

Dofra Lodge No. 5775 – Lodge History

Origins

In 1938, there were a number of members of Military Jubilee Lodge (of Dover) resident in the Midlands, and our Lodge was born of a desire to bring these Masons together. Accordingly, a petition was submitted supported by Kings Norton Lodge No. 4001 (with the background support of Military Jubilee) on the 18th November, 1938, and approved.

Consecrated

The Consecration took place at Kings Heath Masonic Hall on 18th February 1939, under the leadership of the then Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. General Sir Francis J. Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., V.L. (Deputy Grand Master) and his Provincial Team.

Date of Warrant

7th December 1938,

Origin of the name Dofra

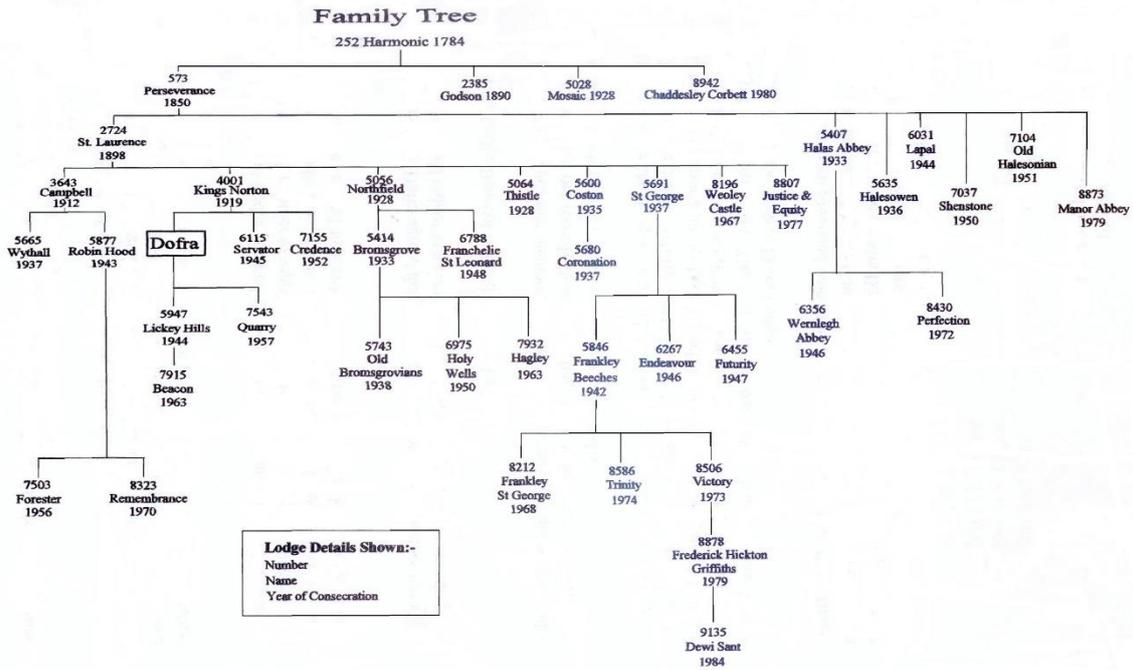
It was originally intended to name the new Lodge "Dover Lodge", but, at the request of the Provincial Grand Master, the names Dofra, Dovarra and Dofris were considered, and, Dofra was chosen and approved. The name "Dofras" (in Anglo Saxon) means "waters" and alludes to the river which runs through the town. Hence the appearance of Dover Castle on our emblem.

Lodge Founders & First Officers

W.Bro. H.S. Bulmer Worshipful Master
Bro. E.G.R. Clements Senior Warden.
Bro. E. Greenhill Junior Warden.
Bro. L. Hampson Treasurer.
W.Bro. N.E. Steeley Charity Steward.
Bro. S. Gordon Jones Secretary.
Bro. E.G. Jeynes Senior Deacon.
Bro. B. Drayne Junior Deacon.
Bro. W. Frankton Assistant Secretary.
Bro. W.E. Teague Inner Guard.
Bro. S.J. Davies Steward.
Bro. J.H. Baker Steward.
Bro. G.E. Teague Steward.
Bro. H.R. Glissan Steward.
Bro. Sam Price Tyler.



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Dofra Founder's Jewel



The Northfield Masonic Hall – how did it all start:

As detailed on the 1882 plans, the land was owned by the Grove Exors and was used for farming. The first evidence of any building work was in May 1894

when plans were submitted by Philip Blenkam - Architect and Surveyor of Selly Oak - to build a "House, near to the Travellers Rest" for Mr Charles H. Halward.

This house was a modest 3 up 3 down and still exists on the site at No 645 Bristol Road South (The Nursery as we now know it).

The unusual feature of this house was the position in that it was some distance away from any other house, with open land on all three sides.

The next development was in 1895 for a " Proposed New Pair of Houses - Bristol Road - Northfield ". These Houses although Semi-detached were more elaborate than No 645 and

included an attic, cellar, bathroom, toilet inside and toilet outside. The Houses appear to be unchanged to this day at No's 647 & 649.

Some 3 years passed before anyone considered any further building work on the site. A well-known local builder " Mr George Woodcock of Cock Lane Northfield " had plans submitted by Philip Blenkam (same Architect and Surveyor as No 645) in August 1899 for a detached Residence and also a new Joiners Workshop, Stables etc Bristol Road, Northfield.

The detached residence (presently the baby nursery and caretakers flat above) was an elaborate affair. 4 bedrooms, dressing room and bathroom with toilet upstairs - Dining room, Drawing room, Kitchen, Scullery, and sunken Larder downstairs. The garden was surrounded by a purpose-built wall and at the bottom of the yard a Cycle Shed and Office! The Office with bay window and porch had a second story accessible from inside by a ladder.

The Joiners workshop included 3 bay storage below and an upper large area for 8 workmen's benches and a foreman's office. Adjacent to this was the harness room, 4 stall stables and carriage house with hay loft and corn store over. Present day, the dining room back wall to the columns was the 3 bay storage area and committee room No 1 was the stables and carriage house.

The work on building the detached house and new joiners' workshop was completed in approximately April 1900. This completed " the island of built-up area " which remained surrounded by fields for the next 30 years.



The Development of the Hall.

November 1901 Alterations to the building.

December 1901 The first Masonic Meeting.

16th June 1916 Masonic Rooms & House advertised for sale by Auction although immediately prior to auction, purchased by W.Bro. R.E.L. Evans (St. Laurence Lodge) for £1,050, although he sold the House for £450.

Over the next 18 months, ownership of the Hall was transferred to St. Laurence Lodge by deed of transfer.

29th Nov 1937 The freehold was purchased for £192 10s 0d and the House (641) bought back?

7th June 1939 Plans submitted for extensive modifications to the Masonic Hall. This included raising & fitting new roof,

new buttress risers, re-position emergency staircase and remodelling the Lodge room and dining rooms.

The rooms were re-opened on the 21st October 1939 at a regular meeting of Northfield Lodge No. 5056.

8th June 1939 The Northfield Masonic Hall Ltd was incorporated.

6th June 1955 Plans submitted for the New entrance and extension to the dining room.

1963 Caretakers House converted to Flat etc.

30th Dec 1964 The St. Laurence Lodge undertook to convey the Freehold to the Company Free of charge.

1971 Purchase of 645 Bristol Road South, (The Nursery), outbuildings demolished and car park extended.

2020 – New roof (see image), carpark upgraded, kitchen improvements and dining room re-decorated