

The Prestonian Lecture for 2022
THE ROYAL FAMILY AND FREEMASONRY

by **Dr John W. Hawkins**

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AND FREEMASONRY**

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In the 209 years since the Union of the Premier and Antient Grand Lodges to form the United Grand Lodge of England, a member of the Royal Family has been its Grand Master for more than 150. The Union itself in 1813 was facilitated by the heads of the two constituent Grand Lodges both being Royal Princes – the brothers the Dukes of Sussex and Kent. Prior to the Union, members of the Royal Family had already been Grand Masters of the Premier Grand Lodge for over 30 years. The royal connection goes back even further than this, with Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales and eldest son of King George II, having been initiated in 1737. The present Duke of Kent has been Grand Master of the Craft since 1967 and Prince Michael of Kent Grand Master of the Mark since 1982.

This lecture discusses not only those members of the Royal Family whose contributions to the Craft remain well-known today, of whom King Edward VII and the Duke of Connaught are examples, but other members who are now less well remembered, such as the ill-fated Dukes of Albany and Clarence. Members of the Royal Family who were not Freemasons nonetheless supported its charities and recognised its force for good, so that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the Prince Consort, are not omitted.

The author has been provided with unprecedented access to the archives of United Grand Lodge and has also drawn on material from the Royal Archives at Windsor and contemporary news reports.

The connection between the Royal Family and Freemasonry has been a popular topic of masonic research for over 100 years, but this is by far the most comprehensive and profusely illustrated work on the subject to have been published to date.

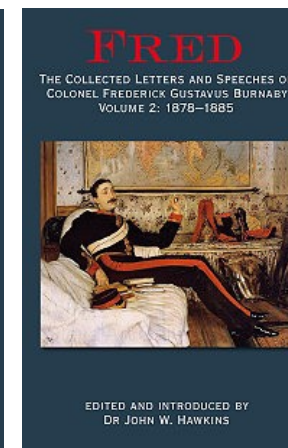
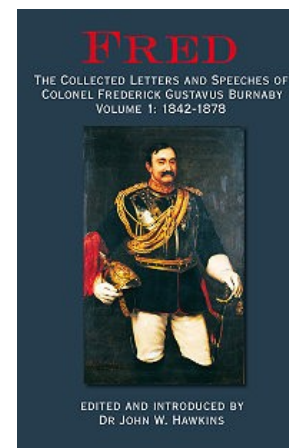
Dr Jim Daniel, Prestonian Lecturer, 2017

John Hawkins is an independent researcher and author with interests in art, family, local, masonic, military and social history, having published in most of these areas and others.

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Also by John Hawkins: *Fred, the collected letters and speeches of Colonel Frederick Gustavus Burnaby* Volume 1: 1842-1879 (Solihull: Helion & Co. Ltd., 2013); Volume 2: 1880-1885 (Solihull: Helion & Co. Ltd., 2014).



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