong to the Brotherhood. **The Ancient and Honourable Order of Buffaloes.**

Inherent Rights

When speaking of the opening of these lodges it must not be supposed that at the period of which we speak that there was the same elaborate procedure to go through as there is today. It must not be forgotten that at that time the Order was newly a newly created one, and there was no central authority or, Grand Lodge, to regulate the proceedings, to grant or refuse permission. Each Lodge met then by virtue of what is known as the ‘Doctrine of inherent Right’. Each was a law unto itself; a separate entity as it were, neither exercising nor attempting to exercise jurisdiction over any other lodge, nor rendering obedience to any person, or organisation whatsoever.

Its own Sitting Primo was supreme in all matters which concerned his own lodge. Dispensations, Charters, and Warrants were unknown, or not considered vitally essential. Thus it was, that if a lodge became too large, or a difference of opinion arose, then a part of the members might remove themselves to another house, open a lodge therein, without let, or hindrance from any person whatsoever, and, having opened their lodge, they could give it a name, and call themselves members of the Ancient and Honourable Order of Buffaloes and be on the same footing as any other lodge or member of the Order.

Unity of the Order

And yet through the Order - or what passed for the Order in those days - had no apparent organisation, being comprised of a number of separate and independent lodges, yet there was Unity. These lodges did not represent so

many separate factions warring one against the other and struggling for supremacy, they were all as one, bound together by a common bond of brotherhood and good fellowship. Brothers made in one district were free of the lodges in another. They might visit them and were received as Brethren.

The Early Growth

The early growth and spread of the Order was not rapid. Thirty years after its formation it is estimated that there not more than fifty lodges then working. The general public for a long time looked askance at it, and the “unco good” and ultra - respectable gave it a wide berth. No doubt the loose way in which many lodges were carried on would account for this. “Boozy Buff” was a common appellation. The hilarious tomfoolery practised at the initiation. The “Judge and Jury” Trials, the pantomime clowning etc, would do it no good. The establishment of the “Grand Lodge of England” in 1866 did much to remedy this state of affairs, the buffoonery being gradually suppressed from that date.

A Flourishing Order

Today after sixty years rule of the Grand Lodge England, we have none of this. The initiation ceremony is dignified and decorous. The Buffalo Lodges are well conducted, the Boozy Buff day has passed, thousands of members being abstainers and many lodges are held in premises where alcoholic beverages are forbidden, “Temperate Conviviality” is the order of the day; there are thousands of lodges all over the world and millions of members. Old age pensions, Orphanages, Convalescent Homes and Benevolent Funds abound with funds sufficient to satisfy all Philanthropic needs. Today the Order is something to be proud of and all classes of society from Peer to Peasant are members. Let’s hope it may continue to prosper.

Chapter Seven

The Order in the Provinces

The “Mother Lodge” in the Provinces L.A.O.B

At the time when the Buffalo Order came into existence, and for many years afterwards, the country seethed in sedation, and under the pretence of holding a social club, conspirators were wont to assemble and hatch their plots, therefore, the Government looked with disfavour on all such secret and semi-secret societies, and endeavoured to suppress them. They declared such societies and the imposition of their oaths as illegal, prosecuting many who took part therein.

To combat this official antagonism, many of these societies prefixed the word “LOYAL” to their other titles, in order to show that they as a body, were favourable to “Crown and Constitution”, and not disloyal. The Buffalo Society was one of these, but the word was afterwards changed to “ROYAL” as it is today. However, before this change took place - perhaps even before the word loyal had been added, (for the earliest documents which I possess concerning this Manchester Section makes no mention of it). The Shakespeare Lodge was opened, and while in London Buffs called themselves “Royal”, the Manchester Brethren continued to use the original word Loyal until the end of their career as a Mother Lodge.

Mother Lodge L.A.O.B

The early history of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes - to give it its full present day title - is evolved in a certain amount of obscurity. Some events however stand out clear, for instance, we have the most concise and definite statement regarding the formation of the Harponian Lodge in 1822. We also have very precise information concerning the early existence and activities of the Shakespeare Lodge at Manchester. We know that it was opened at a very early date by a company of theatricals from the Drury Lane Theatre, London, even before the Order had begun to sprout in the Metropolis.

This Shakespeare Lodge continued its existence for a good number of years and did good service in the cause of Buffaloism, in and around Manchester, and even in districts far remote therefrom. Its members carried the fame of the Order far and wide and met with a success that was little short

of phenomenal, with the result that a very large number of lodges were formed in the North, and at a time when the Order in London was practically dormant, and what is more remarkable, these lodges continued to maintain a connection with their Manchester parent stem, which they evidently held in high regard, for in their minutes they invariably speak of it in terms of respect as “The Mother Lodge”. They carried to it all of their little troubles and difficulties, and asked advice and counsel concerning them. “The Mother Lodge”, in its part took quite a maternal interest in her offspring and gave all the assistance possible. This procedure had a far reaching effect. A group of lodges were to a certain extent, connected together, and to a great extent their working was made more uniform. Further the way was paved, when the time came, for the establishment of a Grand Lodge to rule over the whole of the Order.

Grouped Lodges

By about 1852, the Order had about fifty lodges working. A few of these were situated in the Metropolitan District but by far the greater number were in the Provinces. The need of a centralised authority was evidently beginning to be felt, for in various districts the example of Manchester was followed. The smaller lodges were grouping themselves around some well attended and popular lodge in their own district and to that lodge they were making appeals for advice whenever knotty problems presented themselves. In consequence of this practice, this central lodge acquired considerable power, and exercised a considerable influence within its own area. Its real position was however not that of an overlord, but rather one of *primus inter pares* (First among Equals.) Its head-ship than real.

The Manchester Group

The Manchester Group was however by far the largest and most important of these groups. Its pivot was the Shakespeare Lodge already referred to, as having been opened during the early days of the Buffalo Order. From the first it had been exceedingly popular, and it had attained a system of organization of great efficiency. Its influence with other lodges was great, but it was deserving of this for the work that it did. I shall not be overstating the case if I say that this lodge did more for the advancement and spreading of Buffaloism, together with the consolidation of the Order in its early days, than any other lodge up to the opened, not excluding the Harponian.

At a very early date it had lodges professing allegiance to it in practically every part of England. It was everywhere referred to as the “Mother Lodge” and later when the Harponian Lodge had ceased to function, it became known as the “Mother Lodge of England”, a title which was not altogether inappropriate, inasmuch as it did act in that capacity to a very large proportion of the lodges in the country.

Organization

Its organisation was simple but effective. When opening out any particular district, its custom was to confer upon its first lodge opened within that area the title of “District Lodge”. To this lodge it gave the power of opening other lodges there, it also granted to it the oversight or government of all other lodge within that district. This lodge might also hear, and decide any dispute which might arise, but it preserved to itself the right of revising those decisions should appeal be made to it. Every lodge was accountable to the District Lodge for its actions, and every District Lodge was accountable to the Mother Lodge for what took place within its own lodge or district.

We see that the District Lodges held much the same powers as our present Provincial Grand Lodges but with this difference. The District Lodge remained a **Minor** Lodge. It was not purely an Executive body ruled by delegates from all the lodges within its own area. It was the members of that lodge who gave the decisions. Oligarchical as opposed to Democratical.

The District Lodges were required to purchase all Dispensation, Books of Rules, and Travelling Cards from the Mother Lodge. The subordinate lodges of course had to purchase from the District Lodge. The profits derived from the sale of these were apparently the only source of income received from the District Lodges for no dues appear to have payable, though a return had to be periodically made of all lodges working within that area.

To a certain extent this system would appear to be to the mutual advantage of all concerned and also for the Order at large. In the first place it ensured uniformity of working, second the District Lodges would be able to purchase cheaper than if they had to print small quantities themselves.

Anyway the system worked effectually for more that half a century, for though the majority of the lodges who owed their existence to the Manchester Mother Lodge came over to the G.L.E shortly after its formation. The Mother Lodge itself continued a spasmodic existence for some years after, but its day was over, it had served its turn, and Ichaboa was written its doors. It is now extinct. But although gone, this Mother Lodge ought not to be lost sight

of or forgotten, for as much, as years before the creation of that body which has arrogated to itself the proud title of “Mother Lodge of the World”, this “Mother Lodge” was working, attending to the needs, of a great number of Buffalo Lodges in the Country and was recognized and respected far and wide as the “Mother Lodge of England”. The Title was therefore no idle boast but a very real thing and thoroughly deserved.

Chapter Eight

Grand Lodge of England Established

Let me here promise, that the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes under the Grand Lodge of England, is ever working in all its lodges throughout the world, helping and stimulating members to elevate and improve themselves by their own free and independent action.

Ritual.

The story of the Buffalo Order, resolves itself into two distinct epochs - the old and the new. The old we may call that period previous to the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England. The new since that date. The first has reference to a time when practised chaos reigned, everybody did just as they pleased. During this period we have few records to guide us, practically all taken were scores for 'gatter' and they were not preserved. The second may be declared as the unenlightened age when those in authority in the face of much opposition did see that it was possible to establish order when chaos has reigned supreme. They had a difficult task, but they succeeded. All Glory and Honour to these old veterans for their splendid achievement.

The beginning of this change for the better coincides with the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1866. First a constitution was provided, then the rules and regulations for the guidance of the lodges compiled, after which a start was made with the revision of the Initiation Ceremony. The horse-play and pantomime clowning were gradually abolished. This accomplished a different class of member was attracted, a new spirit permeated through the Order. With the result that the membership began to advance by leaps and bounds.

The formation of the Grand Lodge came about as follows. The Manchester Buffs who were at the head of affairs apparently lost much of their old zeal, their interest in the Order had seemed to wane, at times it was only with great difficulty that they could be prevailed upon to answer communications addressed to them, and the need of a really live centralized governing authority, with up to date methods, being most pressing, and particularly so in the Metropolitan area. A large number of Brethren were dissatisfied with the lackadaisical proceedings decided that the Executive of the Order should be in London. Host Brown of the Beehive Lodge, who was a member of the Masonic Craft saw the immense good which a Grand Lodge was doing and in that order thought it would be advantageous to have a similar body in connection with the Buffs in London. He used his best endeavours

in this direction and was very materially assisted by Teddy Scates, also a member of the same Lodge. Who, having a stronger personality was the more effective of the two. They ventilated their ideas on the various Lodges in the London District with such effect that they won the members over to their way of thinking, with the result that the Metropolitan Lodges Federated together and formed the Grand Lodge as an Executive to transact all business and act for the Order as a whole.

This executive they called the Grand Primo Lodge of England. It was composed of delegates and representatives from all the lodges joining the scheme. Bro G. T. Wright was appointed the first President, or Grand Primo, Teddy Scates becoming the Vice-President, or Deputy Grand Primo. A constitution having been agreed upon was signed on behalf of the various lodges by the delegates assembled. This took place on the 18th of May 1866. Rules were at once prepared and were issued during the October of the same year. This was an epoch making event, with far reaching effects, altered the Status Quo ante of the whole Order and the constitution then drawn up so completely that I cannot do better than reproduce it.

The Constitution of the Grand Primo Lodge of England

“We the Primos of the Metropolitan Lodges of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes, being assembled by the authority of the said lodges for the furtherance of the Order, and the settlement of our Laws, do hereby take upon ourselves, from this date, as The Grand Lodge of England the sole right of granting Dispensations, and the government of all lodges lawfully Constituted in the United Kingdom. We therefore call upon all Primos and Brethren of such lodges as are at present established, to yield us their allegiance, and to obey all Rules, Regulations, and Orders that are here-in embodied, or that may from time to time be ordained by us, and we do hereby acknowledge, and confirm all such lodges lawfully constituted in the rights and privileges that they at present possess”.

Witness our hands this 18th day of May 1866

<i>G. T. Wright.</i>	<i>President</i>
<i>Edward T Scates</i>	<i>Vice President</i>

Joseph Jones, Alfred Tapping, Albert Bringham Knight of Merit, W. H. Keel, Harvey Burton, Albert. E. B. Fullager, William Winspear, Edmond St Albyn, John Laing, H. F. Harrison, Andrew Greig, Joseph Allen, E. B. Mitchell, William Wade, Brandon Ledger, Samuel. G. May, H. Wilbey.

The Lecture

The Lecture or Initiation Ceremony though long and complicated was not printed, very rarely was it committed to writing. It was memorized and so passed from one to another. Thus it came to pass that while the main features of the Ceremony remained practically identical, the procedure when considered in detail was far from uniform, it varied considerably, for the actors could and did “gag” unmercifully when given the opportunity.

The ceremony itself was theatrical and terrifying, and of the type designed to try the nerves of and temper of a candidate to the utmost: he was baited and spoofed unmercifully, much rough horseplay being indulged in of course, care was taken that he came to no actual hurt, but for about a quarter of an hour and even longer, he had anything but a comfortable time. Suggestions of “Bloodletting” and “Burning” would not tend to give assurance to a nervous individual, “as can be seen from the previous ceremony”.

The Officers

The burlesque nature of some of these titles is something which goes to substantiate the claim which is made with regard to the original spoof character of the Order. The Brethren will also observe that while a number mentioned who are unknown in the present day procedure of the Order, there is a notable omission of several that we have full knowledge of. Thus we have no City Treasurer and one may seriously enquire whether, ‘after the convivial symposiums which the records show to have characterized the average lodge meeting of those days’, there would be anything left to “Treasure”, either in the funds or “in the bottle”.

Another Officer whose name is absent from the list is the “Alderman of Benevolence”. Possibly the “Alderman of Poverty” would perform the benevolent duties of this office, but it must be distinctly understood that in those days philanthropy, though undoubtedly practised was not a special feature of the Order, and no special channel was needed for its disbursement.

The City Chamberlain and City Registrar, have apparently not made their appearance. They belong to a period when the order had become ceremoniously decorous in its procedure, than it was during the first few years of its existence, the officer that I am surprised to see absent is the City Minstrel, for at this period gatherings of their class generally had a minstrel to accompany the singers either on the harp or violin. Two grades of members are mentioned, the “Kangaroo” and the “Primo”. The “Order of Merit” or

the “Knighthood” is not yet a recognised degree and the title “Right Honourable” is nowhere to be found. The society is spoken of as an “Order”, the members are described as “Brethren” and irrespective of rank are referred to as “Brother”, “Buffs”, or “Buffaloes”, while the term “Lodge” is in general use.

The Order Flourishes and Spreads

This Buffalo lodge flourished, Theatricals found in it an ideal order for their profession and they almost adopted it as their own special society. Certainly as a profession they patronized it extensively, and when as members of a “Stock Company” they left London to tour the Provinces. As they could not include the Harpionian Lodge along with their “props”, they did the next best thing and opened lodges of a similar character in the various towns the visited, wherein they followed much the same procedure as that to which they had become accustomed to in London.

These Provincial lodges were generally opened in some recognised “house of call”. The meetings were usually on a Sunday evening - the “Pro’s” night off - which gave the opportunity to strolling players, and members of other companies to foregather and discuss matters connected with their profession, thus combining business with pleasure, and at the same time by means of a little innocent frivolity and friendly banter, find the wherewithal to assist a hard up pal who was down and out a broken down actor - a fallen star.

Early Difficulties

On the whole the Grand Primo Lodge worked exceedingly well, but as might be expected did not please everyone. As a new body it lacked experience in some things appertaining to what was really essential in the proper working of a number of lodges. Individuals who had been accustomed to within their own lodges of having their own way, and being able to lay down the law, and carry everything before them, now found that when they came as delegates to Grand Lodge that their power was checked, the individual had to give way to the voice of the majority, the greatest good for the greatest numbers was to be the rule. The consequences were that many “chaffed” under the restraint and things did not always run smoothly. Rocks were looming ahead.

Chapter Nine

The Formation of the Grand Surrey Banner Mother Lodge (or Banner) of the World

*Strange all this difference should be
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweeledge'
John Byron*

“Splits”

In organisations of the Buffalo Order class, “Splits” are far from being uncommon, indeed among the older societies, they may be said to be the rule rather than the exception. Practically all have had experience of one or more during their career. During their early days the hold which they had upon their branches was generally of such a slight character that when a decision was arrived at on a matter upon which a considerable majority felt strongly, then there was almost sure to be a breakaway and a new organisation formed.

To give examples; - The Manchester Unity of Odd-fellows was itself a secession from a previous order of the Odd-fellows, and other orders of Odd-fellows, have since been derived by secession from the Manchester Unity until now there is no fewer than ten orders of Odd-fellows in existence in addition to the parent society. The Ancient Forester originated from a previous body called The Royal Foresters and has now outlived the body from which it seceded. Other Orders have had similar experiences.

Often these secessions were over some trivial matter which was really of no moment. In other cases they took place in opposition to some wise action on the part of the Executive, sometimes personal matters are the cause of the rupture. In several instances the better branches have seceded in order to be rid of some objectionable element. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, the rupture having taken place, there has been no getting together again, the scars remain to remind them of the past and a bitter feud continues.

The Buffalo Order

Unfortunately the Buffalo Order has not been immune from divisions of this kind. Over and over again the Order has been rendered into sections through some difference of opinion. Hardly had the Grand Lodge of England got upon its feet when a very serious dispute arose which led to a division of forces, and threatened its very existence.

In 1868, Bro Edward T. Scates K.O.M. had occupied the position of Grand Primo of England with such satisfaction to the majority of the members that they desired him to retain it for another year. He was therefore re-nominated. The brethren of the lodges on the Surrey side of the Thames had however put forward one of their own members as a candidate, but on the votes being counted it was found that the majority of those recorded were in favour of Scates, he was therefore declared to have been re-elected.

The G.S.B. secedes from the G.L.E

The Surrey brethren felt very strongly on this matter, they did not think that Bro. Scates ought to have allowed himself to be re-nominated. Indignation meetings were held and some very bitter things said and done. After weeks of agitation matters at last came to a crisis, and at a meeting held in their own lodge, a motion was brought forward by the Grand Surrey members that: - "The Grand Primo Lodge should cease to exist, and the Grand Surrey Lodge transact all the business of the Order".

Upon this being put to the floor 21 were in favour and 19 against. Following this decision, The Grand Surrey, and the four or five other lodges, who were acting in conjunction with it withdrew their members and delegates from the Grand Lodge and formed a rival Grand Lodge of their own, which, after several changes they called the Grand Surrey Banner.

The Grand Lodge of England had by this time grown in strength and instead of there being only nine lodges represented therein, as was the case at the formation, there were now about a score, and the majority of them being faithful to their pledges continued their membership and the G.L.E, with the assistance and co-operation of the country lodges was able to carry on successfully, much to the chagrin of the opposing faction, who had hoped by this move to destroy it.

The Rye House Fete

As usual in disputes of this kind there was much acrimonious discussion, and many things were said and done by both sides which did not reflect credit on an Order which professed brotherly love and good fellowship as its main feature. Closely following upon this resolution to ignore the Grand Lodge came another cause of difference. There had been held what is called "The Rye House Fete" under the auspices of the Grand Primo Lodge. The various minor lodges held in their possession certain moneys collected to

defray the expenses of this, those who had decided to leave the Grand Lodge for some reason or other refused to hand over this cash. The result was a County Court action and much more bitterness. The Grand Lodge being called upon to foot the bill for the costs of the entertainment, and the two sections drifted further apart.

The Grand Surrey Banner Title

Thus came about the first split of the Buffalo Order and in this way came into existence the section, or sections - for later secessions have rendered the G.S.B into several parts - which we know today as the Grand Surrey Banner.

Before passing on to the consideration of this title it may be just as well to explain that the title "Banner" takes its origin from an alleged "historical" incident narrated in the lecture of the Initiation Ceremony where it is alleged that in the good old days of 'Queen Bess' a banner was presented to the Order by the then reigning Sovereign, though today this banner title has become general among the smaller sections of the Buffalo Order as an equivalent for Grand Lodge, this was the first occasion of its use. The Grand Lodge of England never having adopted it.

But this was not the first name chosen by the newly formed section. During the dispute they called themselves "The Independent Order". The G.L.E brethren spoke of them as "the other side". After their secession they used the Grand Surrey Lodge room as their headquarters and seeing that the majority of the lodges comprising the section were situated on the Surrey side of the Thames they hit upon the title of "Grand Surrey Banner" as an appropriate term, shortly afterwards they added a phrase evidently 'borrowed' or suggested by the title of the Shakespeare lodge at Manchester "Mother Lodge of England" which quickly developed into "Mother Lodge of the World".

There is some confusion in the minds of many brethren concerning this section and at this stage it may be as well to explain that there are at least three sections of the Buffalo Order claiming, and using, this G.S.B. title. They are distinguished by variations in their second or subtitle. For many years after its secession the G.S.B was domiciled at the St George's Tavern, from where they removed to the Gibraltar Tavern. After a time certain members desired to go back to the old home, others wished to remain. There was a division, one section going back to the St George's the other remaining at the Gibraltar Tavern, hence we have "G.S.B Gibraltar" section and

“G.S.B. Mother of the World” section. Some years ago another division occurred and a section was formed which adopted another variation of the original title “Mother Banner of the World”.

Further Splits

But I am going too fast. We will return to 1868. It is almost needless to say the lodges who have broken away from the G.L.E soon found that they had differences of their own to settle before they could comfortably come to rest. These differences very quickly gave rise to another division, and the **“Grand Council Banner”** was formed.

Feeling ran high. The whole Order was in a state of ferment, and splits became frequent. Section after section broke away and following the example of the G.S.B. called itself a “Banner” and prefixed the letters R.A.O.B. to some territorial, or other title, called into being for their own particular use, with the result that we today about a couple of score of “Banner” working.

The exact order in which these splits took place may not be stated with certainty, but the following is near enough for our purpose.

- 1. Grand Surrey Banner**
- 2. Grand Executive Banner**
- 3. Imperial Banner**
- 4. Grand Imperial Banner**
- 5. Independent Banner**
- 6. London Unity**

After this the record becomes too broken to follow.

Viewing this dispute and the causes which led up to it, we of today can see things in a more true perspective than those who lived nearer to the time. The whole affair appears like the proverbial storm in a teacup, there certainly was never sufficient grounds for the splitting up of a hitherto undivided Order into fragments. The whole thing was one of no consequence, and one which would have righted its self in time, today we wonder why there was all the fuss.

But though we may at the present time see that the squabble over the Scates election was really one between Grieg, Fitzgerald and Braham, on the one hand, and Brandon Ledger, Worth and Scates on the other and over some trifling thing, and though the parent body (the G.L.E.) has succeeded not

withstanding this division, yet we are bound to admit that the consequences have been serious. The Order has lost much of its solidarity thereby, and time thus far has failed to heal the breach then created. Today we have innumerable sections as a result, and all good Buffs deplore this fact concerning our present divisions. Is it not time that we attempted to bury the hatchet and sought to be once again gathered into one fold to have one Grand United Lodge which would embrace the whole of the Buffalo Order throughout the World. That brethren removing from one district to another, or one country to another might in their new home find a lodge in union with that they had left behind. Then we might use the phrase “**Mother Banner of the World**” truthfully knowing we were stating a fact.

Let us hope that better counsels will in future prevail, and that the re-union of all sections, and Banners in the Buffalo order may soon be accomplished. A Hope that I know that Buff will heartily agree with, and readily respond.

So Say We All

Chapter Ten

The Grand Lodge of England Limited Section How it came into being

What might contests rise from trivial things?

Pope

*A dispute began in jest upon a subject which a moment before
was regarded with careless indifference is continued by desire
of conquest till vanity kindles into rage and enmity.*

It is strange, but never the less true, that the history of many of our great social orders, Orders professing Brotherhood as one of their main objects - should necessarily contain a record of so much strife and dissension. It is easy to be seen, that there is often a great difference between the profession, and the practice, of the members of these fraternities. It is safe to say that had they acted more in accord with their great principles, had they more thoroughly understood what "Brotherhood" means and really stands for, had this been more thoroughly engrafted into their hearts then I venture the opinion that there would not have been the divisions that we now see.

This is particularly so in the Buffalo Order, the divisions which have occurred have in the majority of cases been over some trivial point, matters of opinion, which if approached in a true brotherly spirit ought to have been easy of solution. Had this been done, the Order would not over and over again been broken upon the rocks of a difference of opinion concerning policy, and there would today have been only one section and one great Brotherhood.

After the storm comes the calm and when the noise of battle in connection with the Grand Surrey Banner split had somewhat subsided, the Order so far as the Grand Lodge of England was concerned settled down and made progress, slow certainly, but never the less sure. In 1882 according to an old Directory issued by Dan Collins the Buffalo Printer, the G.L.E had then sixty lodges working under its control, ten years later Lodge No.1000 had been consecrated, and the future outlook seemed bright and rosy. We had a period of thirty years peace.

Storm Warnings

Then once again the sky became overcast, ominous dark clouds began to gather on the horizon, there was threatened trouble between the Buffalo brethren in the Metropolitan area and those residing in the provinces.

The Grand Lodge having originated in London had remained there, further, practically every meeting held, when business was transacted in connection with the Grand Lodge, was held there.

Grand Lodge was not then a quarterly affair, it met twice a month and the delegates from the provincial districts were severely handicapped. They could only attend at considerable trouble, and expense to themselves, consequently they were not represented at the Grand Lodge with any thing like the real strength which their numbers entitled them to.

On the other hand the Metropolitan Lodges - who were allowed to send two delegates from each lodge - and these delegates in consequence of the nearness of the Grand Lodge to their own homes, were able to be present at every meeting with very little trouble to themselves. Metropolitan views were consequently always predominant, Provincial measures were swamped practically every time, London ruled the roost. The Provinces were ever bottom dogs.

A strong feeling of resentment arose against this, which led to a certain amount of friction. The Provincials ultimately federated to constitutionally alter this state of affairs. At the London Convention held in 1895 they succeeded in partially remedying the evil, the system of representation was altered and the London Lodges had many of their special privileges curtailed. They were placed on a footing with more equal to the other districts and ceased to have representation except through their Provincial Lodge.

The Grand Lodge made Migratory

In the Provinces it was felt that the only way to meet the difficulty was to have a movable Grand Lodge. A Lodge that would meet in different parts of the country. The Members in the London Districts were naturally opposed to this, it was against their own personal interests, and they predicted that should such a change be made, it would mean the break up of the Order. Both parties were confident, with regard to their own strength, and each felt sure of victory, therefore, they were anxious to come to grips. Convention was the only place where such changes could be legally made, and as the next Convention would in the ordinary course of events, not be held until

1898, it was mutually agreed in Grand Lodge by all parties, that the same should be hurried forward a year and held in 1897. This was done, the meeting was at Cardiff, and the epoch making struggle took place. It was proposed that the Grand Lodge for the next three years should be held in Birmingham. The vote was taken.

For Birmingham 86 Votes for London 60. This naturally created a flutter in the Metropolitan district. They had expected an overwhelming victory, and were astonished at the result. They were anxious to retain the Grand Lodge in their midst, and now looked around for some means of upsetting the arrangement.

The change could not take place until the beginning of the following year and for the remaining four and a half months the Grand Lodge had to be held in London, and at one of the meetings finding themselves in a majority the Metropolitans trumped up some petty charge against certain of the Provincials, suspending the Provinces of Manchester, Rochdale, and Bury, the districts where the principle reformers hailed from.

At the next meeting the Provincials were then in force. Elaborate preparations had been made by the Executive (practically composed of Metropolitan members), to keep out all those opposed to them. The doors were locked, and admission refused when the country members arrived. The result was a miniature Donnybrook Fair. The Provincials brushed aside all obstruction, and forced their way into the room, the police were called to eject them, but finding they had a right to be there refused to act. The illegal suspensions were rescinded and arrangements made to give effect to the Convention Ruling, that Grand Lodge be removed to Birmingham. The papers next day came out with a full account of the affray one headed its report as "Buffaloes Rampant" a phrase which fairly correctly represented the state of affairs.

After this the lodges (principally Metropolitan) who were in favour of the Grand Lodge remaining in London, declined to accept the majority vote of the Convention, they refused to move or attend the meetings in Birmingham, formed a Grand Lodge of their own, which they called the Grand Lodge of England Limited and professing to be the Constitutional body, stigmatised their opponents as "The Birmingham Section".

Success

Though we cannot and do not wish, to deny that much good work was done by the Buffalo Order during the time that the Grand Lodge was in London, yet we must point out that the real progress of the Order dates from the time when it left that district, to become a "bird of passage".

That the movement was popular and the vote of the Convention fully represented the feeling of the majority is evident by what followed. Twenty Nine Provinces had been represented by 155 delegates at the Cardiff Convention, of these no fewer than Twenty Six declared their intention of standing by the decision of the Convention. Three Provinces only, and they were personally interested, seeing that they were in the Metropolitan District, refused to obey the Mandate of the Convention.

Since the change was made, the progress made by the G.L.E. has been phenomenal - numerically and financially - it occupies now a position in Buffaloinism that is unparalleled. Its numbers are in excess of those of all the other sections and Banners combined. It has millions of members and thousands of Lodges, and they are increasing by leaps and bounds. The wisdom of the step taken is clearly apparent by the progress made.

It is not the historians duty to criticize, but in passing one cannot help pointing to the fact that while G.L.E. with its migratory Grand Lodge has advanced from hundreds of lodges to thousands in 1926, the section which refused to fall in with these views - declined to accept the majority vote and prognosticated disaster should the motion be carried out - has remained practically in the same rut it was in then. Its passage has been like its name "Limited".

Here is a secession due entirely to a mistaken policy - to opposition wise measures of reform which experience has proved to have been correct. How much better it would have been for the minority to have fallen in with the views of the majority and endeavoured should they have proved to be wrong; to convert their fellow members to a more reasonable view. But in the heat of the moment such steps are forgotten our hasty conclusions appear to be the only correct ones and so long as human nature is as it is, there will always be differences of opinion, and there will always remain the question of which road to follow for the best.

All Brethren

Before leaving this subject concerning the various sections and banners in connection with the Buffalo Order. I would like to point out that these various sections do not represent so many different societies all striving for Supremacy and members. Nothing of the kind, rather I would liken them to the various units in an army, for they all belong to our great Order. They have all the same grips, signs, and passwords, and they are all Brethren, and though as Buffaloes they may enjoy a "fight" now and again when the fight

is over they are content to sink their little differences, and though they may remain in separate camps, under different Banners and under different commands, yet, they do not forget the fact that they are all brethren of the R.A.O.B. and though the various "Grand Lodges" and "Grand Councils" may strive to keep up a system of splendid isolation, the members themselves are perfectly friendly one with another, they co-mingle and visit the lodges of the various sections where they are received in Good Spirit and made to feel at home. Would that would carry this fraternal spirit one step further and demand that the various Grand Lodges should meet and come to some amicable arrangement whereby all sections should cease, and then in One Grand Lodge and Ones Grand Banner to fly overall alike, with one Grand Primo in Command. This division of forces, under various commands, does not tend to united effort, there is a great waste of energy and much overlapping. The brethren of the various sections have come to recognise this, with the result there is now a considerable amount of amalgamation work in progress. Only the other day I read a report of a meeting held in connection with several smaller sections and where the business to be discussed was "Federation" and one of the delegates admitted, "that fighting in sections had proved a fallacy and the time had now come when we should have one R.A.O.B. dropping all distinction of Banners".

Thus we see that those who are responsible for these divisions now realize that they have made a mistake and deplore their own lack of unity. They realize that "Unity is Strength" and that strength lies in combination. They appreciate that the spirit of true Buffaloism, cannot possibly be served by Banners and Sections, the whole principle is inconsistent with Buffaloism, there should be but one Banner. "The R.A.O.B". Pity is that they see that the way is open for the realization of their ideal, they can all join the Mother Order and become members of the G.L.E.

Someday it may be a matter of vital importance for the whole of the Buffalo Order to stand shoulder to shoulder to meet attacks made against it. This is now recognized and the sections are endeavouring to draw closer together, they are federating by themselves. Some nine or ten of them have lately combined to maintain an Orphanage to be used by the whole. (singly, no section could have done this, hence again the benefit of Union). If this proves successful they hope to carry the federation scheme further afield for their objects - Good Luck to them.

That this desire for unity is being strongly felt is also evidenced by the numbers who are returning to the fold of the original Grand Lodge - the G.L.E. Many individuals and many lodges, in some cases whole Provinces,

and even some Banners, have thus returned. And why not. This is the only way that re-union can come. To talk of a United Order without taking into consideration the Grand Lodge of England is farcical, for the G.L.E represents more than half of the Buffalo World, the path is easy, no brother, or lodge can possibly lose by this reuniting with the parent stem. They are not “absorbed” - they do not lose their identity - by coming back of their own free will they combine under equitable terms, which gives to every lodge and every brother, the status they formally held. They can each find a place in the organization - are given representation in the Provincial Grand Lodge, and through that to the Grand Lodge - They have voting powers accorded to them as represented by their attendance’s and benefits for their members which smaller sections cannot possibly offer.

In consequence of these amalgamations and their causes the G.L.E. is (as already stated) by far the most important of the sections. She has made wonderful progress of late - numerically and financially - and thus great strides have been made towards the attainment of the ideal of all true Buffs, that every Banner and every section shall be gathered together and sheltered neath the protecting wing of our Great Grand Lodge and the name of the R.A.O.B. be sufficient for all.

The G.L.E has now over 5000 lodges and millions of members, situated in every quarter of the civilizes globe, giving her allegiance, and those numbers are continually increasing. Soon perhaps the realization of the hope of so many Buffs may be reached and one Grand United Order of Buffaloes become an actual fact. And why should they not Unite. They all belong to one Order, have the same Signs, Tokens, and Passwords and the same ideals. They are not like sects, where the difference of faith may keep them apart. Their objects are the same and the difference in their ceremonies is only slight. Personally I see nothing except the personal interests of a few wearing Grand Lodge collars which stands in the way of them joining force.

Then let us pray that come what may

As come it will for a'that

That sense and worth o'er a' the earth

May bear the gru and a'that

For a'that and a'that

Its coming yet for a'that

That man to man, the world o'er

Shall Brothers be, for a'that

Robbie Burns

Chapter Eleven

SUPPLEMENT

Was the following article published in the
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the cause of the expulsion of the Buffalo Historian
William A. Culshaw

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ROYAL ANTEDILUVIAN ORDER OF BUFFALOES

by
William A. Culshaw

The age and origin of the "Ancient and Honourable Order of Buffaloes" have given rise to much controversy. Even among its own members there is not unanimity on this subject. Some very vague and at the same time conflicting views are held. The title takes us back to a very early and improbable date in the world's history, while certain historical references in the "Lecture" would (if accepted) show the Society to have existed from a very ancient date indeed, and thus leave room for some justification for the use of the phrase that its "origins were lost in the mists of antiquity".

While there are some who hold that these historical allusions are fully justified and must be accepted literally, there are others who claim that they are to be read as allegories or legends. Others again, pointing to the absence of any indisputable records of these events, say that we are not to take them seriously, that they are part of the original "spoof" or burlesque character which the Order possessed at its formation. They were not originally believed, and were never meant to be believed, but were introduced and worked for the fun of the thing.

Latterly another school of thought has arisen, led by an old Primo of the G.S.B. who, confusing the buffalo with the bull, claims that the ritual and ceremonies contain vestiges of ancient bull worship, and deduce therefrom a theory that present day Buffaloism has some sort of a connection with the ancient Apis or bull mysteries of Egypt and elsewhere. They claim there is a certain amount of symbolism connected with the working of the ceremonies that justifies this conclusion.

THE EARLIEST REFERENCE

Leaving those who advance these various theories to reconcile them as best they can, we quit the realms of fancy and come down to actualities. The earliest reference to the establishment of modern Buffaloism is contained in one of Egan's works, entitled "Finish to the Adventures of Tom and Jerry," and there it is stated that one Joseph Lisle, an eccentric but talented artist, now practically forgotten by all except a few collectors of rare and valuable engravings; together with a comedian friend named W. Sinnet, desiring to commemorate according to their own ideas on the subject, a ballad from the "Pirates" entitled, "We Chase the Buffalo", created a society that has now grown into the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes.

This Society was established in August, 1822, at the Harp Tavern, Russel Street, near the Drury Lane Theatre, London, and there is and can be no doubt but that at its first inception there was much in the Order that might fittingly be described as practical joking; the initiation ceremony of new members was, in those days, to say the least, a nerve racking ordeal, and was accompanied by much that would not be tolerated for one single moment by the majority of present-day members. Further there can be little doubt that the claim to antiquity was part of the original "spoofing" character.

The cause that led up to its formation is said to have been a new regulation made by another society who also met at the Harp Tavern, and whose members styled themselves "Citizens of the Ancient and Honourable City of Lushington". This was a social club of a "free and easy" variety that was then much frequented by the great and shining lights in the theatrical firmament. Being somewhat exclusive as regards those whom it admitted as members, it apparently did not desire the attendance of the "lesser lights" the stage hands and other members of the theatre staff, but for a long time it had tolerated them as "visitors" when accompanied by a member, but evidently this arrangement did not

meet with the approval of the majority, for a new regulation was made in future only members be admitted and the consequent refusal to admit several of the Drury Lane Theatre staff was strongly resented and led as we have seen to the formation of a rival Society "The Buffs".

FROM LOYAL TO ROYAL

The first name used was "The Buffalo Society," which has gradually been added to until we get the present title "Royal" was, however, not always used.

The original word being "Loyal" the transition, however, from the one to the other was easy, and the right to use the word was granted by authority some years ago on a count of "long user".

That the great Buffalo Order was started as a Free and Easy Club is no unique experience.

If their origins are traced back the majority of present-day Orders, Friendly Societies and Fraternities had a like origin. Even the great Masonic Order at the period of which we speak, differed little from the other societies and was accustomed to meet under like conditions.

But to proceed, the Order flourished amazingly, and was chiefly patronised by the theatrical fraternity. Other Lodges were started in other houses of call. The Hum-ums, Wrekin

Tavern, Pheasant Tavern, Bower Saloon etc. and eventually it reached the provinces, being carried there by strolling players, its meetings being usually held on a Sunday evening, the "pros" day off. It served as a rendezvous where actors during tour might congregate and discuss matters concerning their profession, thus combining business with pleasure and at the same time by a little innocent frivolity, find the wherewithal to assist a hard-up pal, broken-down actor, 'a fallen star'.

In 1840 there were several Lodges in the Metropolis, each of which acted as a separate and independent body, and having given rise to other Lodges styled themselves as "Mother Lodges".

The "Lecture" or ceremony, though long and complicated was not printed, very rarely was it committed to writing. It was memorised, and so taken from place to place. Thus it came about that while the main features remained practically identical, the procedure when considered in detail, varied considerably, for the actor could, and did, "gag" immensely when he had the opportunity and free scope.

THE GRAND LODGE

By 1852 the Order had grown to about fifty Lodges, and by 1866 the various Lodges in the Metropolitan

area had federated together under the title of the Grand Primo Lodge, with Brother C.T. Wright as "Grand Primo." Rules were adopted in October of the same year.

The lack of system in its earlier career had apparently prevented the Lodges from the whole country federating as one great body. They met in their various districts under one Lodge, which they styled the "Mother Lodge", and adopted different names. The Metropolitan was the greatest and most important of these groups of Lodges, and was apparently looked upon as the representation of the whole.

By 1868 a dispute had arisen in the London area having reference to the sale of some tickets for the Rye House Fete. The result of this was that the Grand Surrey Lodge which had been "No. 1" on the roll of the Metropolitan Lodges, broke away, and formed an independent body under the style and title of "The Grand Surrey Banner, the Mother Banner of the World". Other differences arose, and the Grand Executive Banner" was formed.

Feeling ran high, the whole Order was in a state of ferment, and solicits became frequent. Each different section calling itself a "Banner", which title I may explain takes its rise from a historical statement made in the ritual wherein it is asserted that in the good old days

of Queen Bess the Order had presented to it a Silken Banner by the Queen, who is supposed to have been admitted a member. It should, however, be pointed out that the main body, the Grand Lodge of England, never styled itself "a Banner".

It should here be explained that while the various "Grand Lodges" still maintain a system of splendid isolation, the members themselves are perfectly friendly, and visit the Lodges of the various sections with perfect freedom, and are always welcomed and made to feel at home.

AMALGAMATIONS AND PROGRESS

Latterly there has been a considerable amount of amalgamation work progressing. Many individual Lodges, and in some cases whole Provinces, have returned to the fold of the G.L.E., which is now the largest and most important of the sections, having more Lodges under its control than all the other sections put together, and will, if the present rate of progress is maintained, soon absorb every other Banner of the Order.

This body has progressed wonderfully, and great strides have been made. There are some 5,000 Lodges under the G.L.E., alone, and it is claimed that there are some five million members in every quarter of the habitable and civilised world.

Its philanthropic work is well known. During the Great War the Order spent over £9,000 in the providing ambulance cars for the soldiers at the front. St. Dunstan's Hostel had over £10,000. The Orphanage for the children of deceased members is famous the world over. Its War Memorial Pensions and Convalescent Schemes are also well known, and every Province and every Lodge maintains a Benevolent Fund for the relief of its indigent members.

Thus it has come about that from the Free and Easy Social Club of a few rollicking theatrical "pros" who met in the bar parlour of an old-time hostelry there has arisen one of the most glorious societies in existence for philanthropy and charity. It seeks to spread the spirit of Brotherly love and good fellowship and to make many a concern not envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness, but seeking unity, peace concord and love, in a word – a blessed inauguration of the Brotherhood of man.