

Freemasonry Ventures East by Manoj Sharma

Extracted and abridged from Manoj Sharma, *Freemasonry and the Eastern Archipelago*, vol. 1

we are also of all Nations, Tongues, Kindreds, and Languages, and are resolv d against all Politicks, as what never yet conduc d to the Welfare of the Lodge, nor ever will.

The Constitutions of the Free-Masons, 1723.

Even though the esoteric roots of Freemasonry took form in the east and progressively crept further west over the landmass, the modern, organised and structured trunk of Freemasonry we know today spread its branches over the whole habitable globe from the British Isles. The Moderns, Ancients, Irish and Scottish Grand Lodges all facilitated the creation of an interconnected global network. The connection of these meshes brought the fruits of brotherhood to a wide range of men. These were men who were deemed to be good and were being afforded the opportunity to be better. Freemasonry as a cultural institution grew as the world continued globalising during the eighteenth century. This was after the formation of the Modern Grand Lodge in 1717, the Irish Grand Lodge in 1725, the Scottish Grand Lodge in 1736, the Ancient Grand Lodge in 1751 and the European Grand Lodges beginning with the French Grand Lodge in 1728.

There are a few ways to look at Freemasonry, as Europe turned eastwards in search of fame and fortune for varying reasons. One is that Freemasonry due to its benevolent nature, allowed imperialism to gain from it. Freemasonry buttressed empires, allowed its mysticism to canopy public ceremonies, and initially only provided shaded ground for predominantly Christian expatriates. It thereafter selectively assimilated aristocracy. Only thenceforth were men from other non-monotheistic faith welcomed to nourish themselves. Another way to look at Freemasonry is that colonialism was the wave Freemasonry surfed to spread its benevolence. Both scenarios and their hybrid require us to have a brief appreciation of the British and other East India companies. They provide the enthralling context in which a fascinating diversity of men from differing countries, social strata, educational backgrounds, professions and inclinations met under the starry firmament of Freemasonry.

The British East India Company

In 1608, ships belonging to the British East India Company started arriving in India and docked at Surat, Gujarat, as a trade transit point. Surat, a hub for the textile manufacturers of Gujarat, was the most important centre for the overseas trade of the Mughal Empire, founded in 1526 by Babur (1483–1530), who hailed from what today is Uzbekistan. He was a descendant of Genghis Khan (1158–1227) through his mother. The Mughal Empire which extended from Afghanistan in the west to Bangladesh in the east, lasted 331 years from the First Battle of Panipat in Haryana, won by Babur on the 21st April 1526, till the Siege of Delhi ended on 21st September 1857. The Siege of Delhi was a rebellious uprising against the authority of the British East India Company and one of the decisive conflicts of the Indian Sepoy Rebellion of 1857. It ended when the aged Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II (1775–1862) was exiled by the British East India Company to what is now Myanmar. This was after the Mogul Empire had been reduced to the walled city of Old Delhi or Shahjahanbad.

The high profits reported by the company after landing in India initially prompted James I (1566–1625), to grant subsidiary licenses to other trading companies in England. In 1609, he renewed the charter given to the company for an indefinite period. He included a clause that specified that the charter would cease to be in force if the trade turned unprofitable for three consecutive years. In 1611, the British East India Company established another trade transit point in Masulipatnam on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. The city is in the Krishna district of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The British East India Company also started building a factory in Surat.

A year later, in 1612 a naval battle took place between the British East India Company and the Portuguese who had monopoly over trade with India from the fifteenth century when Vasco da Gama (d.1524), 1st Count of Vidigueira, became the first European to reach India by sea sometime between 1497 and 1499. The battle between four English and four Portuguese galleons supported by twenty-six rowing vessels, lasted from 29 November until 10 December 1612. The Battle of Swally, as it is known, is historically important as it marks the beginning of the ascent of the British East India Company in India. It was around the time of this battle, which

involved Sir George Clifford's *Red Dragon*, that British East India Company persuaded King James I to send Sir Thomas Roe (1580–1644), a Member of Parliament, as his royal envoy to the Mughal Emperor Nur-ud-din Salim Jahangir (1569–1627). Roe arrived in 1614. According to Willian Dalrymple's 2019 *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company*, Roe is said to have brought with him *many crates of red wine*. He spent three years at the Emperor's court in Agra, attempting to gain the rights to reside and establish factories in Surat and other areas in return for rarities from Europe for the Emperor. In 1617, Emperor Jahangir sent the following letter to King James I through Sir Thomas Roe. It is worthwhile to print it in full as it changed the fortunes of the British East India Company, the Mogul Empire and India.

When your majesty shall open this letter let your royal heart be as fresh as a sweet garden. Let all people make reverence at your gate; let your throne be advanced higher; amongst the greatness of the kings of the prophet Jesus, let your Majesty be the greatest, and all monarchies derive their counsel and wisdom from your breast as from a fountain, that the law of the majesty of Jesus may revive and flourish under your protection.

The letter of love and friendship which you sent and the presents, tokens of your good affection toward me, I have received by the hands of your ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe (who well deserveth to be your trusted servant), delivered to me in an acceptable and happy hour; upon which mine eyes were so fixed that I could not easily remove them to any other object, and have accepted them with great joy and delight.

Upon which assurance of your royal love I have given my general command to all the kingdoms and ports of my dominions to receive all the merchants of the English nation as the subjects of my friend; that in what place soever they choose to live, they may have reception and residence to their own content and safety; and what goods soever they desire to sell or buy, they may have free liberty without any restraint; and at what port soever they shall arrive, that neither Portugal nor any other shall dare to molest their quiet; and in what city soever they shall have residence, I have commanded all my governors and captains to give them freedom answerable to their own desires; to sell, buy, and to transport into their country at their pleasure.

For confirmation of our love and friendship, I desire your Majesty to command your merchants to bring in their ships of all sorts of rarities and rich goods fit for my palace; and that you be pleased to send me your royal letters by every opportunity, that I may rejoice in your health and prosperous affairs; that our friendships may be interchanged and eternal.

Your Majesty is learned and quick-sighted as a prophet, and can conceive so much by few words that I need write no more.

The God of heaven give you and us increase of honour.

The British East India Company in Japan

A few years earlier in 1613, the British East India Company had received a similar letter from the Japanese. Captain John Saris (1580–1643), a merchant, was on the second British East India Company's voyage east in 1604. He visited the factory established by Sir James Lancaster in Java and stayed there for five years as its chief factor or agent before returning to London. In 1611, he left London, stopped in Yemen before returning to Java in 1612. Taking the *Clove*, he ventured on to Japan, where he arrived in the summer of 1613. He was aided by William Adams (1564–1620) the first Englishman to arrive in Japan in 1600, albeit as the pilot of a private Dutch ship *Liefde*. Bearing the gift of the first telescope ever to leave Europe and the company of Adams, who had become the Shogun's advisor on foreign affairs, Saris was received warmly. He met with Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) the founder and first Shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate of Japan, and his son, the *de facto* Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada (1579–1632). The shoguns were military dictators who, while appointed by the Emperor, were the actual rulers of the country. Saris gained permission to establish a factory on the Japanese island of Kyushu with the following pronouncement by the Shogun.

We give free license to the subjects of the King of Great Britaine, Sir Thomas Smythe, Governor and Company of the East Indian Merchants and Adventurers forever safely come into any of our ports of our Empire of Japan with their shippes and merchandise, without any hindrance to them or their goods, and to abide, buy, sell and barter according to their own manner with all nations, to tarry here as long as they think good, and to depart at their pleasure.

Saris and Adams were unable to capitalise on the open invitation and the British East India Company eventually closed its factory in Japan in 1623. Unlike the experience of Saris and Adams in Japan, following the 1617 letter from Emperor Jahangir, the British East India Company fortified its trading post in Surat in 1619 and established another in Madras in 1639. By 1647, they had twenty-three factories in India. This was followed by more trading posts being established in Bombay in 1668 and Calcutta in 1690. The Bombay trading post was a gift from King Charles II (1630–1685) to the British East India Company. He acquired it from the Portuguese as part of his 1662 dowry for marrying Catherine of Braganza (1638–1705), who is credited with introducing tea-drinking to the English. Charles II granted the British East India Company the right to mint money, acquire territories, create laws for them and protect its assets. The British East India Company in return provided the King with a substantial amount of saltpetre to make gunpowder.

The British East India Company in China

In 1672, the British East India Company secured a trading post in Taiwan. From there they made regular voyages to Amoy (Xiamen), Canton (Guangzhou) and Chusan (Zhoushan), across the strait from Taiwan. This was more than a century after the Portuguese had already gained territorial rights at Macao in 1557. The British East India Company took tea, silk, and porcelain in exchange for cotton and silver. By 1700, Canton became a more significant trading base than Taiwan, due to its convenient access to the Pearl River Delta. In 1704, the *Baoshang* system which sanctioned Chinese merchants to trade, collect duties and be responsible for the behaviour of foreigners was established. It was the predecessor of the Cohong, a Qing dynasty (1636–1912) merchant guild.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the British East India Company found the trade with China unideal. The British demand for tea, porcelain and silk were creating a trade imbalance which was being paid for in silver. The criticism that came along led to a need to sell a product into China. It was around this time that the British East India Company had started growing opium in India with the intention to use it to reduce the trade imbalance with China.

In 1792, George Macartney (1737–1806), 1st Earl Macartney, a distinguished British statesman, administrator and diplomat, set off on a year-long voyage to the Imperial Court at Peking (Beijing), China, as the royal envoy of George III (1738–1820). Macartney was accompanied by a hundred-member delegation including his secretary Sir George Staunton (1737–1801), his Chinese-literate eleven-year-old son who was later to be knighted as Sir George Thomas Staunton (1781–1859), a painter William Alexander (1767–1816), and craftsmen such as metallurgists, weavers and potters. The artisans were there to observe technological developments. The delegation was collectively referred to as the Macartney Mission. Their objective was to establish an embassy, secure an island exclusively for British use near Chusan, lobby to open up new ports for British trade and relax trade restrictions.

As with Sir Thomas Roe, who arrived in India in 1614, Macartney arrived in China in 1793 bearing fifteen thousand pounds worth of gifts. They included the highlight - a planetarium for Emperor Qianlong. It was the latest in European technology. The issues started even before meeting the Emperor and revolved around a Chinese practice called *kowtow*, an act of deep respect shown to the Emperor by kneeling and bowing one's head till it almost touched the ground. Macartney thought it slavish and humiliating and refused to perform it. He considered Britain to be the most powerful nation on Earth and beneath him to *kowtow* before the Emperor. Instead he negotiated a genuflect, the act of bending a knee to the ground.

Emperor Qianlong rejected all of the British requests in a 1793 letter to King George III. It was not entirely due to Macartney's refusal to *kowtow* to Emperor Qianlong, but due to conflicting world views. It would not have helped that the letter Emperor Qianlong sent belittled the British, referred to Europeans as barbarians and treated King George III like a lowly Chinese subject. In the letter Emperor Qianlong made his stance clear in

that there was, *no need (for China) to import the manufactures of outside barbarians*, and that he had *ordered the departure of the mission*. He asserted that *sage Emperors and wise rulers have bestowed on China a moral system and inculcated a code, which from time immemorial has been religiously observed*, that the Europeans, *may not go about propagating their religion* and, *your Ambassador's request that barbarians shall be given full liberty to disseminate their religion is utterly unreasonable*. He warned *should your vessels touch the shore, your merchants will assuredly never be permitted to land or to reside there, but will be subject to instant expulsion*. He concluded with the following: *Do not say that you were not warned in due time! Tremblingly obey and show no negligence! A special mandate!*

The Liquidation of The British East India Company

By 1803, at the height of its rule in India, the British East India Company had a private army of approximately 260,000 men, twice the size of the British Army. The company eventually came to rule large areas of India. It exercised military power and assumed administrative functions. The British East India Company's rule in India effectively began in 1757 after the Battle of Plassey. It lasted until 1858 for a duration of one hundred and one years. While the British East India Company was victorious in the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the rebellion still put an end to the British East India Company. This rebellion is known by many names, including the Sepoy Mutiny, the Indian Mutiny, the Great Rebellion, the Revolt of 1857, the Indian Insurrection, and India's First War of Independence. The rebellion fueled by deep-seated pre-existing discontent, began on 10th May 1857 in the form of a mutiny of sepoys in the garrison town of Meerut, sixty kilometers northeast of what is now called Old Delhi. It is said to have begun because the British introduced the Enfield Rifle that used cartridges greased with cow or pig fat. Since the end of the cartridges needed to be bitten off prior to use, the Hindus and Muslims protested. The protest spread to a general uprising. It spread, creating other mutinies and civilian rebellions, chiefly in the upper Gangetic plain and Central India, though other incidents also occurred farther north and east. The rebellion posed a considerable threat to British power in that region and was contained only with the defeat of the rebels at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh on 20th June 1858. This was a few months before the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago was constituted in the Straits Settlement of Singapore on Saturday, 4th December 1858.

The rebellion proved to be an important watershed in Indian and British history. The provisions of the Government of India Act 1858 called for the liquidation of the British East India Company, who had up to this point been ruling British India under the auspices of Parliament. The act demanded the transference of the functions of the British East India Company to the British Crown. This led to the dissolution of the British East India Company, and forced the British to reorganise the army, navy, financial system and the administration of India. This was the start of the British Raj. It lasted from 1858 to just after the end of World War II in 1947, for a period of eighty-nine years. The British East India Company was finally dissolved in 1874 as a result of the East India Stock Dividend Redemption Act 1873. At its peak, the British East India Company rose to account for a significant part of world trade, particularly in commodities such as cotton, silk, indigo dye, salt, spices, saltpetre, tea, and opium. Its opium trade was especially controversial, specifically in relation to China.

The Eastward Expansion Of Freemasonry

Simon Deschamps, in his *From Britain to India: Freemasonry as a Connective Force of Empire* tells us it took twelve years from the formation of the first Grand Lodge in 1717 for Freemasonry to establish itself in India. *In 1729, Captain Ralph Farrwinter, an officer of the East India Company, was appointed Provincial Grand Master for East India in Bengal, and warranted the first Indian Lodge East India Arms, No. 72, based in Fort William, Calcutta. From there, and as the British secured their position across the Indian subcontinent, Freemasonry spread to the presidencies of Madras and Bombay where Provincial Grand Lodges were formed in 1752 and 1758, respectively.* Ralph Farrwinter was the son of Captain Nehemiah Winter, a director and shareholder of the British East India Company. The *List of Marine Records* of the late British East India Company preserved in the records department of the India Office in London dated 1896, show Captain Nehemiah Winter helmed the *King William* from 4th November 1709 to 9th August 1711 in Bengal, and was again the captain of the ship from 12th December 1712 to 11th September 1714 in Madras and

Bengal. Lodge East India Arms, No. 72 is said to have adopted its coat of arms from the coat of arms of the British East India Company. It shows the closeness of the relationship between Freemasonry and the British East India Company.

The British were not alone in using their East India Company to bring Freemasonry to the east. Through *Freemasonry, Colonialism, and Indigenous Elites* a 2001 paper by Frank Karpel, a historian and educator living in Charleston, USA, we ascertain, *The Grand Lodges of Scotland, Holland and France appointed Provincial Grand Masters in China, Ceylon, Bombay, Java and Sumatra from the 1730s onward, creating a complex web of Masonic jurisdictions.*

When the author of the first of the *Ancient Charges* in the *1723 Constitutions* in 1723, *Concerning God and Religion* how expansively was he thinking when he stated *...by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among persons that must have remain d at a perpetual Distance.*

We can gather from the naming convention of the Premier Grand Lodge that the concerns of the fledgling organisation called the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster were not the whole habitable globe. Hence the *Denominations or Persuasions* Anderson mentions can safely be assumed to be within the differing Christian faiths. Even though we now know *Freemasonry* long before its introduction to the British Isles had members from very diverse religious faiths, it would be too romantic to consider that Anderson was referring beyond the warring Christian *Denominations or Persuasions*.

While there are *Old Testament* references aplenty in the *Book of Constitutions*, the *Bible* is mentioned only once and even then only in relation to *King Athelstan, (the grandson of King Alfrede the Great, a mighty architect) the first anointed King of England... translated the Holy Bible into the Saxon tongue*. It is the same with *Christ* who too only gets one mention in relation to, *holy branch of Shem (of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came)*. The *Mahometans* score two mentions in the following contexts, (i) *by the conquests of the Mahometans, whose grand design is only to convert the world by fire and sword, instead of cultivating the arts and sciences* and (ii) *In short, it would require many large volumes to contain the many splendid instances of the mighty influence of Masonry from the creation, in every age and in every nation, as could be collected from historians and travellers; but especially in those parts of the world where the Europeans correspond and trade, such remains of ancient, large, curious, and magnificent colonading, have been discovered by the inquisitive, that they can t enough lament the general devastations of the Goths and Mahometans*. We must keep in mind, the dynamics of the day and the audience sometimes influence the thoughts of writers.

Jews however are mentioned six times in various contexts such as: (i) *the Jews believe that Abram also instructed the Egyptians in the Assyrian learning*, (ii) *But as the Jewish captives were of special use to Nebuchadnezzar in his glorious buildings, so being thus kept at work, they retained their great skill in Masonry, and continued very capable of rebuilding the holy Temple and city of Salem upon its old foundations*, (iii) *(of the seed of David, by Nathan, the brother of Solomon, whose royal family was now extinct) the head, or Prince of the captivity, and the leader of the Jews and Israelites returning to Jerusalem*, (iv) *by Zerubbabel, the Prince and General Master Mason of the Jews*, (v) *yet being raised exactly upon Solomon s foundation, and according to his model, it was still the most regular, symmetrical, and glorious edifice in the whole world, as the enemies of the Jews have often testified and acknowledged*, and (vi) *Wise Hiram Abif s charming Influence: He aided Jewish Masters bright, Whose curious Works none can recite.*

Would it then surprise us then to read in Jacob Katz's 1970 *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723–1939* that, *the readiness to accept Jews into European society was not universal, and even Freemasons imposed restrictions, often showing distinct reserve and even open hostility*. In the early eighteenth century there were only a small number of immigrant Jews in Britain, and they were on the fringes of society. Katz tells us that, *The first instance of a Jew being admitted to a Masonic lodge took place, as far as we know, in 1732. One, Edward Rose, was initiated into the London lodge... This event was a novelty and excited attention. Soon afterward the Lodges began debating the propriety or otherwise of admitting this Jew. That the final decision was not unfavourable is conclusively proved by the fact that Jews in significant numbers were admitted to membership in the ensuing years*. They were not just admitted into lodges in Britain, but Netherlands and other European nations too. By 1793, Lodge of Israel No. 205 was established in London for Jewish Freemasons. It met at Leadenhall Street, where the headquarters of the British East India Company, East India House was. It now meets at Freemasons 'Hall, Great Queen Street, London. The fact that it took fifteen years

after the founding of the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster for the first Jew to be admitted into Freemasonry, should put an end to all speculation of Freemasonry having originated as a Jewish conspiracy.

But Freemasonry's progression towards being a truly inclusive global institution was not linear. It is not alone in this regard, as many grand aspirations have a long gestation period. A readily citable example is the 4 July 1776 American Declaration of Independence. Sixteen of the fifty-six signatories of the document were known to be Freemasons during their lifetime. Its most famous line states, *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.* It took some time for the idea to seep through and it is still a work in progress. The reality is, some ideas while noble and revolutionary are simply never fulfilled to the degree they can be. Their measure is how far further forward they have raised the consciousness of the world. We keep solace in the knowledge that the ears of justice are eternally receptive, and in acquiescence to the rectitude of those with the loftiest intents.

In 1742, an anonymous book appeared in France. It was entitled *Apologie Pour L ordre Des Franc-maçons* or *Apology For The Order Of The Freemasons*. It asserted non-Christians such as Jews, Muslims and Pagans were not to be included in the order. It led to a prerequisite of baptism for membership, which was ratified by the French Grand Lodge in 1755. By 1759, as French Freemasonry regressed, the Swedish East India Company brought Freemasonry to China on the *Prince Carl*. They carried a travelling warrant giving them permission to hold meetings whenever they entered a port, and they did just that when they berthed in Canton (Guangzhou). In 1758, the Lodge Solomon was founded under the Dutch Constitution, by Jacob Larwood Van Chevichaven, a commander of the Dutch East India Company. This was in Chinsurah, West Bengal in India. The Scottish Constitution claimed its first lodge in 1767 via One Lodge Hope No. 334 which met in Karachi which was then part of India. A year thereafter in 1768, the Grand Lodge of England warranted Lodge Amity No. 407. They joined the brethren from the Swedish East India Company and met in Canton until the end of the century. All these lodges had exclusively expatriate members.

The first prominent Muslim to be initiated into Freemasonry is said to be Prince Omdit-ul Omrah Bahauder, the son of the Nawab of Carnatic in South India. This supposedly took place in Lodge Perfect Unanimity No. 150 sometime between 1775 to 1779. The lodge was originally named unofficially as No. 1 Coast of Coromandel, as it was the first lodge on the Coromandel Coast of India. The Prince being made a Freemason was not entirely about inclusivity, but really a reward and means for strengthening the alliance with the Nawab of Carnatic, who sided with the British against the French in India, while the Mughals too were vying for their support. It should be noted many of the lodges set up in association with the employees of the East Indian companies were unwarranted, travelling and even unsanctioned lodges. This accounts for why a lodge like No. 1 Coast of Coromandel, was only warranted and became Lodge Perfect Unanimity No. 150 some decades later.

Thierry Zarcone who contributed a chapter entitled *Freemasonry and Islam* in the 2014 *Handbook of Freemasonry* tells us, *Although many Lodges were active in the Ottoman Empire, in Egypt, in India and even in Indonesia in the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth century, it was not until the middle of that century that the number of Muslims admitted to these Lodges started to increase.* He beneficially distinguishes for us two types of lodges in the late 18th and early 19th century. *First, the lodges which were set up in colonial areas, like British India, French North Africa and the Dutch East Indies often functioned as social clubs that supported charities, provided entertainment and aimed to bring together the colonial administrators, the Foreign military, and the well to do colonists (merchants, landholders) with the local aristocratic and upper class. In general, the goal of this form of colonial Freemasonry was the "fraternal" assimilation of the indigenous population.* These were essentially the British and Dutch Lodges that were created on the wave of colonialism of the British and Dutch East India Companies. This applied not just to the Indian Subcontinent, but also the early lodges in Indonesia, Singapore and the Malayan Peninsular. *Second, the lodges which were started in non colonised areas, such as the Ottoman Empire including its Arabic provinces and Egypt, were rather reformist groups composed of foreign diplomats, merchants and of local senior civil servants, literati and well to do men.* These lodges were usually associated with the revolutionary aspiration of the French and Italian Grand Lodges.

Both types of lodges, became somewhat of a sanctuary for men from opposing walks of life and ideologies to fraternise. One such example would be the interactions between the Governor-General of India, Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805), 1st Marquess Cornwallis, and Isaac Titsingh (1745-1812), the Dutch Governor of

Chinsurah and director of the Dutch East India Company. They would often meet in lodges in Calcutta in the 1780s. Another later example is the Dutch Governor-General of Java, Nicolaus Engelhard (1761-1831) and the British Lieutenant-Governor of Java who supplanted him, Sir Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles (1781-1826). Raffles, a Brit, was initiated and passed on his thirty-first birthday in 1812 by the Dutch Engelhard in the Dutch lodge of *Virtutis et Artis Amici* in Buitenzorg, near Bogor. Raffles was subsequently raised and made a Past Master in Loge de Vriendshap at the request of Engelhard too. Freemasonry in the east, as around the world, was facilitating the intermingling of opposing colonial, political and religious forces. Lodge No. 489 with a warrant from the Grand Lodge of England was set up in Punjab in 1786. The French followed closely in 1787, when they constituted Lodge Sincere Amite in Pondicherry. The Asiatic Company, the successor of the Danish East India Company brought a warrant from the National Grand Lodge of Denmark to set up a lodge in the Danish colony of Tranquebar in 1807 and called it *De L amour Fraternelle* which translates to *Brotherly Love*. The Irish who had large regiments in India would only establish a short-lived lodge in 1835, called The Light of the North No. 357. It met in Kurnaul and only survived for three years. And then there were military lodges with travelling warrants. The idea was first developed by the Irish and Scottish with the English following suit out of necessity. Eventually this practice caught on with the French, Swedes, Germans and Russians. By 1813, at the union of the Moderns and Ancients, to form the United Grand Lodge of England, over three hundred travelling warrants had been granted.

All these lodges and the brethren that belonged to them made regular visits to one another and rejoiced in the commonality over the contrasts of their respective Masonic practices. In many ways a Freemason lodge became the first port of social call for a new brother from Europe or a well-known peripatetic one that went from one trading post of an East India Company to another. The social aid being a Freemason provided, accounted for the high number of men who joined Freemason lodges in their home countries before leaving them to venture east and west. It was around this time, the transition between the 18th and 19th century, that the progressive inclusiveness of Freemasonry towards men *by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguished* was disregarded. Despite Freemasonry's stance of being a universal brotherhood, in reality non-aristocrats and non-caucasians were not being welcomed on one hand and in most cases did not care to join on the other. The first *Ancient Charge Concerning God and Religion* that was applied to Jewish candidates in Britain starting in the 1730s took more than a hundred years to be applied in the east, from where the light of Freemasonry is said to diffuse. It was not just an on-the-ground issue. Karpel sheds light that in May 1840 a communication from the United Grand Lodge of England to lodges in India *suggested that it had unanimously been resolved to suspend the admission of Mahomedans and Hindoos into the Order of Masonry pending an investigation and report, and on the other, it requested the opinion of the members of each lodge. Afterwards, a motion put to a vote by the Lodge of Industry and Perseverance that Muslims were admissible on the principle that they believed in a single god (the Great Architect of the Universe) was voted down by a majority. A subsequent motion that would have allowed Hindus to be initiated was also vetoed. Parsees (descendants of Zoroastrians) were particularly enthusiastic petitioners, despite the continual rejections by local lodges and British Grand lodges. In 1843 the Grand Lodge of Scotland formed the Star of Western India, No. 343, especially for Parsees and Muslims.*

The process of Freemasonry coming of age in the east was gradual, starting with anglicised Indians. The first Hindu to be made a Freemason is said to be Bro. Ranganath Sastry in Lodge Perfect Unanimity No. 233, Madras in 1857. The first Sikh was Bro. Duleep Singh in Lodge Star in the East in 1861. But the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal had a by-law that prevented Indians from being admitted into Freemasonry. So it wasn't till 1872, after repeated *black balling* for nine years that Bro. P. C. Dutt was admitted into a lodge in Bengal. It took close to a century thereafter for the independent Grand Lodge of India, to be consecrated on 24th November 1961, at the Asoka Hotel in New Delhi. One thousand five hundred brethren across India, including distinguished visitors from the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, Scotland, Israel and Alberta were in attendance to witness the installation of His Highness Sir Raza Ali Khan Bahadur (1908-1966), the Nawab of Rampur, as the first Grand Master. One hundred forty-five out of two hundred and seventy-seven individual lodges across various constitutions chose to be foundation lodges of the Grand Lodge of India situated at Freemasons 'Hall Complex, Janpath, New Delhi.

Karpiel highlights to us that one of the biggest problems with Freemasonry in India was not a lack of membership but a lack of active participation in Freemasonry. He points out, *The problem plagued lodges in non-settlement colonies and trading posts, where a great percentage of the members resided in the area temporarily.* 'Considering the dissolution of the British East India Company in 1858, he stated, *Interestingly, during the early 1870s, as several Indian Lodges faced one of their periodic downturns, they began to admit Indians for the first time, subsequently electing them to positions as officers.* The same phenomena was observed in Singapore approximately a hundred years later. In 1967, twenty-two years after the end of World War II, Britain's new Labour government dealing with a weakened economy was forced to reduce the country's defence spending. An article on *Singapore Infopedia* entitled *British Withdrawal From Singapore* by Marsita Omar, tells us the British announced plans to halve their defence commitments to the Far East Command which covered China and Japan, with major bases in Hong Kong and Singapore. It turned into a total withdrawal of its troops *East of Suez* by end 1971. By October 1971, the British all but pulled out of Singapore leaving a token number behind which remained for another five years. This sudden pull-out of British forces did not just present a serious problems to Singapore's defence and economic security, it simultaneously presented a serious problem for Freemasonry in the Eastern Archipelago. The returning British expatriates left Freemasonry in the Eastern Archipelago with no choice but to attract and initiate locals for it to survive. The need to survive in India, the Eastern Archipelago and elsewhere turned out to be the biggest promoter of inclusiveness and assisted Freemasonry to live up to its lofty ambitions articulated by Anderson in his 1723 *Book of Constitutions*.

Sumatra

John MacDonald (1759-1831) the first Provincial Grand Master of Sumatra, was the son of Flora MacDonald (1722-1790), a Jacobite heroine. Out of sympathy, in 1745, the then single Flora harboured the twenty-five-year-old Charles Edward Stuart (1720-1788), the claimant to the throne of Great Britain. A romantic figure, Charles Edward Stuart was also known severally as *the Young Pretender* and *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. For her troubles, Flora was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London, and only released in 1747 due to an amnesty. Her son John MacDonald was a ship captain for the British East India Company. Transferred by the British East India Company to Calcutta where influence secured him a job at the Bengal Engineers in 1782, he was by the end of 1784 assigned to the trading post at Fort Marlborough, Bencoolen, Sumatra. A talented surveyor who produced numerous charts of the west coast of Sumatra, MacDonald was an original member of the Asiatic Society founded in 1784 by Sir William Jones (1746-1794), a scholar of ancient India. He lost his entire family comprising his wife and two infant daughters in Fort Marlborough in 1786-87. He returned to Britain in 1797 where he started another family after marrying Frances Maria Chambers, the daughter of Sir Robert Chambers (1737-1803), the Chief Justice at Fort William in Bengal. He became a member of the Royal Society in 1800 and came back east to Fort Marlborough once again in 1808 to take up the post of Chief Engineer. He returned to Exeter, England for good in 1819 and earned a reputation for his charitable work there. This was the same year that Raffles rediscovered Singapore.

MacDonald arrived in Sumatra two years before Captain Francis Light (1740-1794) leased Penang Island in 1786, on behalf of the British East India Company, from the 20th Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah (d. 1797). Light renamed it the Prince of Wales Island. This kickstarted British influence over the Malay States.

Lane s Masonic Records show us there were three lodges in Sumatra. The first was Lodge No. 1 which met in Bencoolen. It received a warrant in 1765 but was operational ten years prior in 1755. Presumably its first number 356, was given at its warranting. In 1770, it was renumbered 293. In 1780, it dropped to 235. A year later in 1781, it is likely to have been corrected to 236 and finally in 1792 it was 200. Importantly *Lane s Masonic Records* tells us it made its last payment in 1797 and was erased in 1813.

The second lodge received its warrant on 10th February 1772, although it first met two years earlier. It was colloquially called Marlborough Lodge, and too met at Fort Marlborough in Bencoolen. It seems to only have been named the Rising Sun Lodge in 1791. This was around the time most lodges went from being numbered to being named. Like Lodge No. 1 Sumatra, it was renumbered in an overall descending pattern. In 1770 it was

424, in 1780 it was 332, in 1781 corrected to 333, in 1792 it dropped to 274, before being increased to 346 in 1814 after the union. It settled on 242 in 1832 and was erased on 4th June 1862, prior to the final renumbering of lodges in 1863.

The third lodge in Sumatra was Lodge of Unanimity and Industry which too met at Fort Marlborough, Bencoolen. It received its warrant in 1796. Lane tells us it was known locally as Lodge No. 2. This suggests it existed ahead of Marlborough Lodge / Rising Sun Lodge in 1770. In 1792, before it was warranted, it was numbered 559. It too, like Lodge No. 1 was erased in 1813 at the union of the Premier Grand Lodge and the Ancients.

In 1793, the Grand Lodge of England records donations made by John MacDonald of ten pounds, along with an additional donation of twenty pounds made by 'No. 200 Lodge No. 1 Bencoolen'. It also received a petition from eight brethren, signed by John MacDonald, the Worshipful Master of Rising Sun Lodge. The letter nominated MacDonald as Provincial Grand Master for the entire island of Sumatra. The donations were well received, mentioned in the Quarterly Communications of November 1793 and MacDonald made the Provincial Grand Master for Sumatra. MacDonald replied to his letter of appointment in 1795 with a further donation of fifty pounds and the pronouncement that, *bad health will soon induce me to return to Europe*. MacDonald's departure for Britain in 1796 created a vacuum that was immediately filled by Bartholomew Hartley, a British surgeon in Bencoolen. Hartley in a 1797 letter to Grand Lodge declared himself the *Right Worshipful Grand Master of the Rising Sun Lodge*. Pleasantly for Grand Lodge it was accompanied by a donation of one hundred pounds from the Rising Sun Lodge which was gratefully recorded at the Quarterly Communications of February 1797.

The succession issue was ultimately addressed with Hartley receiving crushing news of his status after the Modern Grand Lodge consulted with MacDonald. MacDonald continued to act as the Provincial Grand Master until 1821 when he was succeeded by the Fort Marlborough born Henry Robert Lewis (c.1788-1877) who held the office until his death. Lewis was the son of Henry Charlesz Lewis (d. 1795) an Artillery officer in the British East India Company's military service and his Indonesian wife who lived in Bencoolen until 1820. Lewis has the distinction of being a Provincial Grand Master with just the dormant Rising Sun Lodge in existence from 1825 to its erasure in 1862, and none thereafter till his death in 1877.

Provincial Grand Master Henry Robert Lewis' mother was from Bencoolen. Hence he was fluent in the local vernacular. This is confirmed in David S. Moyer's 1975 doctorate thesis entitled, *The Logic of the Laws - A Structural Analysis of Malay Language Legal Codes from Bengkulu*. From it we gather *A Code of Laws as established by the Pangerans Court at Fort Marlborough, (was) collected by Henry Robert Lewis, Esq., of the Bencoolen Civil Service*. It suggests Lewis was a magistrate, and on the *twelfth of November 1817* was one of four signatories of the Code of Laws along with *Pangeran Linggang Alam, Pangeran Raja Khalipa, Daeng Mabéla*. This law would have been in Bengkulu Malay and Lewis would need to be proficient in it to collect, sign off on it and be the magistrate.

Henry Robert Lewis had two younger brothers, one was William Thomas Lewis (c. 1791-1875), a Past Master of Rising Sun Lodge, whom he appointed as Deputy Provincial Grand Master through a patent in 1839. He had already since 1825 been transferred to the Straits Settlements and was the Assistant Resident Councillor of the Prince of Wales Island, before being appointed to officiate as Resident Councillor at Malacca in 1838. He joined Lodge Neptune in Penang in 1840, but he resigned in 1841. In 1856, he was Resident Councillor and Acting Governor of Penang. The Lewis brothers had a descendent named Henry William Lewis (it is unestablished which of the three brothers he was a descendant of) who was also residing at the Prince of Wales Island. The minutes of Neptune Lodge dated 24 April 1844 state, *Read a letter from Brother Henry W Lewis dated 15 April 1844, stating that through the hands of William T Lewis Esq. he had been authorised to act as Deputy to the Provincial Grand Master of this place, and forwarding documents connected therewith which were read in the following order. No. 1 Letter from R. W. Bro. Henry Robert Lewis addressed to Bro. William T Lewis, of Penang, dated 1 October 1839, forwarding a patent dated 1 October 1839, AL 5839, appointing the latter his Deputy Provincial Master.*

The letter Henry William Lewis received in 1839 from William Thomas Lewis, had authorised him to act for the Provincial Grand Master Henry Robert Lewis, nominate Provincial Grand Officers, and ended with the words, *Pray keep me advised of your proceedings, and if you will not act, pray recommend me a Brother*. The attached Patent of the Provincial Grand Master, dated 10 December 1821, signed by the Duke of Sussex as Grand Master and Lord Dundas as Deputy, read as follows, *The jurisdiction of the R. W. Bro. HENRY ROBERT LEWIS as Provincial*

Grand Master is to extend to Penang and the eastward islands. Dated this 19 day of March, A. D. 1825. By the Grand Master s command. This had implications not just for Penang but Singapore too. We can at this juncture put aside the affairs of Freemasonry in Sumatra and venture further into *Penang and the eastward islands* with the recognition that although Rising Sun Lodge was only officially erased in 1862 there was almost certain no lodge from the English Constitution that existed in Sumatra after the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824. The treaty settled territorial, commercial and financial disputes between the Dutch and British in Southeast Asia. In it, Britain ceded Bencoolen in exchange for Malacca. This eventually led to the formation of British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Even prior to the treaty, Fort Marlborough became subordinate to Fort William in Bengal, overshadowed by Penang, and completely eclipsed by the establishment of Singapore in 1819. As the British East India Company exited Bencoolen, English Freemasonry in Sumatra was extinguished.

Penang

Penang was from from 1136 to 1786 part of the Kedah Sultanate. The *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* also known as the *Kedah Annals*, is a romanticised Malay literary work from the late 18th century which gives a history of Kedah. It claims Merong Mahawangsa, allegedly a descendant of Alexander III of Macedon (356-323 BCE), commonly known as Alexander the Great, was attacked by the Garuda, a divine eagle-like sun bird in the Hindu and subsequently Buddhist and Jain faith, while sailing through the Straits of Malacca. This caused him to crash to shore. He ensured to call the land *Langkasuka* which translates from Sanskrit to *joyful resplendent land*. He made his son Merong Mahapudisat the King before returning to Rome. It was Merong Mahapudisat who divided the land into the Kingdoms of Siam, Perak and Pattani and gave them to his three sons in order of age. History tells us there was a native settlement of Kedahan Malay or *Orang Utara* (Northern People) from as early as 788 BCE in the states of Kedah, Penang, Perlis and Perak in Northern Malaysia, Phuket, Trang and Satun in Southern Thailand and even in Burma. Indian merchants were known to trade with Kedah from the 1st century. From 330 to 1136 Kedah was ruled by a series of kings who all used the Hindu title of Sri Paduka Maharaja. The last king converted to Islam, became Mudzaffar Shah I (d. 1179) and established the Sultanate of Kedah. It continues to the present day. During the Siamese Ayutthaya Kingdom (1350-1767), the Sultanate of Kedah was a tributary state to Siam. In the 14th century, the Portuguese traded with Penang while keeping their maps of its location a secret. By the 15th century the Chinese traded with Penang under the command of the Muslim born Ma He (1371-1433) who would go on to be a Chinese court eunuch, mariner, explorer and diplomat. Ma was conferred the surname Zheng by the Emperor. As a result, the world now knows him best as Admiral Cheng Ho. In the 16th century the Dutch started trading with Penang. The British were to arrive thereafter.

The Ayutthaya Kingdom of Siam was named after Ayodhya, the legendary capital of the *Ikshvaku* (*Suryavamsa* or *Descendants of the Sun* or *Solar*) dynasty mentioned in the ancient Sanskrit texts of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. After the fall of Ayutthaya in 1767, due to Burma being victorious in the Burmese-Siamese War (1765-1767), the Northern Malay Sultanates were temporarily freed from Siamese domination. Burma's gain however was temporary. They vacated Siam when the Chinese attacked Burma. A new Siamese dynasty, called the Chakri dynasty formed in 1782. It is still the ruling royal house of the Kingdom of Thailand. Its emblem is the Sanskrit *Chakra* or *wheel of time*, and the *Trisula* or *trident* the celestial weapons of the Hindu God Vishnu of whom the Thai sovereign is seen as an incarnation. The Royal Standard of Thailand consists of a bright yellow square with a red Royal Garuda in its center. The Garuda is also the national symbol of Indonesia, a martial motif in India, an exquisite ornate on temples of Cambodia, known as the *Karura* a divine creature with a human torso and birdlike head in Japan, the *Khangerid* as the symbol of Ulan Bator in Mongolia, as *Galone* in Myanmar and *Galura* in the Southern Philippines, who believe it is a race of creatures who look like eagles when flying in the air but humans on the ground.

A few years after the fall of the Ayutthaya dynasty in 1767, the British Captain Francis Light wrote to the Governor-General of Bengal, Warren Hastings (1732-1818). He communicated the value of a '*convenient magazine for trade* en route to China, that could be a tranquil harbour for free trade and the antithesis of the piracy riddled and despot governed Aceh and Phuket. He subsequently, on behalf of the British East India Company, orchestrated the takeover of Penang from the Kedah Sultanate. Light knew Kedah was a vassal state

living in fear of Siam. So, he promised Sultan Muhammad Jiwa Zainal Adilin II (d. 1778) that Light and the British East India Company would protect Kedah from the Siamese if he agreed to hand over Penang Island to the British. To show his sincerity, Light recaptured a Bugis-held fort for the Sultan. In the letter to the British East India Company, he noted that if *Malay, Bugis and Chinese will come to reside here, it will become the Exchange of the East if not loaded with impositions and restrictions* .

After Sultan Muhammad Jiwa Zainal Adilin II died in 1778, Light continued his negotiation with his successor, the 20th Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah (d. 1797). Light made headway in 1786 when Kedah handed over Penang to the British East India Company on the agreement of three conditions. Firstly, that the British East India Company provided military assistance to Kedah when needed. Secondly, that it was not to lead the enemies of Kedah. Thirdly, that they pay the Sultan of Kedah, as much as thirty thousand Spanish Dollars annually in compensation. Light raised the Union Jack in Penang on 11 August 1786, renamed it The Prince of Wales Island and became its first Superintendent. Before the year was up, Siam conquered Patani and threatened Kedah. Since Light had made the agreement without the consent of the British East India Company, the British East India Company refused to provide any assistance. This led to things falling apart between the Sultan and Light, even though Light offered to make payments. In 1790, Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah's planned invasion of Penang Island was preempted by the British East India Company who attacked Kedah's navy in Seberang Perai on the peninsular. A ceasefire was negotiated in 1791. Light died in 1794 from malaria and was buried at the Old Protestant Cemetery in George Town. By the end of the 18th century Penang attracted multicultural settlers and was home to over ten thousand people of which only three hundred were Europeans. It was eventually nicknamed the Pearl of the Orient. Over the expanse of history it has shared this nickname with other Asian destinations such as Goa, Sri Lanka, Saigon, Hong Kong, Manila and Shanghai.

In 1800, Major General Sir George Alexander William Leith (1766- 1842), the first Lieutenant-Governor of The Prince of Wales Island signed an agreement to occupy Seberang Perai and name it Province Wellesley. The Sultan of Kedah was to be paid ten thousand Spanish dollars per annum for Penang as a whole. This symbolic payment continues to this day from the Malaysian Federal Government to Kedah. Leith Street, a narrow road within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the city of George Town is named after Major General Sir George Alexander William Leith.

In December 1804, Philip Dundas (1762-1807), a British member of parliament of Scottish descent became the Governor of The Prince of Wales Island. This made The Prince of Wales Island a Presidency of the British East India Company. Raffles arrived in 1805 to help Dundas form his new government. Philip Dundas had previously rose up the ranks of the British East India Company with the assistance of his well-connected uncle, Henry Dundas (1742-1811), 1st Viscount Melville, a Whig politician. Henry Dundas at various points was the Secretary of State for War, the President of the Board of Control, Home Secretary and Lord Advocate. His almost total control of Scottish politics led him to being nicknamed *King Harry the Ninth* , the *Grand Manager of Scotland* , an unobvious play on the office of the Grand Master of Scotland, and '*The Uncrowned King of Scotland* . Was Governor Philip Dundas related to the second Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England Thomas Dundas (1795-1873), 2nd Earl of Zetland? They were both certainly descended from Gospatrick, the Earl of March who died in 1139. Having tracked their lineage, their last common ancestor was Sir Hugh de Dundas (b. 1275) of West Lothian, Scotland. Naturally their coat of arms share the same French motto, *essayez* .

The First Lodge Neptune

The first present record we have of Freemasonry in Penang was in the aftermath of setting up of the Presidency by Governor Philip Dundas and the arrival of Raffles. Arnold Wright's 1908, *Twentieth Century Impressions Of British Malaya* tells us on Saturday, 16 August 1806, the following was published in the *Pinang Government Gazette*:

A select few also met to commemorate the anniversary of the birth of H.R.H. as Grand Patron and Grand Master of Masonry. They sat down to a neat dinner provided at the house of a brother, and the evening was spent with the highest conviviality and good-fellowship. Among others the subjoined toasts were drunk with great applause :

- *H.R.H. George Augustus Frederick, Grand Master of Masonry.*
- *The Mystic Tie.*
- *Virtue, Benevolence, and Peace to all mankind.*
- *King and the Craft.*
- *Queen and our sisters.*
- *The immortal memory of Lord Nelson.*
- *The revered memory of Marquess Cornwallis.*
- *All Masons round the globe.*

It was not till 31 May 1808 that a petition, printed by Bro. Andrew Burchet Bone was sent to London. It stated:

The Worshipful Grand Secretary to the Most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons in Great Britain.

Worshipful Brother,

HAVING with extreme regret experienced the want of an established Constitution of Masonry on this Island, not withstanding our repeated endeavours, by various ships, which unfortunately have either been taken or lost, We the undersigned, most respectfully request your interference on our behalf, in making application to the GRAND MASTER, for permission to erect a Lodge at this Island, vested with all the ancient privileges attached to the CRAFT, and that we have further permission to nominate it The Neptune Lodge”.

We are led to hope, that through your kind and brotherly assistance, we may speedily obtain what we have been so long and anxiously looking for; and we are the more urgent, as we have already made application, though unhappily without effect, through our Mother Lodges, to obtain such permission from the Provincial Grand Lodge in Bengal.

We beg to assure you, Worshipful Brother, that in the interim we have not been idle in our vocation; but have endeavoured, by every means in our power to exercise those masonic precepts we have been taught; and can only lament that we have been precluded the happiness of allowing a participation to a number of worthy individuals, who have long been anxious to add the name of Brother to the endearing one of Friend.

Unacquainted with the amount of Fees, on this occasion, we request your brotherly assistance in disposing of the enclosed amount, in such manner as you may deem fit; for an deficiency, your draft on Brothers Court and Bone, Merchants at this place, will be gratefully accepted and duly honoured.

We salute you with the Sacred Numbers, and beg you to believe us, with every respect,

WORSHIPFUL BROTHER, Your affectionate Brethren,

PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND, MAY 31ST. A.D. 1808, A.L. 5808, A.M. 5812.

Amongst the twelve petitioners were Thomas McQuoid (d. 1841), a police magistrate, business associate and confidant of Raffles who would go on to be the Sheriff of New South Wales in Australia, Samuel Stewart a master of a merchantman, Andrew Burchet Bone the publisher of *The Government Gazette*, the owner of the first printing press in Malaya and auctioneer of Raffles 'house in 1811, William Robinson an auditor for the British East India Company, and trusted friend, advisor and spy for Raffles in Java, and John Rodyk (1770-1845) a warehouse assistant whose grandson Bernard Rodyk (d. 1898) would set up the law firm Rodyk & Davidson in Singapore. In September 1810, the brethren of Penang received a warrant from Prince John, Duke, Marquis and Earl of Atholl, Grand Master dated 6th September 1809 for the first Neptune Lodge No. 344.

When the brethren of Penang held their meeting on 10th September 1810, a joining member, Thomas Robinson the Deputy Commissary of Ordnance was 'requested to take the Chair until the ensuing election of officers'. Thomas Robinson (not to be confused with the petitioner William Robinson) thus became the Founding Master. He was re-elected Master at the 12 December 1810 meeting, reinstalled on 27 December 1810 and re-

elected again on 16 December 1811. Rodyk acted as *Secretary pro tempore* at the first meeting. It was agreed that Neptune Lodge would meet on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month.

As Penang grew, the brethren conducted frequent regular and emergency meetings. We know there were close to a hundred minutes of meetings recorded between its first meeting in 1810 and last in 1813-14. The extraordinary number of meetings may have been a function of necessity, due to the large number of transitory brethren who passed through Penang that could not be accommodated by regular meetings alone. There were also meetings called for lectures, to receive overseas brethren, conduct ballots and to announce resignations and new appointments. Attendance was a persistent problem, and a system of fines was introduced in February 1811, for non-attendance. Five Spanish Dollars for the first offence, ten for the second and expulsion from the lodge at the pleasure of the brethren for the third offence. Relationships amongst brethren were extremely fractious. Admonishments, refusals, debates, expulsions and uncooperative behaviour were common. It eventually led to the demise of the first Lodge Neptune.

Lodge Humanity With Courage & the Second Lodge Neptune

Circa the abeyance of the first Lodge Neptune in 1813-14 and before the creation of Lodge Humanity with Courage No. 826 in 1822, Gilbert Elliot-Murray Kynynmound, 1st Earl of Minto had handed over his governorship of India to Francis Edward Rawdon-Hastings (1754-1826), 1st Marquess of Hastings. Rawdon Hastings had stepped off his role as the Acting Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge of England to be the Governor-General of India. Raffles had in the preceding years before the collapse of the first Lodge Neptune been initiated and passed in the Dutch Lodge *Virtutis et Artis Amici* in 1812, raised and made a Past Master in the Dutch Lodge *De Vriendshap* in Surabaya in 1813.

In 1814, once the first Lodge Neptune was in a state of latency, Raffles experienced the loss of his wife. He then suffered ill health in Java in 1815, left for Britain to clear his name in 1816, published the two-volume *History of Java*, was knighted, appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen and remarried in 1817. He returned to Bencoolen and wrote an extraordinary paper entitled *Our Interest in the Eastern Archipelago* in 1818 before founding modern Singapore in 1819. He next attempted to consolidate the Eastern Isles in 1820 and suffered the death of all his children with the exception of one. In 1822, after Singapore's trade exceeded Penang's and Malacca's combined, Raffles returned to Singapore to completely ruin his friendship with Major-General William Farquhar (1774-1839) the Resident of Singapore, to whom enough credit for Singapore's early success cannot be given. Raffles then left for England for the last time in April 1824. This was a month after the Anglo-Dutch Treaty was signed in March 1824. The treaty gave all British settlements in what is now Indonesia to the Dutch. In return the Dutch ceded all claims in the Malay Peninsular, gave up claims to Singapore as the British agreed not to establish any offices on the Carimon, Batam, Bintan, Lingin or any of the other islands south of the Singapore Strait. Raffles suffered a fatal stroke in London on 5 July 1826, a day before his forty-fifth birthday. Before he passed on he would have known the Directors of the British East India Company, on 12th October 1825, based to the allowances provided by the Anglo-Dutch Treaty, constituted the three settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore into one administrative government. The government was to be led by one governor and three resident councillors, one for each of the settlements. From 1826 to 1946 they would be referred to as the Straits Settlements, with the Dindings, Cocos Island, Christmas Island, and Labuan being co-opted in 1874, 1886, 1900 and 1906 respectively.

We do not know when Lodge Humanity with Courage No. 826 was consecrated. *Lane's Masonic Records* tells us it was warranted in June 1822 and struck off in 1829. We know its first Worshipful Master in 1822, was Richard Brinsley Smith (d. 1826) and the eminent Hugh Stewart, a mariner, commander in the royal navy, shipowner and Freemason for more than two decades, was its last when he was installed as its last Worshipful Master on 25 January 1827.

At the very meeting that W. Bro. Hugh Stewart was installed, he after his installation, *begged the attention of the brethren to a communication he had to make relative to the present lodge, stating that it was working contrary to the regulations of the Grand Lodge, it being a military lodge and all those members who had been made in it being civilians. As it was done in ignorance the Worshipful Master said he had no doubt but that the Grand Lodge would be pleased to look over it, and at the same time recommended that the Military Warrant should be returned to the Provincial Grand Master at Calcutta,*

stating the cause in a respectful manner, and the Worshipful Master at the same time recommended that the brethren should all join him in their best endeavours to procure the Warrant of the Neptune Lodge 441, working under the Grand Lodge of England, where they, would at all times receive the necessary information and in the event of our being able to accomplish so desirable an occurrence (sic) that we do publicly call a meeting of Masons together for the purposes of reviving the Neptune Lodge and taking their opinions in the absence of better information to justify our proceedings. The Lodge of Humanity with Courage was therefore closed and dissolved, unanimously.

This was a laudable act, from a clearly exemplary man of whom we know very little. An advertisement in the *Scottish Caledonian Mercury* published on 5 June 1826, tells us Stewart was *well-known in the East India trade*. The *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and Its Dependencies, Volume 24* covering July to December 1927, gives us a *List of Ships trading to India and Eastwards of the Cape of Good Hope*. On it Hugh Stewart is listed as the 'Owner or Consignee and Captain' of the *Lalla Rookh*. The *Lalla Rookh* was a 380-ton sailing vessel, which was commissioned in 1823. From 1823 to 1827, Stewart sailed to various ports in the United States, Brazil, Australia, Singapore, Indonesia, India, Malaysia and England. The *English Morning Post* tells us the *Lalla Rookh* was recorded as leaving Portsmouth for Madras, Penang and Singapore under the command of a Captain McCallum on 5 November 1827 and arrived on 19 February 1828. This was presumably after Stewart hired McCallum to helm it. On 6 March 1828, Captain McCallum *totally wrecked* the *Lalla Rookh* at Pondicherry, India. The same periodical also tells us that Stewart owned the *Rising Star*.

In the *Pinang Gazette* dated 8 February 1827 we find an advertisement requested *the attendance of all true Brethren*. It attracted the presence of twenty-two Brethren. Amongst them were John Rodyk, a warehouse assistant, George Felix Gottlieb, a harbour master and William Cox, the first principal of the Penang Free School. W. Bro. Hugh Stewart took the chair and opened *a lodge*. He was assisted by John Rodyk and William Cox as Senior and Junior Warden. The Worshipful Master proceeded to examine the brethren and finding them to be qualified and skilled, proceeded to the objective of the meeting, to revive Lodge Neptune. The warrant was apparently still held by Bro. John Rodyk who had no objection to delivering it on. That was how the second Lodge Neptune No. 441 was revived with Hugh Stewart as its Worshipful Master, and Edward Tanner and William Hall as its Senior and Junior Wardens. In 1832, it was renumbered No. 293.

Singapore

W. Bro. John Colson Smith (c. 1803-1863), was a man of some character. From a January 1994 paper entitled *The Founding of the District Grand Lodge and the Part Played by John Colson Smith* by W. Bro. Eric L.S. Jennings (1912-1997), we know, *Before arriving in Penang, he was a barrack sergeant in Madras, India for the 89th Regiment, which later became the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers.* In his 20th May 1909 address, the R. W. District Grand Master Walter J. Napier (1857-1945) referred to W. Bro. Smith as *a man of unblemished reputation and a man of education*. Records show he joined the second Neptune Lodge No. 441 on 24th June 1828. This was two years after Penang became the capital of the Straits Settlements which included Singapore and Malacca.

W. Bro. Smith was initiated, passed and raised in Lodge Social Friendship No. 326 in Madras, India. He maintained his membership there at least until 1840 and had joined various appendant orders in Madras before coming to Penang. He was exalted as a Royal Arch Mason in Keystone Chapter No. 326, admitted as a member of Rose Croix and installed as a Knight Templar and Knight of Malta in Lodge No. 863 under the Grand Lodge of Ireland. He rose up within the Craft too and was acknowledged to be an expert brother.

He guided the course of Freemasonry in Penang for approximately fifteen years. We can presume he was adequately if not well-educated as he was appointed schoolmaster of the 1816 founded Penang Free School from 1828 to 1843 after being *finally selected from those persons who come out through distress or misfortune in the Company's Army,* "as one whose character and abilities would fit him for the position. His instrumentality and contributions to Freemasonry in Penang are undebatable. W. Bro. A. W. Frisby, one of the most consummate Masonic historians in the Eastern Archipelago states in his 1958, *English Freemasonry In Malaya And Borneo 1765 - 1958, We learn from the correspondence between the affronted Lodge Neptune and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal that there was a movement afoot in 1840 to gather names for a petition from brethren in Singapore. Nothing seems to have come of it*. That was until 1844, when W. Bro. Smith was invited to take up a job in Singapore as the second headmaster of the Singapore

Institution Free School. The school was the everlasting wish of Sir Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles (1781-1826), the founder of modern Singapore in 1819, who laid the foundation stone of the institution on 5th June 1823, with a twelve-gun salute. This was just four days before Raffles left Singapore for good. It was one of his last major contributions to Singapore.

From the records of the present Raffles Archives and Museum we gather, W. Bro. John Colson Smith was the headmaster of the institution from 1844 to 1852. During that time it had a Chinese school section that taught in the Hokkien and Teochew dialects, but suffered from low enrolment numbers. They reckon while W. Bro. Smith was popular, the trustees did not cherish his guidance and were less than satisfied with him mainly due to low enrolment numbers. They conceded that he was nevertheless a respected man and stated that many attended his send-off. It is unspecified if his *send-off* is a reference to him leaving the school in 1852 or the country for good in late 1862 / early 1863. Most likely it was the former.

The Zetland in the East Lodge

The story of the petition for the first lodge in Singapore starts with an account we read in *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore* by Charles Burton Buckley (1844-1912). *In 1843, the lodge voted a silver vase to Bro. J. C. Smith, as a mark of its high esteem of his character and services during the fifteen years he had been connected with it; and at the same meeting a special vote of thanks was tendered to the late Bro. F. Dunnett, then about to proceed to China: and those only who knew him and loved him as a man and a Mason can sufficiently understand the high claims of this most excellent Brother to this distinction. Honoured be his memory, for Masonry and friendship will very seldom meet with one so worthy of such laudation.*

In the *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* of 27 June 1844 we find an excerpt from the *Pinang Gazette* of 15 June 1844. It says, *We understand that the Silver vase subscribed for by the Master, Warden and brethren of Neptune Lodge No. 293 to be presented to Mr. J. C. Smith as a testimony of their respect for his Masonic Worth and the many and valuable services he has rendered to the Lodge, during a period of 15 years, has been received from Calcutta and may be seen at T King & Co.s shop where it seems it is deposited for inspection.* But such was the haste with which W. Bro. Smith left Penang to be in Singapore that the brethren of Penang never got to mark their esteem and regard for him who, more than anyone else had guided their Masonic fortunes for fifteen years. While it was their desire to present him with the silver vase and a service plate, the occasion was not to arise before W. Bro. Smith departed for Singapore. So, they asked Bro. Thomas Owen Crane, a member of Lodge Friendship No. 520, Gibraltar, and one of Singapore's first ten European residents to convene an assembly of the brethren in Singapore and make the presentation to W. Bro. Smith.

The meeting was duly convened, and the presentation made. During the proceedings W. Bro. Smith and Bro. Crane were requested by the brethren present to draw up a petition and forward it to the United Grand Lodge of England praying for permission to start a lodge in Singapore. No time was lost and a petition for a warrant of constitution, dated 25 July 1844, was drawn up and duly dispatched. The petition was written on a delicate piece of paper, a far cry from the elaborate document sent by Neptune Lodge forty years earlier. The petition in W. Bro. J. C. Smith's immaculate handwriting, as transcribed by the author, states:

*To The Most Worshipful Grand Master of the United Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of England.
We the undersigned being regular registered masons of the Lodges mentioned against our respective names, having the prosperity of the Craft at heart, are anxious to exert our best endeavours to promote and diffuse the genuine principles of the art, and for the convenience of our respective dwellings, and other good reasons, we are desirous of forming a new lodge to be named The Zetland Lodge.*

In consequence of this desire, we pray for a warrant of constitution, empowering us to meet as a regular lodge at Singapore on the first Wednesday of every month, and there to discharge the duties of Masonry in a constitutional manner according to the form of the order and the laws of the Grand Lodge, and we have nominated and do recommend brother John Colson Smith to be the first Master, brother Charles Andrew Dyce to be the first Senior Warden, and brother Thomas Owen Crane to be the first Junior Warden of the said lodge.

The prayer of this petition being granted, we promise strict obedience to the commands of the Grand Master and the laws and regulations of the Grand Lodge.

Dated at Singapore this 25th day of July AD 1844 AL 5844.

Outside of W. Bro. Smith, it was signed by fifteen other brethren. The number matched the fifteen years W. Bro. Smith spent as a Freemason in Penang. Many of the signatories for the first lodge in Singapore left their marks on the history of Singapore. Singapore was the third island with an English Masonic presence, in our region, after Sumatra and Penang. One will note that the petitioners came from a varied number of constitutions and orders and that W. Bro. Smith was by far the most senior Freemason amongst them.

The lodge name, The Zetland Lodge was chosen as a nod to Thomas Dundas (1795-1873), the 2nd Earl of Zetland. As a result the lodge is known as a patron lodge. At the time of the petition, the 2nd Earl of Zetland was still the Pro Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, having been installed in 1840 by the first Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, His Royal Highness Augustus Frederick (1773-1843), Duke of Sussex. From the year of the passing of the Duke of Sussex in 1843 and the requested name of the lodge, we can surmise that the brethren in Singapore were aware that the 2nd Earl of Zetland was their new Grand Master-elect. Almost three months after the petition written by W. Bro. Smith was dispatched, the 2nd Earl of Zetland was installed as the Grand Master on 15th October 1844. He would rule for twenty-six years until 1870.

On the outside of the letters patent, that we call the warrant of constitution, is the date 31st May 1845. From this we can gather that the warrant of constitution was only dispatched after this date. A report on 23rd September 1845 on page 3 of *The Straits Times*, under the head 'Masonic Lodge' announces, *We understand that a warrant of constitution had been received from the Most Worshipful, The Earl of Zetland, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, addressed to the Worshipful Brother, J. C. SMITH, directing him to hold a Lodge in this Settlement, and appointing him its first Master. Brothers C. A. DYCE and T. O. CRANE ESQRS have, by the same instrument, been respectively nominated the Senior and Junior Wardens of the Lodge, which will we believe be styled the Zetland Lodge," in honour of the Grand Master, and we have no doubt it will be brought into active operation as soon as the worthy brethren can complete the necessary preliminary arrangements. We need hardly say that, we wish our Masonic friends every success; and, from the foundation thus laid, we entertain no doubt a superstructure will be raised perfect in its parts and honourable to the builders.* The last sentence suggests that the reporter was a Freemason or at least familiar with the Craft. The author is likely to have been none other than Robert Carr Woods (1816–1875), the founding editor of *The Straits Times*, who was one of twelve candidates proposed for membership at the consecration of The Zetland Lodge. Why he would however use a Masonic phrase when he was not yet made a Freemason is unknown. It is quite possible he was quoting from other similar reports outside of Singapore.

On 17 November 1845, soon after receiving the warrant of constitution, W. Bro. Smith organised a preliminary meeting at what became known as The Masonic Room at Armenian Street. Ten brethren attended, three of whom were members of Lodge Neptune. The warrant of constitution was examined and several accompanying documents read. Amongst these was a letter from the Grand Secretary. It explained the delay caused by the time required to obtain the signature of the Deputy Grand Master. W. Bro. John Colson Smith *pursuant to the directions conveyed to him in the Warrant of Constitution, requested the brethren to retire, and then called them into the Lodge Room individually and separately, proceeded to satisfy himself by due trial and careful examination, that the brethren are or have been regularly made Masons.* Later in the meeting W. Bro. Smith *congratulated the brethren on the satisfactory manner in which they had proved themselves true and worthy Masons and informed the brethren that W. Bro. Richard Taylor of Malacca, Past Master of the Lodge Social Friendship No. 326 Madras, an expert and very distinguished Mason, has offered his services to assist at the opening of Zetland Lodge . . . hopefully in the first week in December.*

A transcription of the minutes of this preliminary meeting and the consecration ceremony were sent by W. Bro. Smith to Grand Lodge and are preserved there. Monday, 8th December 1845, was chosen as the day to consecrate the lodge. We know a warrant of constitution is a letters patent officially issued by Grand Lodge to authorise the constitution or formation of a lodge. The warrant of constitution consequently acts as the pledge, for the future activity of the Lodge and makes it *regular*, as per the *just, perfect and regular* a Freemason should be familiar with. This practice was formalised at the founding of the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster in 1717. Eventually all lodges under the United Grand Lodge of England received a warrant of constitution, the

only exceptions being as the *Book of Constitutions* tells us, *Lodge of Antiquity, No. 2, the Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge, No. 4, and the Lodge of Fortitude and Old Cumberland, No. 12, which act under immemorial constitutions*’

As promised W. Bro. Richard Taylor, came down from Malacca for the ceremony. He travelled, it is said, in a *sampan panjang* or *long boat* from Malacca. At the time of the consecration of The Zetland Lodge, W. Bro. Taylor was the acting deputy assistant commissary and conductor of ordinance in Malacca. The consecration ceremony was held at The Masonic Room at Armenian Street. It started at 7pm and closed at 9.30pm. After the preliminaries had been completed the minutes tell us, ... *the officiating Master proceeded to open the Lodge successively in the Second, Third and Past Master Degrees and installed the Master Elect, the Worshipful Brother J. C. Smith, with the usual ceremonies and ancient usages and then invested him with the insignia of his office.... The new Master then immediately entered upon the exercise of his Office and calling forth the two brethren nominated in the Warrant of Constitution, presented them with the Instruments of their Office in due form and installed them in their proper places viz: Brother C. A. Dyce the Senior Warden and Brother T. O. Crane, the Junior Warden of the lodge. The Straits Times of 13 December 1845, made the consecration known to the public at large, via the following communication, Masonic Lodge. - Pursuant to the Warrant of constitution lately received from Grand Lodge of England, Zetland Lodge no. 748” was opened in due form on Monday evening last, the Worshipful Master and Officers installed and invested with their respective badges. There appears to be every prospect of this lodge meeting with great success from the number of members already belonging to it, as well as from the numerous list of respectable candidates for legitimate admission to the mysteries and privilege of the ancient and honourable fraternity.*

Lodge of Fidelity

Thwarted in their repeated attempts to have a province sanctioned by Grand Lodge, the brethren in Singapore strategised an alternative course in 1858. One that they were alerted to as far back as 1833 in a Grand Lodge correspondence. It would prove to be complementary to their recurrent mithering of Grand Lodge.

At Grand Lodge’s Museum of Freemasonry is found a petition with the following words etched on it: *3rd April 1858, Zetland G M.* It is a petition for a second lodge in Singapore to be called *Lodge of Fidelity* and it was warranted on 3rd April 1858, as per the etching. Fidelity means faithfulness demonstrated by continuous loyalty and support, and one cannot help but imagine the requested name might have been chosen in the hope that it delivered a deferential message to Grand Lodge. The wording of the petition for Lodge of Fidelity is similar to that submitted by W. Bro. Smith in 1844 for The Zetland Lodge. The reason why it is similar is because it follows the standard format provided in the *Book of Constitutions*. The main difference between the two petitions is that the second is clearly not in W. Bro. Smith’s immaculate hand. The petition states the principal officers of the second lodge in Singapore were to be, the everserving W. Bro. John Colson Smith as Founding Master, and Bros. John Matthew Moyle and Paul Lessler, as Senior and Junior Warden respectively. Frisby tells us, *There were 20 signatories. Of these, W. Bro. J. C. Smith added to his signature the Lodge Numbers 293, 326 and 748, Bro. J. R. Taylor the Lodge Numbers 326, 664 and 748, and Bro C. Lessler, Golden Lodge of Bendigo, No. 924”. All the others were from Lodge No. 748, which was, of course, Lodge Zetland in the East. Lodge No. 293 was Lodge Neptune, No. 326 was Lodge Social Friendship, Madras, Bro. Smith’s Mother Lodge’.* The author has traced Lodge 664 to be Doric Lodge. It was warranted on 26 August 1838 and originally met at Kamptee, a suburb of Nagpur, in the Indian state of Maharashtra.

We know the petition proved to be successful. The lodge was consecrated on Thursday, 5th August 1858. Its Founding Master was W. Bro. John Colson Smith. Lodge of Fidelity was to meet on the last Monday of every month.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago

While Penang was where W. Bro. Smith got absorbed into the dynamics of creating and entertained the idea of a province, it was in Singapore that he succeeded in having it formed. W. Bro. Smith was a firm believer that it was necessary to have a province in Penang. He, by and by, brought those convictions to Singapore. While he

desired a province immensely for practical reasons, he remained effacing enough to know he did not have to be its figurehead.

Knowing him, it should come as no surprise that W. Bro. Smith endorsed W. Bro. William Henry Macleod Read (1819–1909) to be the Provincial Grand Master. Recalling what the brethren of Penang did in 1827, when they put up the name of Kenneth Murchison (1794–1854) to be the Provincial Grand Master, gives us a clear insight into W. Bro. Smith's thinking. Murchison was an initiate of the first Neptune Lodge, and the Resident Councillor of Penang as well as the Resident Councillor of Singapore from 1827 to 1833. Thereafter till 1836, he was the third Governor of the Straits Settlements. There are broad parallels in masonic initiation and societal prominence between Bros. Murchison and Read. W. Bro. Read was a beneficiary of the wealth and connections of the graft, risk and pioneering work of A. L. Johnston & Co. in Singapore, where his father was a partner. Taking on the directorship of the company after his father retired back to England summarily made him a, if not the, leading merchant in Singapore. W. Bro. Read was the second brother to be initiated by W. Bro. Smith in The Zetland Lodge at its second meeting, after W. Bro. William Napier who was the first. With now two lodges in Singapore - The Zetland in the East Lodge and Lodge of Fidelity - Grand Lodge allowed for the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago to be formed on 4th December 1858. R. W. Bro. William Henry Macleod Read was installed as its first Provincial Grand Master.

The Lodge of St. George

Lodge of Fidelity is believed to have amalgamated into The Zetland in the East Lodge as early as 1863. But the timing of informing Grand Lodge of the amalgamation of The Zetland in the East Lodge and Lodge of Fidelity in 1866 is intriguing. In 1866, a group of initiates of The Zetland in the East Lodge and one other brother, led by W. Bro. Felix Henry Gottlieb, who was previously the Worshipful Master of The Zetland in the East Lodge and Lodge of Fidelity, petitioned for the formation of a new lodge to be named The Lodge of St. George. The lodge curiously was not sponsored by The Zetland in the East Lodge, but by Cadogan Lodge No. 162 from London after a meeting held in Cadogan Lodge on 19 February 1867. The justifiable reason being that W. Bro. Felix Henry Gottlieb was a member of Cadogan Lodge too. Its warrant of constitution was dated 22nd February 1867 and it was consecrated on 22nd June 1867 at six o'clock in the morning. But the lodge first met in February 1866 and worked under a dispensation from the Provincial Grand Master.

While the renumbering of lodges on the register of the United Grand Lodge of England took place in 1863, we still observe in 1866, the members of The Zetland in the East Lodge using the lodge's old number of 748 when petitioning for The Lodge of St. George. Bro. Joseph Rose was the only petitioner of The Lodge of St. George who was not a member of The Zetland in the East Lodge. He was a member of The Lodge of Edinburgh No. 1 which styled itself as Mary's Chapel or the Ancient Lodge of Edinburgh Mary's Chapel. They together with Lodge of Kilwinning on the role of the Grand Lodge of Scotland claim to be the oldest masonic lodges not only in Scotland, but in the world. We can also observe that the R. W. Provincial Grand Master W. H. M. Read was not a petitioner. He was to later become a joining member of The Lodge of St. George.

The Prince of Wales Lodge

A quick recap of Penang's early history starts with it being known as the Betelnut Island in the 15th century and serving as a way station for ships en route to trading ports. In the early eighteenth century we know settlements at Batu Uban were established by Sumatrans. By the late 18th century, the adventures of Captain Francis Light (1740–1794) took centerstage as he secured it from the Sultan of Kedah as a trading post for the British East India Company. Before the century was up, he would take formal possession, hoist the Union Jack and rename it The Prince of Wales Island. A favourable business climate and atmosphere of liberal tolerance attracted settlers from all over Asia and by the close of the 18th century it was home to over ten thousand people. In 1800, Seberang Perai was ceded to the British and renamed Province Wellesley after Richard Colley Wellesley (1760–1842), 1st Marquess Wellesley who was Governor-General of India from 1798 to 1805. Also in 1805, Penang became a separate presidency of British India. This led to the appointment of Philip Dundas (1762–1807) as Governor of the Prince of Wales Island and Sir Stamford Raffles (1781–1826) as his assistant secretary.

In 1826, Penang became the capital of the Straits Settlements which included Malacca and Singapore, until it was superseded by the faster growing Singapore in 1832. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Penang had become a major opium trading post and it provided more than half of its revenue. Along with the opium trade came brothels, gambling dens and Chinese secret societies. On 1 April 1867, after years of campaigning against rule by the Bengal Presidency, the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore became a Crown Colony. A governor was put in place. He was supported by executive and legislative councils. By the 1870s Singapore business interest in the Malay Peninsula had grown considerably.

So it seems perfectly natural that on 29 June 1875, we find the District Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago, R. W. Bro Read, informing Grand Lodge of the establishment of a new lodge in Penang. It was the fourth lodge in the District after The Zetland in the East Lodge, Lodge of Fidelity and The Lodge of St. George. Lodge of Fidelity of course having been amalgamated into The Zetland in the East Lodge in the 1860s.

Through the December 2008 *Pentagram*, compiled by W. Bro. Dr. Lim Kuang Hui, to mark the sesquicentenary of the District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago, we discover the following.

At a meeting held at the Penang Chamber of Commerce Building on 10th April 1875, it was resolved to form a Lodge of Freemasons in George Town. On 17th April 1875, a petition requesting for a Charter for a Lodge in Penang, from the Most Worshipful Grand Master HRH Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and later King Edward VII, was sent through the Immediate Past Deputy District Grand Master, W Bro FH Gottlieb to R W District Grand Master, R W Bro WH Read, who was then in London. The Lodge was to be called Lodge Penang”.

Bro. Robert Carr-Woods, who was to be its Primus Master, was one of the brethren proposed at the inaugural meeting of The Zetland Lodge on 8th December 1845 in Singapore, and that five out of the fourteen petitioners were from The Zetland in the East Lodge. There was a petitioner Bro. Wilkinson who was from Lodge Zetland 525, which was warranted the year after The Zetland Lodge, in 1846 in Victoria, Hong Kong (Quang-tung), China, and curiously a petitioner had listed The Lodge of St. George No. 1152 as *St George in the East 1152*. This was as per The Zetland Lodge requesting to have ‘*in the East*’ added to its name to distinguish it from The Zetland Lodge No. 741 which was warranted in 1844 and met in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

The First Elopura Lodge

Records show that on 13 August 1885, Elopura Lodge No. 2106 was warranted by the United Grand Lodge of England, and slated to meet in *North Borneo, Borneo, East Indies*. It was however erased on 2nd January 1888. The lodge was never consecrated because the petitioners left North Borneo before that could be done. This was around the same time that Borneo became a protectorate of the British Empire in 1888. If anything that should have assisted in its consecration and subsequent success. The only way this oddity makes sense is if we correlate it with the knowledge that R. W. Bro. Read was a director of the 1 November 1881 chartered British North Borneo Company (BNBC) and was no longer the District Grand Master by the end of 1885. Soon thereafter he was plotting a retreat to England. It quite possible the desire for Elopura Lodge wavered with his resignation as District Grand Master and died with his retreat.

The District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago

The District Grand Lodge of the Eastern archipelago has grown since its constitution as the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago on 4th December 1858. It has come a long way from the early day of the struggle to survive experienced by the first few lodges such as Neptune, Zetland, Fidelity, St. George, Prince of Wales and Elopura. Failed attempts to warrant, consecrate and sustain lodges in the region known as Maritime South East Asia were eventually superseded by the forty lodges that make the District the largest in the world by number of members, under the constitutions of the United Grand Lodge of England. The District is unique in that it is spread over three countries: Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. It has nine lodges in the city-state of Singapore, twenty-six lodges spread out over East and West (or Peninsular) Malaysia in major cities as well as

country towns, while three lodges are to be found in Thailand in the cities of Bangkok, Phuket and Pattaya. There are thirteen temples and five makeshift locations where the forty lodges meet. In no particular order the temples are:

1. Dewan Freemason, Sungei Petani, Kedah.
2. Dewan Freemason, Pulau Pinang.
3. Dewan Freemason, Taiping, Perak.
4. Dewan Freemason, Ipoh, Perak.
5. Freemasons 'Hall, Kuantan, Pahang.
6. Read Masonic Centre, Kuala Lumpur.
7. Dewan Freemason, Seremban, Negri Sembilan.
8. Dewan Freemason, Melaka.
9. Dewan Freemason, Johor Bahru, Johor.
10. Freemasons 'Hall, Singapore.
11. Dewan Freemason, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.
12. Dewan Freemason, Sandakan, Sabah.
13. Masonic Hall, Kuching, Sarawak.

The headquarters of the District is Freemasons 'Hall, Singapore, while the bulk of the administration of the District takes place from Read Masonic Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The diversity of the District is a wonderful source of comradeship. This is witnessed by the frequent visits from brethren to lodges across the three international borders. The strength of the District is on full display at the Half and Annual Communications of the District with the festivals being rotated across different cities in the three countries with often a quarter of the almost two thousand brethren congregating to enjoy each others company. Out of the forty lodges, twenty-one work the revised ritual, while nineteen the emulation. While Thailand is home to seventy-one living Thai languages and Malay is the official language of both Malaysia and Singapore, the rituals of all forty lodges are worked in English. The temples also host lodges from the Scottish, Irish and French Constitutions. This adds to the vibrancy of the District with brethren often being members of various constitutions. All lodges are registered in their respective countries under the local register of societies.

The forty lodges in order of seniority are:

#	Lodge Name	No.	Warranted	Meets	Ritual
1	The Zetland in the East Lodge	508	1845	Singapore	Revised
2	The Lodge of St. George	1152	1867	Singapore	Emulation
3	The Royal Prince of Wales Lodge	1555	1875	Penang	Emulation
4	Perak Jubilee Lodge	2225	1887	Taiping	Revised
5	Read Lodge	2337	1889	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
6	Lodge St. Michael	2933	1902	Singapore	Emulation
7	Eastern Gate Lodge	2970	1903	Singapore	Revised
8	Kinta Lodge	3212	1907	Ipoh	Revised
9	Klang Lodge	3369	1909	Kuala Lumpur	Emulation
10	Napier Lodge	3418	1909	Ipoh	Revised
11	Negri Sembilan Lodge	3552	1911	Seremban	Revised

12	Lodge Elliot	3557	1911	Malacca	Revised
13	Makepeace Lodge	3674	1913	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
14	The Lodge Kedah	3830	1918	Sungei Patani	Revised
15	Johore Royal Lodge	3946	1919	Johor Bahru	Emulation
16	Johore Utara Lodge	5324	1931	Malacca	Revised
17	Baldwyn Lowick Lodge	7004	1950	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
18	Lodge Kinabalu	7047	1950	Kota Kinabalu	Emulation
19	The Lodge Singapore	7178	1952	Singapore	Emulation
20	Sir Stamford Raffles Lodge	7444	1956	Singapore	Revised
21	Horsburgh Lodge	7533	1957	Singapore	Emulation
22	Elopura Lodge	7545	1957	Sandakan	Emulation
23	Centenary Lodge	7629	1958	Singapore	Revised
24	Sentosa Lodge	7661	1959	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
25	Beaufort Lodge	7989	1964	Kota Kinabalu	Emulation
26	Edward Holiday Lodge	7997	1964	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
27	Fidelity Lodge	8469	1972	Kuala Lumpur	Emulation
28	Joseph Eu Lodge	9572	1994	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
29	Labuan Lodge	9652	1997	Labuan	Emulation
30	Table Lodge	9717	2000	Tawau	Emulation
31	Chula Lodge	9745	2001	Bangkok	Emulation
32	Sri Damai Lodge	9768	2003	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
33	Light of Siam Lodge	9791	2004	Phuket	Emulation
34	Neptune Lodge	9849	2009	Penang	Emulation
35	Mustapha Osman Lodge	9859	2010	Kuantan	Revised
36	Centenarian Lee Keng Hong Lodge	9861	2010	Kuala Lumpur	Revised
37	Idris Lodge	9868	2011	Ipoh	Revised
38	Eastern Archipelago District Grand Stewards' Lodge	9888	2013	Kuala Lumpur	Emulation
39	Trident Lodge	9891	2014	Pattaya	Emulation
40	Oldham Lodge	9961	2017	Singapore	Emulation

The District Grand Master is supported by a Deputy District Grand Master and three Assistant District Grand Masters. They assist him rule across the geographically dispersed District. With its diversity of members from countries globally, the medley of mother tongues spoken, assortment of religions practiced and deep bonds of benevolent brotherhood, the District mirrors Anderson's *Constitutions of the Free-Masons* from 1723, *'we are also of all Nations, Tongues, Kindreds, and Languages, and are resolv d against all Politicks, as what never yet conduc d to the Welfare of the Lodge, nor ever will.*