

**Queen Victoria - Her Majesty's visit to Chingford
and High Beech on 6 May 1882**



The Chingford Masonic Hall was recently presented with the loan of an Illuminated artefact from Chigwell Lodge No.453 to placed on display in the Ante Room.

The address was created by the Chigwell Lodge No.453 in view of the contemplated visit of Her Majesty Queen Victoria to Epping Forest, on the 6th May 1882. The address was forwarded to the Duke of Connaught, through the Provincial Grand Master of Essex, Lord Tenterden.

It is a statement of their pleasure and of all Freemasons of the Province of Essex to celebrate Queen Victoria to High Beech.

The inscription reads as follows:-

**Chigwell Lodge of Freemasons
No.453
Province of Essex**

FAC ALTERI UT TIBI VIS

*(Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Considered the
"Golden Rule" given by Jesus Christ - Matt: 7:12)*

*To His Royal Highness Arthur W P A Duke of Connaught and
Strathearn KG KT KP GCSI GCMG Etc Etc and Ranger of Epping
Forest*

Past Grand Warden of England

*We, the Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethren of the Chigwell
Lodge of Freemasons No.453 of the Province of Essex, established and
held in Epping Forest formerly of Chigwell and now at The Forest Lodge
Hotel, Chingford, desire to take advantage of the opportunity of the visit
of*

Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen,

*to the Forest on the 6th Instant to express the joy and satisfaction of the
Brethren as well of this Lodge, as of the whole of the Province of Essex
at this Her Majesty's graceful act for the benefit of Her loving subjects
and to assure Her of the sincere and steadfast loyalty of the Craft and the
hearty good wishes of the Brethren for Her continued health and
happiness*

Dated this 1st Day of May 1882

<i>Alfred Buck</i>	<i>W.M.</i>
<i>J. Child</i>	<i>S.W.</i>
<i>Jno. Glass</i>	<i>J.W.</i>
<i>Robt. Martin</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>Geo. Corble</i>	<i>Secretary</i>

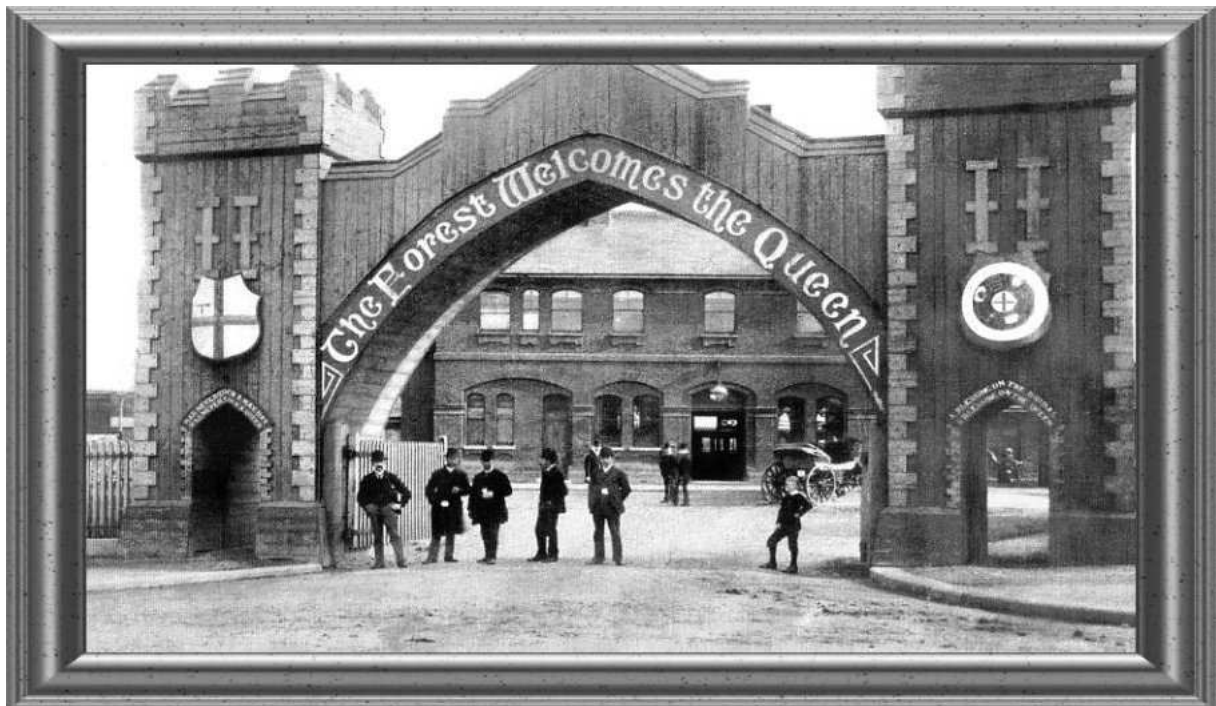
Forest Lodge Hotel, Chingford, Essex

The address was acknowledged on behalf of the Duke of Connaught who was in attendance to the Queen on the occasion of the visit, as follows:-

*Buckingham Palace
May 7th, 1882*

*My Lord,
I have been desired by the Duke of Connaught to ask you to express on the part of his Royal Highness his appreciation of the cordial and loyal greeting from the Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethren of the Chigwell Lodge of Freemasons on the occasion of His Royal Highness's visit to Epping Forest as Ranger yesterday.
I remain, my Lord
Yours faithfully
M. Fitzgerald
Knight of Kerry
Equerry in waiting on H.R.H. Duke of Connaught*

In the Walthamstow Guardian, dated Saturday, 29th April 1882, a small article was written stating that "The Lord Mayor has received from his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught. the Ranger of Epping Forest, an intimation that the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Epping Forest will be paid in the afternoon of Saturday, May 6. Her Majesty will proceed by special train direct from Windsor to Chingford, where the Royal carriages will be in waiting, and thence the Queen will drive to High Beech, where the most extensive view of the beautiful scenery of the forest is to be obtained. At this point an amphitheatre will be erected capable of holding 2,000 persons, and an address from the Corporation of London will be presented to Her Majesty by the Lord Mayor. The Queen will then formally declare Epping Forest dedicated to the free use and enjoyment of the public for all time. At the conclusion of this brief ceremony Her Majesty will return to Chingford, thence by train to Windsor".



Photograph above: Chingford Station, circa 1882

Chingford Station was actually opened in 1898, much in its current form. The arrival of the railway in 1873 marked a change in Chingford's destiny. A direct and convenient route into London encouraged both suburban development and opened up the forest for East End day trippers. Chingford's first station stood in Kings Road, (then called Bull Lane). In 1878 the terminus was moved north of Maddox Lane, now Station Road and the original station became a goods station. Chingford Station was never intended as a terminus as it was originally planned to extend the railway

across Chingford Plain to High Beech. The Epping Forest Act thankfully prevented this eventuality. [The Epping Forest Act of 1878 appointed the City of London as the Conservator of Epping Forest and its strictures still govern how the Forest is managed today.]

In the Walthamstow Guardian, dated 13th May 1882, it included a long article "The Dedication of Epping Forest by the Queen". I have expurgated as follows:-

"The Crowning act in the preservation of Epping Forest, and the dedication of it to the use of the people forever, was performed by her Majesty on Saturday last (6th May) under the most gratifying circumstances, the weather being propitious, and the attendance of spectators very large. The beauty of the weather, the presence of Royalty, and the happy event, which was to be celebrated, brought the people of London out in enormous crowds, and the day is one which will long be remembered in the eastern districts of the Metropolis. The proceedings passed off, from first to last, in the most felicitous manner, and nothing occurred to make the recollections of the day other than pleasurable.

St. James-street, Hoe-street, and Wood-street Stations were decorated with flowers, mottoes, flags, etc, those at Hoe-street being particularly effective, and displaying much taste. Chingford being the starting point, was one of the centres of attraction, and the village was alive, banners and mottoes meeting the eye in every direction, whilst military bands discoursed sweet music at intervals.

The exit into the public road was under a triumphal arch, representing a castle keep, with square embattled towers on either side, surmounted with by a trophy of banners. Upon the arch was inscribed "The Forest Welcomes the Queen". Over the subsidiary side arches were the legends, "Was never such a May Day, was never such a Queen, and "A blessing on the bridal, a blessing on the Queen". Shortly before the arrival of the Queen, two Royal carriages, drawn by four horses and with postillions, entered the station yard. From the bustling appearance of the officials, and the forming up of the troops, it was evident the Royal train was approaching; and punctually to time it steamed into the station.

The Queen was received on alighting by the Duke of Connaught and the noblemen and gentlemen. The Royal Standard was hoisted, and the boom of the first gun of a Royal salute was heard, fired by the 1st Essex Artillery, who were stationed near Hawkwood Farm.

Her Majesty, accompanied by Princess Beatrice, met the Duchess of Connaught and Princess Louise, and the Royal party were escorted to the carriage.



(picture left: probably depicts how Queen Victoria would have looked on her visit to Chingford)

Her Majesty was dressed in black, the only relief to this sombre hue being a white ostrich feather in her bonnet. Amid the cheers of the assembled multitude, with the troops at the present, and the band playing the National Anthem, the cavalcade proceeded on its way. The Officers of the Corporation followed in their carriages, the procession being escorted by the Royal Horse Guards, and a troop of the Honourable Artillery Company. The cortege passed on up the ascent to the Royal Forest hotel. The hotel itself had been tastefully decorated for the occasion. The long balconies were draped in red with a pretty red and white fringe. The Royal progress through the Forest was, as might be expected, a perfect ovation. In the meantime the Honourable Artillery Company, under the command of their Colonel, the Duke of Portland, had marched on

to the ground at High Beech. Entering from the other extremity of the open space, the London Rifle Brigade, under the Command of Lieutenant Colonel Haywood, took up a position in line opposite the southern wing. At a quarter to five the approach of the Royal cortege became manifest at High Beech. Here a semi-amphitheatre, or grand stand, of immense extent, had been constructed on the rising

ground, commanding a magnificent view towards the west. The crimson covered seats rose tier above tier in one immense seep from north to south, while the rays of the sun were excluded by a well-arranged canvas awning. On the coloured drapery which fringed the summit appeared in colossal letters "Welcome Victoria" The Royal arms and other decorations adorned the structure, and the entire effect was extremely good.

On the arrival of her Majesty the Royal Standard flew to the summit of the flagstaff over the pavilion, the guards of honour saluted, and the bands struck up the National Anthem. The Royal carriage having been pulled up at the right spot, her Majesty retained her seat as previously arranged, and the first incident of the programme consisted in the presentation of a splendid bouquet of flowers to her Majesty, according to her gracious permission; by Miss Victoria Buxton, a young lady of tender years, who was lifted up to the requisite height in order to present the floral gift. Her Majesty accepted the bouquet with evident pleasure, and then followed the reading of the Corporation address, an office which was performed by the Recorder, Sir Thomas Chambers. Her Majesty, addressing the Lord Mayor, made her reply. "I thank you sincerely for your loyal and dutiful address, and it gives me greatest satisfaction to dedicate this beautiful Forest to the use and enjoyment of my people for all time. I thank you for your continued solicitude for my welfare". The Lord Mayor, mounting a seat, then said in a loud voice "Her Majesty the Queen has most graciously condescended to command me to declare in Her Majesty's name this beautiful Forest open and dedicated to the delectation of the public for all time."



Picture left: A line drawing of Queen Victoria's visit to Epping Forest in 1882. The Queen drove through the Forest and declared it was free and open for ever. In the picture the Royal Procession is shown passing Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, Chingford.

wood to be henceforth known as Queen Victoria's Wood. Accordingly, in the vicinity of the King's Oak a fine specimen of the scarlet oak was planted to commemorate the Queen's visit; and a handsome spade of silver and gold was presented to and graciously accepted by Her Majesty as a memorial of the circumstance. A salvo of artillery announced the conclusion of the ceremony.

The Royal procession then returned to Chingford, and her Majesty, with Princess Beatrice, left for Windsor by special train at half past five. A few minutes later the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and Princess Louise quitted the station by train for London.

For thousands of people, who remained in the Forest, there was provided at dusk the splendid sight of a grand display of fireworks."

The Address was found on E-Bay and obtained by W Bro John Bergstrom-Potter, framed, and is now on display at the Chingford Masonic Hall by kind permission of the members of the Chigwell Lodge No.453.

Acknowledgements:

- [1] Vestry Hall Museum and Archives, Walthamstow
- [2] Walthamstow Guardian
- [3] Leaflet - Millennium Heritage Trail No.1
- [4] History of the Chigwell Lodge No.453 1838-1914 by C. Gough Published 1914
- [5] Grand Lodge Museum and Library

Article and research by W Bro Allan de Luca