

Glover book/CD review (1500 words)

A History of First Fifty Years of Freemasonry in South Australia 1834–1884

Charles R J Glover

Grand Lodge of South Australia, 1916

hc, approx 430 pp, illos, no index, out of print.

History of the First Fifty Years of Freemasonry in South Australia 1834–1884

Charles R J Glover

Data CD-ROM edn 2007 © Archive CD Books Australia Pty Ltd <www.archivecdbooks.com.au>

ISBN: 978 1 921461 29 3

available from Gould Genealogy <www.gould.com.au>, \$22.51 plus postage.

Was it modesty that caused Charles Glover to describe himself as the ‘compiler’ of *A History of First Fifty Years of Freemasonry in South Australia 1834–1884*, when it was first published in 1916? It is not always easy to distinguish the functions of an historian from those of a compiler or an editor. Charles Richmond John Glover (1870–1936) was educated at Prince Alfred College and then qualified as a pharmaceutical chemist. His business activities were varied, from stockbroker to licensee of what is now the Richmond Hotel in Rundle Mall, to director of several companies, including the Bank of Adelaide and the SA Gas Co. He was active in many charitable, cultural and sporting bodies, and was Lord Mayor of Adelaide three times (1919, 1923–25 & 1930–33). In 1909 he became Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of South Australia and held that office until his death in 1936.

An avid collector of memorabilia of many kinds, as Grand Secretary he pursued the task of producing a detailed record of the establishment and growth of Freemasonry in South Australia, from the warranting of the first lodge in England in 1834, some two years before the establishment of the colony, to the time of formation of the Grand Lodge. He reported its completion to the Board of General Purposes in 1911, and approval was granted to publish it in instalments as an addendum to the *Annual Proceedings*. It was then published as a hard-bound book in 1916, as volume 1 of an intended series, but the second volume was not commenced until 1970.

Glover’s *History* is by no means complete. It covers in detail only the history of the first three lodges: Friendship EC (38 pages), Adelaide SC (48 pp) and Harmony EC (30 pp); the English Provincial & District Grand Lodge (183 pp); and the formation of the Grand Lodge of South Australia (96 pp). The history of the other lodges, and the Provincial Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland are recorded only in bare outline. This is not the fault of Brother Glover, who made good use of the material he could locate. His search revealed that many valuable records had been lost, some accidentally by fire, and some deliberately destroyed. He was unable to locate minute books of some lodges, and other records which ought to have been made and preserved. Those he did locate, he carefully incorporated in his account, either in summary or verbatim, thus guarding against further loss of the history of early Freemasonry in his jurisdiction. In addition to original documents, he acknowledged the usefulness of the few lodge histories that had been compiled and preserved.

The result is an uneven picture, of necessity ranging from brief sketches to full portraits, but it is the only picture we have, and Brother Glover has been rightly commended for his work in preserving the history of the Craft. His book presents many insights into the lives and deeds of the brethren of this era, the problems and successes of the lodges, the rampant ego and ambition of some brethren, and the selfless actions of others in the best tradition of the Craft. In addition, there are delightful snippets of information for the reader whose interests extend beyond the Craft in South Australia. Two brief examples:

There are several references to *Bro E Solomon*, an early member of the Lodge of Friendship and an officer of the Provincial Grand Lodge EC, including a note that he offered his lodge the gift of a piece of land and 10,000 bricks to build a lodge, and another that he imported a complete set of officers’ jewels and presented them to Adelaide Lodge. This is the emancipist Emanuel Solomon (1800–1873), the same man who provided a temporary home for (Saint) Mary MacKillop and the Sisters of her Order when Bishop Sheil excommunicated her in 1871.

Bro T B Solly is recorded as Master of Adelaide Lodge in 1853, and leaving for Van Diemen’s Land a few months after completing his term of office. This is Benjamin Travers Solly (1820–1902), who moved to Tasmania to become private secretary to the Governor, and then Assistant Colonial Secretary until his

retirement in 1894. His claim to Masonic fame is in forming brethren of the Hobart lodges into a Masonic Rifle Company in 1860, part-time soldiers in defence of the colony.

There are other gems of information to be discovered, such as the fact that the brethren of the Lodge of Friendship were using Richard Carlile's 'exposure', *Manual of Freemasonry*, (first published as a newspaper serial, and later in book form) as their ritual for degree work—at least until 1860; and that when Lodge Concordia was erected under the Scottish Constitution in 1882, the District Grand Master SC translated a Scottish ritual into German, for the brethren to work in their mother-tongue.

There is an amusing account of a public event, not the customary laying of a foundation stone for a building, but of screwing the first pile of the jetty at Glenelg in 1857. The Provincial Grand Lodge EC was opened in due form at the Pier Hotel by Deputy Provincial Grand Master John Lazar (the Mayor of Adelaide), and then the Governor-in-Chief, Bro Sir Robert MacDonnell, the Mayor (Bro Lazar), Past Provincial Grand Master Henry Mildred and the Commissioner of Public Works proceeded to screw the pile into the sand in 'due Masonic form', a task which involved them in a full ten minutes of hard labour.

And there are some curious occurrences and turns of phrase within the records: in 1851 ProvGM (EC) Henry Mildred is reported as referring, at a public ceremony, to 'the Great First Cause, the Almighty Architect of the Universe'; we learn of the Provincial Grand Lodge (EC) in 1858 being opened 'in the Past Master's Degree' for the Installation of the Masters of two of the English lodges; and in 1864 the brethren of the Lodge of Friendship apparently travelled backwards in time, since we are informed that:

On June 25th [1864] the Brethren had a somewhat unique experience in being refused the use of the Lodge-room, in consequence of the rent not having been paid. They were then meeting at the Prince of Wales Hotel, Angus Street, whither they had removed on August 17, 1864.

As a conclusion to his work, Glover makes several suggestions to Secretaries and Masters of lodges. He urges Masters, at the end of their term of office, to present to the lodge a report of the work done in the preceding year, as a guide to future Masters of the lodge and for the information of future historians. He recommends that Secretaries keep more detailed minutes, include background information such as the reasons for proposals and discussion of them, and append copies of letters sent and received. He commends the practice of including an annual balance sheet with the minutes, and urges Secretaries to remember that they are recording for reference not only in the immediate future, when memories are still fresh, but also for posterity.

A compiler Glover certainly was, but from the research he did, the presentation of that material, and the conclusions he reached, he could accurately be described also as author and historian. His book is invaluable as an account of the Craft in the colony of South Australia.

Only 500 copies of this book were printed and it has long been out of print; second-hand copies which occasionally are offered for sale are priced well beyond the means of most lodges and individuals who would wish to add it to their library. A copy is available for reference in the Grand Lodge library, but time restrictions and the tyranny of distance often render access difficult.

In 2007 the South Australia & Northern Territory Freemasons Historical Society, under the leadership of PGM Rob Casson and historian Robert Clyne, examined the feasibility of reprinting Glover's *History* in a facsimile edition. A proposed hard-cover facsimile at a retail price of \$120 had no hope of successful sale, but a practical solution was forthcoming and collaboration with Archive CD Books Australia has resulted in a CD version in PDF format, available from Gould Genealogy & History on a single Data CD at an affordable price.

The CD contains not only the whole text and illustrations of the original book as high quality scanned images, but also something which Glover did not provide—an index facility. In addition to the efficient 'Find' function available to all users of Adobe Acrobat Reader, the CD has a downloadable catalog index (.pdx) that provides even better search facilities.

This CD places in your hands the opportunity to enjoy a very readable book about our forebears, and to look up the answers to historical questions from time to time without going to the library or even connecting with the Internet.

Tony Pope, PM, OS
Lodge of Fortitude #94.

Illustrations for this review:

<Glover book AU5060.jpg>

<Glover CD.jpg>

<Glover 1919 StateLibSA.jpg> (no permission to use required, but must include acknowledgement:
courtesy of State Library of South Australia, photo B55002.