

INTRODUCTION

Commencing with 24 Founders in 1921, the total membership of Gavelkind Lodge, excluding Honorary Members, reached a peak of 116 in 1963 and now stands at 40. During the 75 years of its existence the Lodge has held 375 meetings (including Emergency meetings), 212 Initiates have been received into the Lodge. .

These are statistics but history consists of more than facts & figures and a Lodge with the name of Gavelkind certainly has an interesting past including, as it does, amongst its Initiates and Joining members, engineers, surveyors, architects, accountants, teachers, clergymen, civil servants, local government officers, builders, electricians, printers, watermen and lightermen, engineers, publicans, a management consultant, a master farrier, an England & Essex cricketer, a staff nurse, a hairdresser, a master boot maker, a barrister-at-Law, a solicitor, a monumental mason, a fire fighter, a marble salesman, an optician, a dental technician, a basket maker, and employees in gas, communications, water and electricity utilities - and many other trades and professions too numerous to mention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The document is formed in two parts. The first section covers the period 1921 - 1971 is adapted from an earlier document by W.Bro J. Woodhouse, written to commemorate the first fifty years of the Lodge. The second section draws significantly on the research carried out by W.Bro F. S. Roylance for the purpose of bringing the history of the Lodge up to date in this the 75th Anniversary year - 1996.

The style of the two parts is therefore very different. It is not the intention of the editor to significantly alter the work of these two valued researchers - only those changes necessary to retain the context and chronology of events have therefore been made.

PART ONE 1921 - 1971

THE LODGE IS BORN

The North Kent Lodge No.2499, which was consecrated in 1895, met regularly at the Masonic Hall, Bexleyheath and by 1920 had become a large & popular Lodge with a long waiting list of candidates. The only other Lodge meeting at Bexleyheath was the West Kent Volunteer Lodge No.2041 whose premises had been temporarily taken over by the Government, but this Lodge returned to Bromley as soon as circumstances permitted.

In November 1920 a special meeting of members of North Kent Lodge was held when the following resolution was considered and agreed:-

"That, in view of the present congestion in the Lodge, and consequent bar to the election of new members, and having regard also to the slowness of promotion to office, it is desirable that a new Lodge be petitioned for, working in sympathy with, and founded mainly by members of the North Kent Lodge."

At the meeting of North Kent Lodge held on February 7th 1921, the Master and Wardens were authorised to sign the Petition.

At a Founders' meeting held on December 9th 1920 a suggestion was put forward by Bro. Percy E. Bex that the name of the new Lodge should be "Gavelkind Lodge". This was appropriate and suitable and was agreed nem con. Bro. Percy Bex was the Deputy Clerk of Bexley U D C and we are told that his suggestion arose from the examination of some deeds in the office of land which had been held under the law of "Gavelkind". This was a custom formerly presumed to apply to all freehold land in Kent, and capable of applying elsewhere in England & Wales. The chief feature of the custom was partability, whereby the lands of a person dying intestate descended to all males of the same degree equally instead of to the eldest male alone. Thus, whereas at common law the eldest excluded his brothers, by gavelkind all sons shared equally. Both gavelkind and other Kentish customs relating to land were abolished by the Law of Property Acts 1922 and 1925 and by the Administration of Estates Act 1925.

At a meeting held on February 7th 1921 an important decision of the Founders was recorded in the Minutes as follows:-

"The Founders discussed the advisability of putting on record the terms of the arrangement come to with the North Kent Lodge and, whilst well understanding that the compact cannot be made binding as a formal agreement, yet they now register their intention, in founding Gavelkind Lodge, of working amicably with their Brethren of the North Kent Lodge in all respects. Especially it is their hope and intention that each succeeding Master of Gavelkind Lodge will carefully consult and work in unison with his colleagues of the North Kent Lodge, so that Brethren who are members of both Lodges shall hold office leading to the chair in only one of them, except by mutual consent for special reasons agreed to by the respective Masters, and explained to the Permanent Committees of both Lodges. Further, Brethren who have passed the chair in one Lodge shall not be eligible for office in the other, except by mutual consent on similar lines."

The new Lodge was consecrated at the Town Hall, Gravesend, on Thursday June 9th 1921 by the Right Worshipful The Provincial Grand Master, Col. Fiennes Stanley Wykeham Cornwallis, CBE, DL, PGW, who afterwards became the First Baron Cornwallis of Linton.

Lists of the Founders and first officers are given below:-

FOUNDERS OF THE LODGE.

OFFICERS OF THE LODGE.

W.Bro. E.J.REID, PM2499 PAGSupt.Wks.Eng. PPSGD, Middx.	W.M.	W.Bro. E.J.REID, PAGSupt.Wks.Eng PPrSGD. Middx
W.Bro. HENRY SMITH,PM2499, PPJG	IPM.	W.Bro. Henry Smith, PM2499,PPJGD
" T.W.JENKINS,PM2499, PrGReg	S.W.	W.Bro. C.J. WILSON, PM2499
" ALBERT BEX, PM3014	J.W.	W.Bro. H.G.TICEHURST, PM2499
" C.J.A.ELLIS, PM2499	Chap.	Bro. Rev.W.C.COCKREM
" HENRY EPPS, PM2499	Treas.	W.Bro.W.T.JENKINS, PM2499,PrGReg
" A.A.HALLAM, PM2499	Sec.	W.Bro. HENRY EPPS, PM2499
" F.C.LAWSON, PM2499	D.C.	W.Bro. A.A.HALLAM, PM2499
" W.E.REID, PM2087	S.D	Bro. W. M.EPPS
" D.SMALLWOOD, WM827	J.D	Bro. P.E. BEX
" H.G.TICEHURST, PM2499	ADC.	W.Bro. A.BEX, PM3014
" C.J.WILSON, PM2499	A.Sec.	Bro.L.L.LONSDALE
Bro. W.E.ADAMS	I.G.	Bro. A.G. DAWE
" F.S.BATCHELOR	Steward	Bro. R.C.SWEET
" P.E.BEX		Bro. A.E.WHITE
" A.G.DAWE		Bro. E.THOMAS
" W.M.EPPS		Bro. W.E.ADAMS
" G.E.FINCH		
" W.E.A.LEIGH.		
" L.L.LONSDALE.		
" R.C.SWEET.		
" EDWIN THOMAS.		
" W.R.TRENGROVE.		
" A.E.WHITE.		

EARLY YEARS OF THE LODGE

The new Lodge met at the Masonic Hall, Bexleyheath and during the first four years of its existence had 9 Joining Members and 22 Initiates. In the same period North Kent Lodge had 18 Initiates and its membership went up from 85 to 93. Without the formation of Gavelkind Lodge it is likely that either North Kent Lodge would have become too large for its accommodation or many would not have been able to enter the Craft locally. In addition keen Masons in both Lodges were able to advance more rapidly in office than would otherwise have been possible.

North Kent and Gavelkind Lodges worked closely together for many years. Members of Gavelkind attended North Kent Lodge of Instruction and were later joined by Brethren of Bexleyheath Lodge No 4918 (Warrant of 1927). On several occasions members of the Lodge of Instruction gave up their evenings to allow Gavelkind Lodge to hold Emergency Meetings. By 1931 membership of the Lodge of Instruction numbered 92, of whom 55 were active members. Following a meeting in February 1931 between representatives of the three Lodges, it was decided that each Lodge should form its own Lodge of Instruction so that they could at all times practise their own version of the ritual.

The first 10 years marked a period of expansion and consolidation. Membership increased from 24 Founders in 1921 to a total membership of 75 in 1931. The first three Masters expressed a wish to forgo Past Master's Jewels and that a Lodge Banner should be purchased instead. The banner was bought in 1923 at a cost of £28.4.6 but there is no record of it being dedicated. Gifts made during this period included:-

*Embroidered pedestal frontals by Bro. P. E. Bex, J.D.,
on behalf of his wife and daughter in 1921.*

*Albums for photographs of Masters by Bro. W. M. Epps, S.W.,
(who also designed the Lodge Jewel) in 1924.*

*A Heavy Maul (made from oak which had "recently been
removed from the belfry of Crayford Church, where it had been
in use since the time of Queen Elizabeth") by
W.Bro. P. E. Bex W.M. in 1926.*

*An oaken casket (made from the same historic oak as the
Heavy Maul) to be used for the safe keeping of the Lodge Album
by W.Bro. H. G. Ticehurst and other past Masters in 1929.*

*A Leather Warrant Case by Bro. A. W. Thomson on behalf of
the Brethren of "Callenders" in 1929 (known as B.I.C.C. in 1995).*

At the Election Meetings in 1922, 1923, 1924 and 1925 resolutions were passed to the effect that the election of Master and Treasurer for the following session be left in the hands of the Worshipful Master. The Grand Secretary confirms that even in those days this procedure was out of order. However, in each case the Senior Warden was declared elected as Master and W.Bro. T. W. Jenkins was declared elected Treasurer, an office he had held from 1921 to 1942.

We read in the Lodge Minutes that at the Installation Meeting in 1924, the Installing Master was presented with a cigarette casket on behalf of the initiates during his year of office. We also read that Past Masters 'Collars and Jewels' were presented in 1925, 1928 and 1929 to the outgoing Masters by the Initiates and Joining Members of their years. Similar presentations were made in other Lodges but the practice was frowned upon by the Board of General Purposes in 1929 and ceased in Gavelkind Lodge.

During these early years both North Kent and Gavelkind Lodges had hoped to qualify as Hall Stone Lodges by contributing sums equal to ten guineas per member towards the Masonic Million Memorial Fund. This fund was for the building of the New Freemasons Hall to commemorate the sacrifice of thousands of Freemasons who gave their lives in the First World War. It was agreed that a combined effort should be made by the two Lodges but this should be concentrated first on securing this honour for Gavelkind Lodge. Although the Fund was not closed until 1938 neither Lodge qualified as a Hall Stone Lodge but both contributed to the Fund and five members of Gavelkind qualified for the individual Hall Stone Jewel.

During this period Gavelkind Lodge supported and by 1927 had subscribed sufficient to qualify as a Founding Lodge of the "Freemasons' Hospital and Nursing Home" at Fulham Road, Chelsea.

In 1922 it was resolved that the Lodge become a subscribing Lodge for the fund for forming a Provincial Library at Canterbury.

THE PERIOD 1931 - 1939

These were years of further progress. Although increase in membership was not as rapid as in the first ten years, numbers increased from 75 to 82. The first three Initiates did not progress to the Chair but in 1932 Bro. A. W. Thomson, the fourth Initiate, was installed as Master. Initiated on February 18th 1922, he was appointed Organist at the Installation Meeting in October, an office which he held for several years until he progressed to the Chair. Subsequently he returned to the organ in 1945, became Assistant Director of Ceremonies in 1946 and Director of Ceremonies from 1950 to 1962.

During this period five initiates of the Lodge and a Joining Member who had been Passed and Raised in the Lodge followed W.Bro. Thomson to the chair, these were W.Bro's F. A. Bex, C. T. Shaw, C. T. N. Wright, P. G. Farebrother, H. W. Langley and T. W. Rankin.

Several members received Provincial and London Grand Rank (through other Lodges) including W.Bro's. A. Bex, A. G. Dawe, R. C. Sweet and L. L. Lonsdale, together with Bro. W. Royle, Tyler, who celebrated his Golden Wedding in 1931.

1933 is noteworthy as the only year in which a member of the Lodge received Grand Rank, although doubtless through North Kent Lodge. Members were very happy to learn that W.Bro. T. W. Jenkins, Treasurer, had been appointed Past Grand Standard Bearer.

1934 saw the formation of Gavelkind Lodge Benevolent Association with W.Bro. E. S Tanner as Treasurer and Secretary, which offices he held until 1958.

We find in the minutes two interesting references to the Masonic Hall, Bexleyheath. At the Permanent Committee held on September 21st 1936, Bro. Farebrother asked "*if anything could be done to overcome the noise from the sound chamber in the adjoining premises (Palace Cinema). W Bro. Jenkins promised to go into the matter.*"

A meeting of the Committee was held on May 14th, 1937 to discuss the place of meeting for the Installation Meeting in October 1937. The number of members and visitors attending Installation Meetings had by then increased to such an extent that accommodation at Bexleyheath was sometimes uncomfortable; on this occasion there was an attendance of 85.

SECOND WORLD WAR (1939 - 1945)

Following the declaration of war on Sunday September 3rd 1939, in view of the difficulties and dangers likely to follow, Grand Lodge issued a decree suspending all Masonic meetings but this was soon rescinded and within a few months Lodges were again meeting regularly. The Provincial Grand Master sent an encouraging letter to the Masters of all Lodges in the Province in which he stated he was anxious that those who could manage to meet should do so and that he would be glad to grant dispensations to enable Lodges to hold meetings out of their districts if necessary. He added that in cases where only a few could meet perhaps a meeting could be arranged at a house of one of the members, providing of course, a sufficient number could be present to constitutionally form a Lodge.

The Installation Meeting in 1939 was held on November 18th when Bro. T. W. Rankin was Installed as Master. Afterwards meetings were held on the regular dates until March 1940 when Bro. K. B. Jones was elected Master. As air raids during the autumn and winter of 1940 again resulted in the suspension of meetings, the Lodge did not meet again until March 1941 when Bro. K. B. Jones was once more elected Master. Regular meetings were held by Dispensation in June and August and Bro. K. B. Jones was installed in September 1941. Thereafter the Lodge met regularly and also held several Emergency Meetings.

Looking back over the war years we may justly feel proud of the efforts made by Masters, Officers and Brethren of the Lodge to keep things going, sometimes under great difficulties and occasionally while air raids were in progress. During these six years the Lodge held 34 meetings and received 19 new members as Initiates. On two occasions three degrees were worked at meetings. Total membership increased from 82 in 1939 to 91 in 1945.

Several brethren had to move from the district temporarily because of the important work on which they were engaged. W.Bro. J. W. Reay, Master for 1942 - 43 travelled from South Wales to attend four of the regular meetings during his year but "owing to the 'special nature' of the war work on which he was engaged it was utterly impossible for him to attend the Installation Meeting held by Dispensation in September 1943, when his successor was installed".

In 1940 Bro. W. Royle, Tyler since the Lodge's Consecration, resigned on account of age. In 1942 W.Bro. T. W. Jenkins, Treasurer, reluctantly had to give up office on his doctor's advice and died in 1945 at the age of 81. W.Bro. A. Bex, Secretary, died in 1942.

The Session 1942/43 marked the 21st Anniversary of the Lodge but owing to wartime difficulties it was not possible to hold any special celebrations. However, in a special report, the Secretary stated that "it must be recorded as one of the most interesting in the history of the Lodge."

At the meeting held on 18th March 1944 a petition was signed for the formation of our Daughter Lodge, Manor of Bexley No.5977 which was consecrated on 23rd November 1944 with W.Bro. M. D. H.Garrett as first Master. The formation of new Lodges at this time did not indicate that the war was nearly over but was rather a gesture of faith in the future. At the meeting held on 20th May notice was given that "the Church service to be held at Strood on 4th June 1944 was cancelled owing to a traffic ban". At that time the country was divided into "Defence Areas" and travel from one to another was forbidden except for essential purposes.

In the Minutes for the meeting held on the 21st October 1944 we read that the contents of the Charity Box were allocated towards the cost of the "memorial to be erected in Crayford Church in memory of the W.V.S ladies who lost their lives in the execution of their duty, due to bombs."

1945 was a memorable year in many ways. It was the Jubilee Year of our sponsoring Lodge, North Kent No. 2499. The war in Europe ended with a Cease Fire at 0001 on May 8th and in the far East at midnight on 14th August. The Lodge held Services of Thanksgiving and Dedication at St.Paulinus' Church, Crayford on July 7th and at the Masonic Hall, Dartford on October 20th. The Rector of St Paulinus' Church, W.Bro. Rev. W. W. Hurwood, was elected an Honorary Member.

IMMEDIATE POST WAR YEARS (1945-1951)

The end of hostilities was not the signal for an immediate return to normal conditions as is apparent from several entries in our Minutes. The meeting scheduled for the 15th February 1947 was postponed until the 27th February "on account of the National Crisis" (Restrictions on the use of electricity). At the meeting held on the 18th October 1947 a letter was read from the Provincial Grand Secretary calling attention to an Order issued by the Minister of Food which provided that no "luncheon, dinner, supper, or any similar service of food "shall be supplied" to a party of persons exceeding 100 in number". At the meeting held on the 17th November 1951 a short discussion took place regarding the Grand Lodge proposal that the pre-war custom of wearing white gloves be re-introduced as from January 1952 and it was unanimously agreed to fall in with this proposal.

One of the most important decisions taken during this period was to meet regularly at the Masonic Hall, Dartford. Prior to 1948 the installation meeting had been held there on four occasions and also three other meetings were held there. On 21st February 1948 a resolution was agreed by a substantial majority that, owing to the growth and consequent requirements of the Lodge, the accommodation and facilities at Bexleyheath were considered insufficient and that the Lodge should move to Dartford. Doubtless the move was regretted by many whose Masonic home had been at Bexleyheath for a long time.

Following the decision to move to Dartford it was found that the Lodge was short of many items of Lodge equipment. Bro. W. E. Duncan generously presented Warden's Columns, wands, gavels, and a box containing Working Tools. W Bro. J. G. Gibson and G. Townson, members of the Lodge of Instruction, presented a Heavy Maul. Bro's. S. W. Turner and W. S. Oliver presented two charity collecting boxes and other items were donated anonymously.

In 1951 Gavelkind became a Patron Lodge of the Royal Masonic Hospital, 24 years after becoming a Founding lodge of the original Hospital and Nursing Home.

THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS (1952-1971)

The next twenty years were more settled ones for the Lodge but were by no means monotonous. In 1963 the Lodge had a record membership of 116. In the same year, W.Bro. P. G. Farebrother, Secretary, suffered a severe illness and had to resign from the office he had held for 22 years. Subsequently he left the district and died in 1966. The ranks of our Founders gradually thinned and in 1965 W.Bro. A. G. Dawe, the last one as far as we are aware, was called to Higher Service. Provincial Honours were received regularly by our members but none achieved Grand Rank.

After approximately 30 years' use, the original Lodge Banner became beyond repair. On the 21st February 1953 a new banner, made by Bro. Fraser Charles Shaw, was presented to the Lodge. The making of this banner was truly a work of love which occupied all Bro. Shaw's spare time for two and a half years. The cords, tassels and fringe of the original Banner were cleaned and incorporated in the new one. At a special ceremony the new Lodge Banner was unveiled by W.Bro. A. G. Parsons, J.P., P.G.D., Prov.G.Treasurer and dedicated by W.Bro. the Rev. H. H. Hurwood, M.A., P.A.G.Chap., P.P.G.Chap.

An event of considerable interest occurred in March 1965 when W.Bro. E. J. Barnett, then in his 80th year, Raised Bro. E. P. Dyne and in the same year carried out a similar ceremony in Crayford Lodge No.6336 of which he was a Founder.

Three friends who had given assistance over a number of years were elected Honorary Members of the Lodge. W.Bro. J. G. Gibson, MBE, L.G.R. (P.M. Lodge No.2648) who had given valuable help to the Lodge of Instruction was elected in 1954 and W.Bro. G. Townson, P.A.G.Supt.Wks. (P.M. Lodge No.5660) was elected in 1969.

During this period the Lodge had been actively concerned with Masonic Charities and has supported the Provincial Grand Master at the 1960 and 1970 Festivals. Much credit is due to the efforts of W.Bro. H. W. Hearne who was elected a member of the Lodge Benevolent Association Committee as long ago as 1938 and became Secretary in 1958 (following the resignation of W.Bro. E. S. Tanner), an office which he held until 1970. In March 1959 it was decided that in future the activities of the Lodge Benevolent Association should be controlled directly by the Lodge. The Lodge's achievements in regard to Masonic Charities resulted in it becoming a:-

Founding Lodge of the "Freemasons' Hospital and Nursing Home"
Patron Lodge of the Royal Masonic Hospital in 1961
Founding Lodge 1956 "Wakefield Wing, Royal Masonic Hospital"
Patron of the The Royal Masonic Institution for Girls
Patron of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution
Patron of the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys

The Lodge qualified for the Commemorative Jewel in connection with the Grand Master's appeal to mark the 250th Anniversary of the foundation of Grand Lodge. In addition the Lodge of Instruction became a Patron of the Royal Masonic Hospital in 1954 and by May 1971 had donated nearly £400 to its funds.

It is realised only too well that mention has been made of only a few members and friends who gave faithful service to the Lodge during the first 50 years. There are many others who have organised our Ladies Festivals, visited the sick & bereaved, assisted at the Festive Board, helped with the Lodge of Instruction, and acted as Organists.

The Lodge is especially grateful to W.Bro. H. Dresser, P.P.G.Organist (P.M Lodges. No's 4159 & 7558) who, before and since the death of W.Bro. R. M. Jones in 1967, contributed so much to our ceremonies with his musical knowledge and skill that he was elected an Honorary Member in 1970.

While we look forward from the first 50 years with confidence to the future, we should ever be thankful for the service given in the past by those who were perhaps inspired by the following extract from the Oration delivered by the Rev. C. E. Marsh, M.A., S.G.Chap., Kent at the Consecration of the Lodge in 1921;-

"The Law of Gavelkind secures equal rights for all the brothers.....I should prefer to put it that Gavelkind provides equal opportunities for Service to all the Brothers. What is this but the first grand principle on which the Order is founded - BROTHERLY LOVE."

PART TWO: THE YEARS 1971 - 1996

CHANGES IN THE PROVINCE

In 1973, a letter to all Kent Lodges from The Rt.Hon. Lord Cornwallis, Provincial Grand Master, stated that in future, Kent would be split into Provinces of East & West Kent. This, he added, would give younger Masons the opportunity of reaching the chair earlier and being promoted sooner. He also stated that he had been asked, and agreed to become, Provincial Grand Master of both Provinces.

Two years later he was succeeded as Provincial Grand Master of West Kent by V.W.Bro. J.C.H.Twallin, MA., PAGSuptWks., who died in 1978. The Rev. Canon Peter Churton Collins, BD., became his successor from 1979 to 1987, when he resigned and was replaced, by Provincial Grand Master of West Kent., RW.Bro. Simon Francis Norman Waley, MA. He in turn remained in office till 1996 when he stepped down for personal reasons and was replaced by V.W.Bro William James Bryant

BENEVOLENCE & CHARITY.

The Charity Representative in the Lodge from 1958 to 1970, and acting Almoner, W.Bro. W.J.Hearne, MBE, MSM, PPrJGW, an Initiate of the Lodge in January 1932, died in 1975.

In 1976, W.Bro. D.I.M.Edmunds, PPrJGD., Treasurer of the Charity Association for the previous six years, was elected Secretary of the Lodge Benevolent Association, as it became a Lodge responsibility. He was elected Charity Steward and held both offices till sadly called to Higher Service on 17th April 1995, aged 86 - the then oldest member of the Lodge . He had been a staff employee, and pensioner of the RMBI. During his 26 years in office, he had donated from the Lodge, to the following Charities;-

Lord Cornwallis appeal for R.M.Hospital General Fund £ 460
R.M.Hospital Modernisation and Re-development Fund £ 484
in 1970 to the W.Kent Festival for the MTGB £1,460
in 1980 for the RMBI £4,839
in 1990 for the MTG £8,808
also to the Old Samaritan Fund, RMH and many other Charities.

He regularly represented the Lodge at Provincial Charity and Officers' meetings, and was donating to the West Kent 2003 Festival. He qualified the Lodge as a Patron of the New Samaritan Fund, and member of the West Kent Masonic Charities Association In 1974, W.Bro. E.P.Gibson, PPrJGD., was appointed as Almoner for 12 years until his demise in 1986. Much respected for his attention to members and their families and widows, he set up special recognition every Christmas.

Bro. Colin Shewbridge followed W.Bro. Gibson as Almoner until resigning from the Lodge in 1993, and was subsequently succeeded by W.Bro. D.A.Fairbrother, PPrGStdBr.

From 1964, the Lodge honoured the death of a of a relative of a member, in The Hospital for the Sick & Needy, Clapham Common, known as 'Trinity Hospice', by making annual donations.

In 1983, the Provincial Grand Master requested Lodges to consider donating outside Masonry, especially to 'St.Christophers Hospice', Sydenham, and the MacMillan Nursing Scheme. The Lodge continued yearly donations to these charities until 1994, when local Hospices merited urgent development support.

CHANGES TO THE MASONIC CENTRE

On Thursday 8 November 1956, a delegate from the Lodge attended the inaugural meeting of the Dartford Masonic Hall Tenants Association but no serious future was decided until 1973, when members were requested by the Hon. Secretary, Bro.L.N. Hall, to consider the future use of the premises to assist Emulation Lodge 299, the Freeholders. Following are some of the developments completed over the next 20 years:-

- *dining room extended to an upper floor with instruction rooms, annexe, stairs, and a lift for infirm members.*
- *kitchens refurbished.*
- *ground level bar extended*
- *service bar fitted in the dining room*
- *basement cleared of Lodges equipment*
- *roofing, and heating services improved*
- *permanent managers appointed*

FUNDING OF THE IMPROVEMENTS

Initially, an issue of 1000 bonds at £25 each were taken up by many Lodges. Gavelkind purchased bonds worth £500 and all made a profit for the Lodge Raffles, lotteries, bootsales, sweepstakes and donations added to the capital. The Lodge contributed £500 to the lift installation. Double glazed windows were installed in the dining room from a bequest of W.Bro. W.S.Oliver, PPrSGD., Past Master 1967.

Early in 1990's, the Association formed itself into 'The North Kent Masonic Hall Company Ltd', W.Bro. L.N.Hall being appointed Secretary. Lodges were invited to become corporate members on payments of £2000 each and Gavelkind complied from reserves held for that purpose. The Stewards Bro. Roy & Barbara McEwen manage the daily functions of the 'Centre', and deal with beverages, drinks, meals and snacks. Mrs Pat Cooper manages the administration in this 75th year.

In 1995 W.Bro. H.K.Rix was elected to represent the Lodge at meetings of the Masonic Hall Company.

NOTABLE EVENTS & HONOURS

In 1975 a second photograph album of Lodge Masters was donated by W.Bro. G.C.Mackett, and a matching oak casket by W.Bro. E.P.Gibson, hand made by W.Bro. A.H.Ward, a regular guest from Heart of Oak Lodge, Sidcup.

The Lodge had a particularly unusual occurrence during the 1970's when a candidate arrived during the 'call off', and paid his fees. In being prepared, he changed his mind, left the premises and never returned.

In 1975, the then Treasurer, W.Bro. F.S.Smith died suddenly in office and the Lodge became very grateful for assistance, later called on frequently, from Bro. Henry Stephens FCA. A Joining member from E.Kent and a University Lecturer in Accounting, who took over the "books", was elected as Treasurer, improved the systems, and thereafter, offered advice and assistance.

In 1977 W.Bro. 'Ted' Barnett, PPrSGD died, aged 91. He was a member for 47 years, 27th Master in 1948 and Chaplain for 10 years. He left £100 to the Lodge Reserve Fund, from which a Master's collar and chain was purchased on which his, and successive Masters names are engraved. It is recalled that W.Bro Ted gave addresses after Installation ceremonies more than twenty times.

During 1977/8 a booklet was prepared and printed under the Lodge heading from notes left with the effects of W.Bro's A.W.Hearne and E.J.Barnett, by W.Bro's, J.Woodhouse, W.G.Ritchley and R.L.Exeter. A copy of which is issued to each new member.

The booklet is entitled; *VARIATIONS FROM "EMULATION WORKING" AS PRACTISED BY THE LODGE SINCE ITS CONSECRATION IN 1921,*

On 11th February 1977 Bro. Sydney Cooke, the Senior Warden, and probable Master, died suddenly. Many years earlier, he had escaped twice as a P.O.W. from the Italians and after the second attempt, joined the Resistance in the Italian mountains. He was a coach builder pre-war, but unable to resume his trade, due to ill health, took employment as a hairdresser and became Chairman of the local Hairdressers' Federation. He walked, aided with a stick, his balance so affected that he appeared about to collapse. He never complained, had a dry humour and is remembered as one of the best members of the Lodge who never occupied the Masters chair.

In 1977 the first Grand Rank honour was accorded to a Past Master and 1942 initiate of the Lodge, when W.Bro N.F. Bowen was appointed Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, "For his services as Provincial Grand Treasurer of East Kent" and promoted to Past Junior Grand Deacon in 1985.

In 1979 W.Bro John Woodhouse, a Joining Member from 1936 was appointed as Past Grand Standard Bearer "For his services to Masonry in West Kent".

In November 1979 the Lodge balloted in favour of sponsoring the formation of a second daughter Lodge. "The Lodge of Good Heart No.8890" at Welling. W.Bro. D.I.M.Edmunds was the first Master and other Lodge members were Founders. Later discussion concerned a by-law reference about the Lodge Founders `compact' with their sponsors, North Kent Lodge 2499, in 1921 regarding seeking the Masters' Chair in both Lodges. This had then caused no difficulties but a similar compact between Gavelkind and Good Heart Lodges created discontent among some members.

In 1982, W.Bro. S.W.Turner, PPrGSuptWks., was presented with a donation to a Charity of his choice to acknowledge his past six years as Tyler of the Lodge, without emolument.

On 20th October 1984, the Master, announced the death of RW Bro. The Lord Harris, CBE.,MC.,JP.,OSM.,PPrSGW of Kent, on 16th October 1984, aged 91. He had been the senior Honorary member of the Lodge since the consecration in 1921 The Lodge afterwards stood to order.

On 17th November 1984 a ballot proved in favour of a proposition by W.Bro. J.Woodhouse "That the under mentioned Executive Officers of the Province of West Kent be elected Honorary members of the Lodge in recognition of their services to Freemasonry in general, and to this Lodge in particular".

RW.Provincial Grand Master, Rev. Canon Peter Churton Collins, BD.
W.Bro. Stanley Walter Scarlett, PJGD, Provincial Grand Secretary.
W.Bro.Gordon William Sinclair Davie, PAGDC, Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies.

In 1985 the Lodge agreed a recommendation from the Lodge Committee that, as no past Masters or Wardens wished to occupy the Masters' Chair, W.Bro. Woodhouse be encouraged to accept. He reluctantly agreed and was elected and installed in October 1985. He had joined the Lodge as a Master Mason from Brecknock Lodge 651 in 1936 and became Past Master of Crayford Lodge 6336, and a member of other Orders. He served in the Lodge as Secretary, D.C for 18 years, acted as Organist, and was a Past President of the Lodge of Instruction.

In 1985, W.Bro. J.F.Stephens, LGR, Master in 1976/77, PM.,1968/70 and Secretary, of South Africa Lodge 6742, was appointed Past Provincial Assistant Grand Registrar

At the October 1987 Installation meeting, W.Bro. J.Woodhouse gave a short Testimonial to observe the death of RW.Bro. Colin W.Dyer, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, who died in July 1987.

1987, also saw the inauguration of the Dartford Masonic Fellowship, meeting twice monthly at the Masonic Hall, Dartford and open to Masons, their wives and widows. The Provincial Grand Master RW. Bro. Canon Peter Churton Collins, BD., attended the opening and spoke on Masonic Fellowship.

At a Special Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge on 14th July 1987 RW Bro. Simon F.N.Waley, M.A., was Installed and Invested as Provincial Grand Master. This was

followed by the Obligation and Investiture of VW Bro. C.W.F.Dyer, OStJ., ERD, OSM., PDepGSwdBr., as Deputy Provincial Grand Master. The MW Pro.Grand Master, explained the resignation of RW Bro. Canon Peter Churton Collins, BD.

In April 1990 the Lodge was further honoured when W.Bro L.N.Hall another initiate and Past Master of the Lodge, was appointed as Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, "For his services to Masonry in West Kent". The Lodge then had for a brief period, the unusual distinction of having three members of Grand Rank.

In October 1991 the Lodge balloted in favour of the Motion that; "The Provincial Grand Master of the Province of West Kent, RW Bro. S.F.N.Waley, MA, be elected an Honorary member of the Lodge".

During the last 25 years the Lodge has also been favourably considered with Provincial Grand Lodge Honours. For example, from Officers Session 1970/71, W.Bro's. W.G.Ritchley and R.L.Exeter, who were Raised at the same meeting in the mid forties, were later appointed to Provincial rank. In 1985 they were promoted from Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon and Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works, respectively, to Past Provincial Grand Registrars.

In 1992 and 1993 respectively, W.Bro's Ritchley and R.L.Exeter were again promoted, to Past Provincial Junior Grand Wardens. The Lodge then had briefly, two PPrJGW's.

LONG SERVICE

In February 1980 the Lodge received the newly invested Provincial Grand Master RW.Bro. Canon Peter Churton Collins BD., accompanied by W.Bro's S.W.Scarlett PJGD, Provincial Grand Secretary and escorted by W.Bro. Gordon W.S.Davie, PSGD, Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies. The Master requested the Provincial Grand Master to present a Grand Lodge Certificate to Bro. John Vincent, which was much appreciated.

The Master W.Bro. W.T.King then carried out a pleasant duty in presenting from the Lodge a gift of six English cut whisky and cocktail/sherry glasses to W.Bro. John Woodhouse, Past Grand Standard Bearer, Past Provincial Deputy Grand Registrar, to mark 53 years in Masonry and 44 years active membership of this Lodge.

The Provincial Grand Master then addressed the Lodge recounting the history and service to the Craft achieved by John Woodhouse, as a personal friend, neighbour and a parishioner.

On Saturday 16th January 1982 the Secretary reported informing Provincial Office of 60 and 50 years Craft membership achieved respectively, by W.Bro's A.W.Thomson and E.P.Gibson JGD's, so that appropriate certificates could be presented.

The Lodge subsequently welcomed to the meeting W.Bro. Major S.Holland, PAGDC., T.D., J.P., PPrJGW., Provincial Charity Representative, as a representative of the Provincial Grand Master. The then Master, W.Bro. A.R.Milner, presented a gift from the Lodge of six English cut hock glasses to W.Bro. E.P.Gibson, PPrJGD, to mark 50 years membership in the Craft, and 34 years in the Lodge. W.Bro. Holland afterwards added a tribute to the W.Bro. Gibson's dedication to the office of Almoner and his kindness to members and families alike.

In February 1982 VW.Bro. T.D.Jenkins, PGSuptWks., Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master, visited the Lodge Representing the Provincial Grand Master. The Secretary reported that the Provincial Grand Master regretted his inability to be present (due to unforeseen circumstances) to celebrate Worshipful Brother A.W.Thomson's 60 years membership of the Craft but hoped a Deputy or Assistant Provincial Grand Master would represent him.

The Master W.Bro. A.R.Milner, after welcoming VW.Bro. Jenkins, stated that he had another pleasant duty to carry out in his year of office by making a presentation to W.Bro. Alec Thomson PPrJGD., from the Lodge to mark 60 years membership, and called on W.Bro. John Woodhouse to read a prepared statement (filed with the minutes), concerning the activities and interests of W.Bro. Thomson, three, of eleven paragraphs, are as follows overleaf:-

"W.Bro. Alexander William Thomson was the fourth Initiate of the Gavelkind Lodge No.4266 and is now the senior surviving Past Master of the Lodge. He was born at Hammersmith on the 15th March 1896 and moved to Bexleyheath in 1905. After leaving school and training at Clark's College he intended to enter the Civil Service but the First World War broke out in 1914 and he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and served in France for 3^{1/2} years."

"He was initiated on the 18th February 1922, passed on the 18th March 1922 and raised on the 25th April 1922. Eight months after his Initiation he was appointed Organist and two years later he began to progress through other offices to the Chair. He became the 12th Master of the Lodge in 1932 but was again Organist from 1950 to 1962. He received Provincial rank as PrJGD in 1944"

"W.Bro. Thomson is a member of North Kent Chapter No.2499. He was First Principal in 1953 and was appointed to Provincial Grand Chapter rank in 1960 as P.PrGStdBr..J.W. 20th February 1982"

The Master presented W.Bro. Thomson with six English cut whisky glasses and a bottle of brandy together with a floral decoration for Mrs Thomson. They had celebrated their golden wedding in October 1973. VW.Bro. Jenkins added his tribute to W.Bro. Thomson, as a personal friend. Lodge minutes do not record a presentation of a Certificate to W.Bro A.R.Thomson to mark his 60 years membership of the Craft and the Lodge, from 22nd February 1922.[Sadly, W.Bro. Thomson died on 8th November 1982.]

At the Installation meeting on 15th October 1983, the Provincial Grand Master RW.Bro. Peter Churton Collins, BD., visited the Lodge, when he was accompanied by W.Bro. C.M.Porter, CBE., Provincial Grand Registrar, and escorted by W.Bro. Gordon W.S.Davie, PAGDC., Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies. After greeting the Provincial Grand Master the W. Master invited him to present a Grand Lodge certificate to Bro. Hardwick.

The Provincial Grand Master then stated his pleasure in revisiting the Lodge to adopt the practice of presenting Certificates to celebrate fifty years in the Craft. Especially to keep his promise to make such a presentation to W.Bro. John Woodhouse, PGStdBr., PPrDGReg., and called on W.Bro. Porter, Provincial Grand Registrar, to read the Citation. Afterwards he addressed the Brethren, and presented W.Bro. Woodhouse with his Certificate. W.Bro. Woodhouse passed to Higher Service in August 1990 aged 83. The funeral service took place at St.Paulinus Church, Crayford when RW Canon P.C. Collins, BD., Past Provincial Grand Master, officiated.

On 20th October 1984 the Lodge welcomed W.Bro. C.Maddison-Roberts, PSGD., Assistant Provincial Grand Master, representing the Provincial Grand Master, accompanied and escorted by W.Bro. A.W. Nelson, Provincial Grand Registrar., and W.Bro J.L.Blew. Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies respectively.

At the invitation of the Master, W.Bro. Maddison-Roberts kindly presented a Grand Lodge certificate to Bro. B.Pailes. W.Bro Maddison-Roberts then stated that he had another pleasant duty to present to W.Bro. Edmund P.Gibson. PPrJGD, a Certificate to mark 52 years in the Craft.

In January 1986, the Master, W.Bro. John Woodhouse, referring to the retirement of W.Bro. Ritchley, PPrGReg., as Secretary since leaving the Chair in 1963 until 1985, and Assistant Secretary before and after those dates, proposed a vote of thanks and on behalf of members of the Lodge, and presented him with a gift of six English cut whisky glasses. W.Bro. Ritchley, died in May 1993, aged 80, a few months short of fifty years membership.

In July 1987 Provincial Office notified the Lodge of substantial changes in representation of the Provincial Grand Master at Installation meetings and in October 1987 the Lodge was informed that the Representative, at future Installation meetings, would be Assistant Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. Charles J.Carter, PAGDC.

In the same month the Investiture of W.Bro. S.Holland. TD.,JP.PJG and W.Bro. M.H.H.Cash, PAGDC, as Deputy Provincial, and Assistant Provincial Grand Masters respectively, took place at W.Kent Provincial Stewards Lodge 8565, at Wrotham.

In March 1988 the Lodge rearranged regular business to welcome, at 5 p.m., W.Bro Charles J.Carter PAGDC, Representing the Provincial Grand Master and escorted by W.Bro. R.A.Gollan, DepPrGDC.

In October 1988 as no Past Masters or Wardens of the Lodge offered to fill the chair for the coming session, the Lodge installed W.Bro. Alan H.Gane as Master. An Initiate of the Lodge, Founder and Past Master of the Lodge of Good Heart Lodge 8890, and an active supporter of the Gavelkind Lodge of Instruction.

In November 1988 a précis of a speech given by the Provincial Grand Master to Provincial Officers at their meeting in October was read in the Lodge. Details to affect all Lodges from January 1989. Briefly the details concerned:

- * *Membership down in two of every three Lodges over last five years.*
- * *Attendance's down by about half*
- * *Majority of Lodges starting proceedings early are losing members and those with later start are keeping members.*

Due to these factors a two year trial period started on 1 January 1989 with the objectives;

- * *To start later and finish at the regular time*
- * *No lodge meeting to start before 5 p.m., preferably 5.30 p.m.*
- * *Only one ceremony to be performed at any meeting*
- * *No tea breaks during meeting - if necessary, to be taken before meeting starts. Minutes to be kept to a Minimum*
- * *Time from finish of a meeting and start of the meal to be maximum of 30 minutes*
- * *All meetings, where possible to be completed by 9.30 p.m.*
- * *Provincial Grand Master's representatives will not enter Lodges before 5 p.m.*
- * *D.C. to ensure newly installed Master is trained in direction and control of Festive Board*
- * *First appointments to Provincial Rank, as well as promotions, will be awarded after eight rather than current ten years*

On 16 March 1991, W.Bro. F.Eul, PPrGSupt.Wks., was presented with a Certificate of 50 years Masonic membership at his local Lodge, Cherwell 599 Banbury, Oxon., which he had joined after leaving Bexleyheath. The Lodge Secretary kindly arranged the ceremony on behalf of The Province of W.Kent, which was carried out by an Assistant Provincial Grand Master who had been stationed at Biggin Hill as an RAF fighter pilot, in WW2.

Cherwell Lodge also presented W.Bro. Eul with a bottle of Malt whisky and, with a cheque for £50, from Gavelkind Lodge, purchased and presented him with a stainless steel border fork and spade. W. Bro. Eul, a Joining member from E.Lancs, retired from Bexley Council as Superintendent of Parks and Gardens, when Hall Place gardens were re-developed to suit the new route of the A2 trunk road. A widower, partially sighted and unable to travel, he resigned in March 1994.

On 21st March 1992, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, VW.Bro. M.H.H.Cash, PGSwdB., representing the Provincial Grand Master, accompanied by W.Bro. D.J.Mills, PAGDC., Provincial Grand Secretary., and escorted by W.Bro. A.J.Taylor., Provincial Grand Director Ceremonies., attended the Lodge. After being greeted by the Master, W.Bro. R.L.Exeter, PPrGReg., The Deputy Provincial Grand Master announced that he had a pleasant duty to present to W.Bro. N.F.Bowen, PJGD., PPrJGW., Past Provincial Grand Treasurer,(East Kent) a Certificate marking 50 years service exactly 50 years to the day.

The Citation was read by the Provincial Grand Secretary. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master then gave details of the history of W.Bro. Bowen, assisted by references from his autobiography, congratulated and presented him with his Certificate. The W.Master then had the pleasure of presenting W.Bro. Bowen with six cut glass whisky tumblers from the Lodge. On 5th May 1995,W.Bro. N.F.Bowen, PJGD., PPrJGW, PPrGTreas,(E.Kent) passed to Higher Service, aged 83

In March 1994, the Lodge received W.Bro. Roland J.Wade, PSGD, Assistant Provincial Grand Master, representing the Provincial Grand Master, accompanied by W.Bro. D.J.Mills, PAGDC., Provincial Grand Secretary and escorted by W.Bro. K.Beckett, PAGDC., PPrDGDC.

After greetings W.Bro. Wade briefly accepted and returned the Gavel. He then stated he had a pleasant duty to acknowledge fifty years of Masonic membership in the Craft, and this Lodge, achieved by W.Bro. Ronald L.Exeter, PPrJGW and called on the Provincial Grand Secretary to read the Citation.

He then gave a brief resume' of Bro. Exeter's progress, and formally presented his Certificate. W.Bro. Norman F.Bowen, afterwards presented W.Bro. Exeter with six crystal cut glass tumblers, from the Lodge. On 17th September 1995 W.Bro. R.L.Exeter, PPrJGW, passed to Higher Service

In November 1991 a bequest from the estate of the late W.Bro. John Woodhouse, PGStdBr, PPrDGReg., of £500 was acknowledged, and with it the proviso," that it should be spent for the enjoyment and entertainment of the members" was observed at several Festive Boards.

In March 1994 the Lodge agreed a Motion to elect W.Bro. W.T.King, PPrAGDC as an Honorary member of the Lodge, "To recognise his loyalty to the Lodge and the members over many years of ill health". He passed to Higher Service in September 1994.

OFFICERS 1971 - 1996

MASTERS	TREASURER's	SECRETARY's.	D.C's.
1971 S.W.TURNER.	A.R.CLARK.	W.G.RITCHLEY	J.WOODHOUSE.
1972 H.E.WALDRON.	B.A.WILLIAMS..		
1973 F.S.SMITH.			
1974 L.W-LOVEGROVE.	F.S.SMITH..		
1975 C.JACKSON..			
1976 J.F.STEPHENS.	W.H.STEPHENS..		
1977 G.T.H.JUDGES.			
1978 A.J.BROWN.	C JACKSON		
1980 G.C.MACKETT.			
1981 A.R.MILNER..			
1982 L.N.HALL.	.		
1983 M.D.EXETER..	A.J.BROWN		
1984 F.S.ROYLANCE.			R.L.EXETER .
1985 J.WOODHOUSE.		F.S.ROYLANCE	
1986 H.COLGATE..			
1987 D.A.FAIRBROTHER.			G.C.MACKETT.
1988 A.H.GANE.			
1989 J.D.HAYWARD.	D.I.M.EDMUNDS		L.N.HALL .
1990 C.HICKS.		J.D.HAYWARD	
1991 H.K.RIX.			
1992 R.L.EXETER.	M.D.EXETER		
1993 B.R.PAILES.		H.COLGATE. .	
1994 P.J.SKELTON.			
1995 J.F.SKELTON.			

SESSION 1995/96

W.Bro. John H.Skelton
W.Bro. Phillip J.Skelton.

W.M.
I.P.M.

OFFICERS

Bro. R.M.Young
Bro. V.Cosgrave
W.Bro. A.R.Milner, PPrAGDC.
W.Bro. M.D.Exeter, PPrAGDC.
W.Bro. H.Colgate, PPrAGDC.
W.Bro. .N.Hall,PAGDC,PPrSGD.
W.Bro. D.A.Fairbrother, PPrGSt.Br.
W Bro. H.K.Rix
Bro. C.A.Ribbits
Bro. J.Olbrechts
W.Bro. J.D.Hayward, PPrGStBr
W Bro. C.Hicks
Bro. D.I.Everett
Bro. D.Milner
Bro. E.J.Wilson
Bro .M.D.Ivory
W.Bro. S.A.Powsey, LGR.
Bro. A.A.J.Dane, PrGOrg.

S.W.
J.W.
Chaplain.
Treasurer.
Secretary.
D.C.
Almoner.
Charity Steward.
S.D.
J.D.
A.D.C.
Ass.Secretary.
I.G.
Steward.
Steward.
Steward.
Tyler.
(Guest) Organist.