

*At the Consecration and First Installation of The Earl of Dunmore Lodge No 1686 VC:*

*L to R: Bro Keith Murray, Grand Master - Victoria (and Immediate Past Master), Bro Rt Hon 12th Earl of Dunmore, Right Worshipful Master; and Bro Kevin McKay, District Grand Master of Western Australia, SC.*



## **MASONIC HISTORY IN THE MAKING!**

### **The Creation of The Earl of Dunmore Lodge No 1686 VC**

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Photos: Enzo Avagliano

#### **Background**

Upon the formation of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria in 1889, by lodges then warranted by the English, Irish and Scottish Grand Lodges, it was felt necessary to formulate one uniform ritual for all lodges under the new Constitution, in order to attain harmony. Uniformity of ritual has been enforced in Victoria ever since - until now...

The other Australian States and New Zealand have, to varying extents, also required ritual uniformity. However, for historical reasons, lodges in some of our other jurisdictions are permitted to work ritual variations negotiated when their Grand Lodge was formed. There also remains *remnant* lodges in Australia under the Home Grand Lodges - English Constitution lodges in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, an Irish Lodge in South Australia and two District Grand

Lodges in Western Australia directly under the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

It can be readily contended that today that any justification for absolute uniformity of ritual has long since gone, even if it did initially exist. That said, the inherent parochial nature of Freemasonry has meant that any change to this situation was a very long time coming.



*The Grand Master is welcomed*

I have alluded above to the reason why Australian Grand Lodges, upon their formation, to the extent they were able at the time, opted for ritual uniformity. It is useful to compare English-speaking jurisdictions where this has, and has not been, the case. It is a statistical fact that the greatest fall in Masonic membership numbers over the last 30 years, at least, has been in North America, Australia and New Zealand, and Ireland. It almost all of the jurisdictions involved, uniformity of ritual has been enforced. And while it would be a 'long bow' to blame their massive membership declines on this cross-jurisdictional lack of variety in workings, it is contended that it has been a significant factor, especially when compared to other English-speaking jurisdictions when uniformity of ritual has never been applied.

The two jurisdictions in question are England and Scotland; neither of which has ever prescribed uniformity. In England, at best count, 52 different rituals are used in

Craft Lodges - many of which (but certainly not all) are relatively similar. In Scotland, there are also many different rituals in use (but half a dozen 'main' ones). But they are all 'different', to some extent in content, and often in form.



*Bro Lord Dunmore is obligated*

And, interestingly, while membership in England and Scotland has fallen also over the last 30 years, their percentage decline has been considerably less than in Australia and the other countries already cited.

In short, while not possible to quantify exactly, the evidence suggests, on balance, a lack of ritual uniformity will certainly not affect membership but, on the contrary, will most likely enhance it. There are more than a few Masons in Victoria of Scottish origin, and many others, who hold that view.

### **The Next Step**

Thus, the idea to create a lodge in Victoria to work a Scottish Ritual has been around for several years, but it only became possible in recent times given significant positive changes in outlook at Grand Lodge. We were most fortunate to have amongst us the 12th Earl of Dunmore, an experienced Past Master, who enthusiastically added his considerable *gravitas* to the project. The ultimate success of the efforts of many are owed in no small part to the leadership of both Bro Lord Dunmore and his kinsman Bro Keith Murray, now Grand Master in

Victoria. Bro Murray was, originally, a Scottish Mason before emigrating to Melbourne 20+ years ago...



*Bro Lord Dunmore invests Bro Keith Murray as Immediate Past Master*

Of the twelve Earls of Dunmore, the great majority have been Freemasons and the 6th Earl served as Grand Master of Scotland in 1835-36. The current Earl, Brother the Right Honourable Malcolm Murray, 12th Earl of Dunmore, Viscount of Fincastle, Lord Murray of Blair, Moulin and Tillimet, took his seat in The House of Lords in November 1998 and later delivered his *Maiden Speech*.



*The Warrant of the Lodge*

In 2002, he attended the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Her Majesty the Queen in Westminster Abbey. Lord Dunmore resides in Devonport, Tasmania. He is an actual (and active) Past Master of Lodges in both Victoria (which he regularly visits) and Tasmania.

The founders resolved to name the lodge after the Earldom of Dunmore, one of more senior in the Scottish Peerage, and to seek the Lodge number as 1686, the year of the creation of the Earldom. Most significant of all, Lord Dunmore graciously consented to the unanimous request of the Founders that he serve as Foundation Right Worshipful Master. Remarkably, as far as can be determined, this is probably the only occasion in Masonic history where a new Lodge has been named after a peerage and the incumbent peer has served as the Foundation Master.

As many interested brethren came on board with the project, the style of lodge was soon established. It was resolved to work the Scottish *McBride Ritual*, that the lodge normally work four times per year on a Saturday, that it be a 'dining lodge' with the ladies attending; and that its 'Scottish-style Regalia' be of the *Clan Murray tartan*.



*Brethren in the packed Lodge Room*

The Lodge commences with 75 Founders, who are collectively most grateful for all the support they have received, particularly from our Grand Lodge, our Sponsoring Lodge (Seavic Lodge No 8 VC), and from the District Grand Lodge of Western Australia (under the Grand Lodge of Scotland) whose Officers came especially to Melbourne, at their own expense, specifically to carry out our First Installation. It should be noted that we have NOT formed a 'Scottish Lodge' *per se*, but a

regular, warranted Lodge under the United Grand Lodge of Victoria (*Freemasons Victoria*) - yet one which works a Scottish Craft Ritual, wears 'Scottish' Craft Regalia, and will largely follow Scottish Craft traditions.

### Up and Running...!

The Consecration and First Installation of The Earl of Dunmore Lodge No 1686 occurred on Saturday 19th May, at the new Bayside Masonic Centre in Southern Melbourne. About 150 brethren attended the ceremonies. The Consecration Ceremony was flawlessly performed by the Grand Officers of *Freemasons Victoria*, led by the Grand Master, Bro Keith Murray. Bro Keith was supported by his Deputy Grand Master, Bro Richard Elkington; Bro Bruce Bartrop, Past Grand Master; Bro Carl Stewart, Past Grand Master; Bro John Slore, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tasmania; and the Scottish District Grand Master of Western Australia (Scottish Constitution), Bro Kevin McKay and his District Grand Lodge Officers.



*Officers of the District Grand Lodge  
of Western Australia, SC*

It is of more than of passing interest that amongst our many founders, several are of particular note. They include Bro Jamie Melville, Grand Master of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (an apology), Bro John Slore, Grand Master of Tasmania (present); Bro Paul Holland, Deputy Grand Master of Queensland (an apology) and Bro Bill Merrill, Past Deputy

Grand Master of South Australia (present), plus several senior visiting brethren from New South Wales. Bro Kevin McKay (Western Australia) is a Foundation Honorary Member. Thus our new lodge has significant support from every Masonic Jurisdiction in Australia! We even had a visitor from Singapore!

After the Consecration Ceremony, a *Call Off*, and Afternoon Tea, we all returned to the Lodge Room for the Installation of Bro Lord Dunmore as our first Right Worshipful Master. This was admirably done by Bro Kevin McKay and his District Grand Officers.



*Collar Chains of the 3 Principal Officers*

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Bro Keith Murray (now the *Immediate Past Master* of our Lodge), in his capacity as Grand Master of Victoria, was pleased to confer on a shocked Lord Dunmore, the thoroughly-merited Grand Rank of *Past Grand Inspector of Workings*, to the delight of all present.

Interestingly, a week previously, at his Lodge's Installation in Devonport, Lord Dunmore was conferred with the equivalent

Grand Rank, of *Past Grand Inspector of Lodges*, under the Grand Lodge of Tasmania.

Whilst waiting for our brethren to complete the ceremonies, the partners of the members were kept suitably entertained by the ladies of the Grand Lodge Team, led by Mrs Fiona Murray.



*Bro John Slore, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tasmania*

The Celebratory Banquet that followed was truly marvellous, with fabulous food and wine. The *buzz* around the dining room was outstanding! About 220 Brethren and their ladies were present, and other distinguished guests included the Right Honourable the Earl of Loudoun, Bro the Honourable Michael Baden-Powell and Mrs Joan Baden-Powell, and Mrs Rosemary Evans, the wife of our late Past Grand Master, Bro John Evans - who was a petitioner for our lodge and an enthusiastic supporter, until his very sad and untimely death last year.

Our new lodge will meet four times per year, on a Saturday. Our first *Working Meeting* is on Saturday 7th July 2018, when for the first time in over 130 years, a Scottish First Degree Ceremony will be worked by a warranted lodge in Victoria, and we will welcome Mr James Hickey as our first initiate!

All I can say now is.... 'Wow'!!



*Bro Keith Murray invests Bro Lord Dunmore with his Grand Regalia*



*Lord Dunmore proposes the Loyal Toast*



*The Grand Lodge & Dunmore Banners*