



THE ROYAL ORDER OF SCOTLAND

A Brief Historical Sketch by R.W. Bro. C.C. NISBET, Past Deputy Governor of the Order.
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The Royal Order comprises two Degrees, that of Heredom of Kilwinning and that of the Rosy Cross. Tradition tells us that the former was established in Judea, in Palestine, but whether at the time of the Crusaders of much earlier origin, tradition is silent.

The word "Heredom" has been variously interpreted, but the most obvious derivation is from the Hebrew word "Harodim", meaning "The Rulers", and the name of Kilwinning refers to the re-establishment of the Order by King Robert the Bruce at Kilwinning, where he presided as its first Grand Master.

The Degree of Heredom of Kilwinning is a peculiarly interesting Degree and full of instruction to Craft Masons, as in its lectures it explains the symbolism and teaching contained in the first three Degrees of what is sometimes referred to as St. John's Masonry.

The Rosy Cross Degree, tradition takes its origin on the field of Bannockburn, on Summer St. John's Day 1314, and was instituted by King Robert the Bruce, who having in the course of the battle for Scottish independence, received assistance from a body of sixty-three knights who may have been original Knights Templar and Freemasons. He conferred upon them as a reward for their services the civil rank of Knighthood. Each received a characteristic considered descriptive of his performance at Bannockburn. He granted them permission to confer the honor on such Scottish Freemasons professing the Christian religion as had shown themselves worthy of the honour. The number on whom the Knighthood might be conferred was limited to sixty-three, but in years, owing to the large number of worthy Freemasons who coveted this honour, the Grand Lodge of the Order, when it found it necessary to establish Provincial Grand Lodges elsewhere than in Scotland, granted each Provincial Grand Lodge permission to promote sixty-three Freemasons of the Degree of Heredom to the honour of Knighthood under the Grand

Lodge. In some of the Provincial Grand Lodges where the members of Heredom number many hundreds, special powers have been given to increase the number of Knights of the Rosy Cross. This degree, as its name implies, deals more with the subject matter of the Rose Croix Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite than with that of Craft Masonry. The Degree of Knighthood can only be conferred in the Grand Lodge of the Royal Order, which has its seat in Edinburgh, or by special authority by a Provincial Grand Master or his deputy. This authority is purely personal to a Provincial Grand Master, and cannot be transmitted by him to his successors.

By the Constitution of the Royal Order, the King of Scots is its hereditary Grand Master, for whom at every meeting of the Order, wherever held, a vacant chair or throne must be placed at the right hand of the presiding officer. The acting head of the Order is the Deputy Grand Master and Governor, who appoints a Deputy Governor.

There are no reliable records tracing the history of the Order from its alleged revival in 1314 to the middle of the eighteenth century, when it appears to have flourished in France about the year 1735-1740 under the adherents of the Jacobite Cause, who being refugees from Scotland practiced these Degrees no doubt for the purpose of maintaining a common bond of union among them in a foreign land. It is stated that in 1747 in a Charter which was in existence in 1840, granted by Prince Charles Edward Stuart to the Masonic Lodge at Arras, he described himself as Sovereign Grand Master of the Order of "Rose Croix de Herodim de Kilwinning".

The ceremonies of the Degrees are peculiarly interesting, being different from those of other Degrees of Freemasonry, and part of the Ritual is rendered in an irregular versified rhyming form. The original French manuscript of the Ritual, rendered in that language, is in the possession of the Grand Lodge of the Order in Edinburgh.

From France the Order seems to have been taken up in England, where it flourished for a few years, probably from 1741 to 1750, and on 22nd July of that year the Grand Lodge of the Royal Order of Scotland was reconstituted in Edinburgh, where it has ever since had its headquarters.

From that time the Order has continued to prosper. Many men, distinguished not only in Freemasonry but in other walks of life have held the highest office, and presided over the Order as Deputy Grand Master and Governor.

1741 -1766.....No clear record
1766-1776.....James Ker, Writer
1776-1778..... William Baillie (Lord Polkemmet)
1778-1786..... William Charles Little, Advocate
1786-1789..... William Mason, Writer
1789-1816.....Dr. Thomas Hay
1816-1839.....No record
1839-1857.....Houston Rigg Brown
1857-1858.....George Arnott Walker Arnott of Arlary
1858-1883.....John Whyte-Melville of Strathkinness

1883-1891.....Francis, 4th Earl of Rosslyn
 1891- 1917.....George, 11th Earl of Haddington
 1917-1925.....Algernon, 9th Earl of Kintore
 1925-1934.....Edward James Bruce, 10th Earl of Elgin and 14th Earl of Kincardine
KT, CMG, TD, LL, LLD, JP
 1934-1936.....H.R.H Edward, Prince of Wales and Duke of Rothesay
 1936-1966.....Edward James Bruce, 10th Earl of Elgin and 14th Earl of
 Kincardine,KT,
CMG, LL, LLD, JP
 1966-1970.....Alexander, 7th Lord MacDonald of Sleai, MBE TD, LL, JP,MA
 1970.....Andrew Douglas Bruce, 11th Earl of Elgin & 15th Earl of Kincardine,
KT,CD, IP, MA, LLD

Originally, membership in the Order was limited to Scotsmen or those of Scottish descent, but latter the privilege was extended to Master Masons of other nationalities. The Order has now, besides Provincial Grand Lodges in Scotland and in England, Provincial Grand Lodges all over the world, including the United States of America where the Order is very highly prized, and is not conferred on any one who has not received the Thirty-second Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, except by waiver from the Provincial Grand Master.

The Order is one which is, from its historical associations, peculiarly interesting to Scotsmen, and each year on the 4th of July (old style), the anniversary of the day on which the Battle of Bannockburn was fought, the Grand Lodge of the Order, as well as some of the Provincial Grand Lodges, continue the ancient custom of the Order by holding a festival, at which the Toast to the Immortal Memory of King Robert the Bruce, the hero of Bannockburn and Restorer of the Order is proposed in an oration by one of the Brethren, and honoured in silence. The Degrees of the Order are most beautiful and impressive, and inculcate the three great principles of Freemasonry — Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

There is evidence of an early Provincial Grand Lodge in the United States of America at Norfolk, VA, but there are no records available. Sir Albert Pike was the first Provincial Grand Master and was appointed in 1877 and served until 1891. Others who have served as Provincial Grand Master are as follows.

1891 - 1902.....Josiah Hayden Drummond
 1903 - 1914.....James Daniel Richardson
 1914- 1917.....Leon Martin Abbot
 1917 - 1919.....George Mayhew Moulton
 1919-1927.....George Edgar Corson
 1927 - 1932.....Sam Poyntz Cocharan
 1932 - 1953.....James Henry Brice
 1953 - 1997.....Marvin Edward Fowler
 1997-.....Edward H. Fowler, Jr.