

Foundation Stone – St. Thomas Church 1932

Press cutting - 1932

The foundation stone of St. Thomas' Church, Minnis Bay, Birchington, which is being built on land given in memory of the late Colonel Thomas Kearns, C.B., C.M.G., will be laid with impressive Masonic ceremonial tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon by the Right Worshipful the Provincial Grand Master, the Right Hon. The Lord Cornwallis, C.B.E., Deputy Grand Master of England. This unique service will be conducted by the Archdeacon of Canterbury (the Ven. E.H. Hardcastle).

The site of the new church was presented to the diocese in October, 1924, and in the Archbishop of Canterbury's £50,000 appeal for the building of more churches in the diocese, St. Thomas', Birchington, is included as being necessary for the extension of the work of the Church and due administration of the Sacraments in the Minnis Bay area, which has rapidly developed in recent years. The new church will cost £3,500, of which £2,000 has already been subscribed, and an appeal is being made for further funds to free the church from debt as soon as possible.

It is probable that in the long and chequered history of Birchington no procession so picturesque as that which has been arranged in connection with tomorrow's ceremony has ever been seen in the Parish. It will be headed by two Provincial Assistant Grand Directors of Ceremonies, who will be followed by the Deputy Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, the Provincial Grand Tyler with drawn sword, two Provincial Grand Stewards, two Provincial Assistant Grand Directors of Ceremonies, two Provincial Junior Grand Deacons, the D.C. of Lodge No. 5226 (W. Bro. G. Ivor Phillips) carrying the banner of the Lodge, the J.W. of Lodge No. 5226 (W. Bro. F.J. Cornford, P.P.G.D.) bearing the vessel with salt, the S.W. of Lodge No. 5226 (W. Bro. Major George Potts, P.P.G.D.) bearing the ewer with oil, the I.P.M. of Lodge No. 5226 (W. Bro Colonel G.I. Phillips, C.B.E., P.G.Swd.B.) bearing the ewer with wine, the Master of Lodge No. 5226 (W. Bro Colonel Nawab Malik Sir Umar Hayat-Tiwana, K.C.I.E., C.B.E., M.V.O., A.D.C. to His Majesty the King) bearing the Cornucopia with corn, the Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works (W. Bro. Robert Malcolm Campbell) bearing the plans, the Provincial Grand Secretary (W. Bro. Francis J. Bryan, P.A.G.D.C.) with the Book of Constitutions on a cushion, the Provincial Grand Registrar (W. Bro. Stanley Johnson) bearing a phial to be deposited under the stone, the Provincial Grand Treasurer (W. Bro. Julius Kingsford, P.A.G.D.C.) bearing coins in a phial to be deposited under the stone, the Provincial Grand Chaplains (W. Bro. the Rev. Frank Hosmer Manser, M.A., and the Rev. Canon Percy A. Lovel Clarke, M.A., R.D.) bearing the volume of the Sacred Law on a cushion, the Provincial Junior Grand Warden (W. Bro. L.F. Hemmans, M.B.) with the plumb rule, the Provincial Senior Grand Warden (W. Bro. Colonel G.B. Turner) with the level, the Worshipful the Assistant Provincial Grand Master (W. Bro. Alfred Ernest Hobbs, J.P., P.A.G.D.C.O.) bearing the mallet, the Worshipful the Deputy Provincial Grand Master (W. Bro. William Frederick Blay P.G.D.) with the square, the Provincial Grand Sword Bearer (W. Bro. Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Duesbury), the Right Worshipful the Provincial Grand Master, two Provincial Grand Standard Bearers, two Provincial Senior Grand Deacons, the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies (W. Bro. Arthur Atkinson, jun.), two Provincial Grand Stewards, the cross bearer, the choir,

the clergy, the Rev. H. A. Serres, M.A. (late Vicar), W. Bro the Rev. Canon Healy, M.A., B.D., Bro. the Rev. A.O. Hayes, M.A. (Vicar), the Rev. W.G. Boyd, M.A., (Rural Dean), the churchwardens, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, and the architect Mr. T.F.W. Grant, F.R.I.B.A.).

The service will open with the singing of Psalm 84, and after collects and prayers and the hymn "Praise to the Holiest in the height," the Archdeacon will request the Right Worshipful the Provincial Grand Master to lay the stone. The latter will address the assembly, and pass from his chair to the stone, where phials containing coins and paper will be placed in the cavity. The stone will then be lowered and adjusted, and the Provincial Grand Master will, with solemn ceremonial, prove the plumb, level, and square before declaring it "well and truly laid." After the Provincial Grand Master has inspected the plans, the vessels containing the salt, oil, wine and corn, being emblems of plenty, joy and gladness, charity, and hospitality and friendship respectively, will be carried round the stone and in turn presented to him. Following the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation," the Archdeacon will address the assembly and pronounce the Benediction. The service will conclude with the Te Deum and the National Anthem.