

The Raj and the Craft by Laurie McDonald Leapman

The East India Company reached India in 1600 as did an early form of Freemasonry.

The Regimental Lodges with "Perambulatory" Warrants took the Craft around the world. By 1730 regular Freemasonry was established with permanent Lodges meeting up to 12 times a year with up to 40 Emergency or Extraordinary Meetings minuted.

With the vastness of the Indian sub-continent and the difficulty of communication, the Lodges were not under strict control; one lodge was 1,800 miles from the Provincial Grand Lodge, a ten-day journey for a Visiting Grand Officer.

The Lecture is not merely a history of Empire, it tells stories of the Lodges, difficulties and controversy in a multi-racial and religious society.

The paper was researched from official Lodge Histories, printed as far back as a century ago with District & Provincial publications. Most of the material was obtained from the libraries and memories of those who brought their lodges Home after partition in 1947 to form the Federation of ex-India and Pakistan Lodges, of which Brother Leapman was Secretary for many years and later Vice President.

This light hearted 45 minute talk includes the admission of HM the King of Afghanistan and an open air meeting while on active service seen from the air, visited and reported many years later by the late VW Air Vice Marshall Sir Bernard Chacksfield, PGSwdB.