

THE GOOSE AND GRIDIRON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

BY

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IN the Guildhall Museum the sign is exhibited of the Goose and Gridiron Ale-house, St. Paul's Churchyard. The building was demolished in 1894. An illustration of it appeared in *The Daily Graphic* of 28th August, 1894, showing the house as it appeared before the site was cleared to make way for an extension of the warehouse of Messrs. Hitchcock, Williams and Co. The house stood in the north-eastern corner of London House Yard which has two entrances into St. Paul's Churchyard. London House Yard has been the subject of an article in the *Transactions* of our Society, (N.S., Vol. I, p. 13).

London House Yard is shown in Rocque's plan, engraved by John Pine, 1746. At that time Mitre Court, which has long since been built over, extended eastward from the site of the Goose and Gridiron and then turned southward into St. Paul's Churchyard. The celebrated Mitre Music House was situated in this Court until the Fire of 1666, and it seems that the sign of the Goose and Gridiron was a parody of the Swan and Lyre, associated with the Musician's Company, and by consequence with the celebrated Music House. The earliest reference to the alehouse appears to be in Edward Ward's *A Guide for Malt-Worms*, second part, p. 28, published 1713. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have, in their archives, leases going back to 1784 containing references to two leases dated 1764, the latter referring to a tenement then known for some time past as the Goose and Gridiron. During the period from 1713 to 1894, the building was

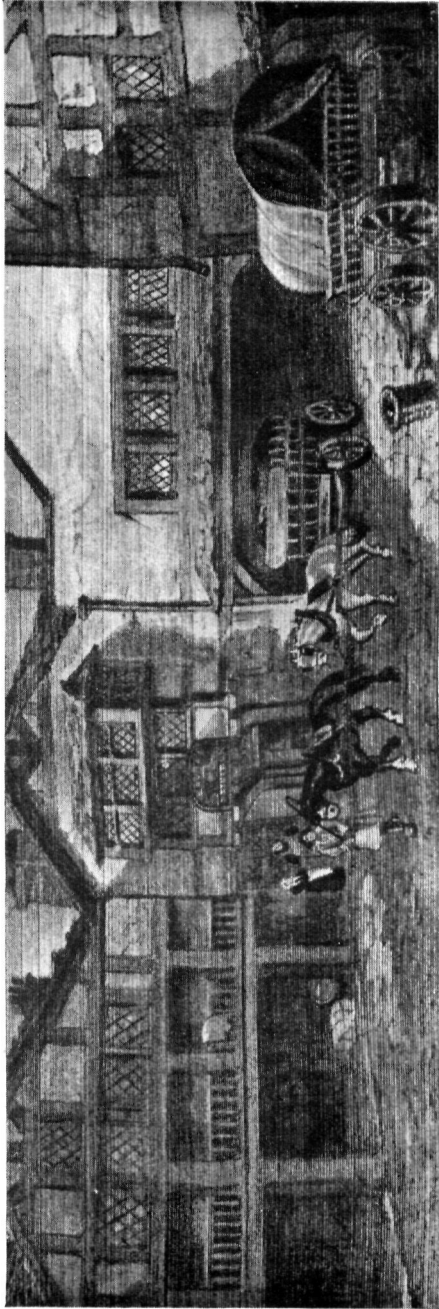


THE GOOSE AND GRIDIRON immediately prior to demolition, 1894.
(*The Daily Graphic*, 1894). Block lent by the *Quatuor Coronati Lodge*.

reconstructed or altered, but the total area was only 21 feet by 22 feet and at some stage the accommodation was enlarged by taking in about another 12 feet eastward. It is quite clear that it was no more than an alehouse and that there never was room on the site for the galleries and appurtenances associated with the old Coaching Inns. The old house has had its memory preserved both by the quaintness of its sign, and by the fact that the Freemasons of that time met there on 24th June, 1717, and elected their first Grand Master. This alone would suffice to justify some short reference in our *Transactions*.

The writer was prompted to make the enquiry resulting in this note because a friend produced to him a copy of Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry* (8th Edition dated 1792) nicely bound in old red morocco and with gilt edges, having on its fore edge a well executed water colour drawing of an old inn showing the sign of the Goose and Gridiron and having on the flyleaf, in what looked like faded ink, the following note:—
“ The Goose and Gridiron, St. Paul's Churchyard where the Grand Lodge of England was organised on the 24th of June, 1717.”

To all outward seeming the drawing appeared to be genuine and authentic and to be over 100 years old. Searches were made at the British Museum (including the Print Room), the London Museum, and the Guildhall Museum, to find out whether any drawing was in existence which could have formed the basis of the fore edge drawing, but in neither of those places was any drawing of the Tavern traced. Both Mr. Songhurst the Secretary of the *Quatuor Coronati Lodge* which is the premier Lodge of Research in the Masonic World, and Mr. Wonnacott, the Librarian of Grand Lodge, expressed serious doubts as to whether the drawing could be correct, because it depicted a wide fronted building with galleries and a courtyard, such as were typical of the old coaching inns; and there certainly was no room for such a building on the site which was known in 1894 as that of the Goose and



FORE-EDGE DRAWING PURPORTING TO BE A VIEW OF "THE GOOSE AND GRIDIRON."

Gridiron. Mr. Wonnacott, however, found in the Grand Lodge Library, in a publication entitled *Two Centuries of Freemasonry*, published in the year 1917 and printed at Berne in connection with Grand Lodge Bi-centenary, an illustration which coincides with the central part of the fore edge drawing.

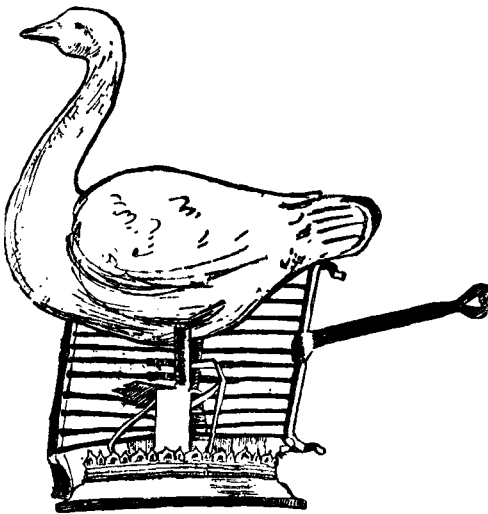
The point then arose whence that illustration and the fore edge drawing were derived, and so far as has been ascertained the picture first appeared in Mackey's *History of Freemasonry* published in New York in 1901. In this country we find it as an illustration to the Second Edition of Gould's *Concise History of Freemasonry* in 1920.

While these enquiries were going on the book was shown to a friend who has some acquaintance with such matters, and he made a suggestion which, when followed up, resulted in the artist who had actually made the fore edge drawing being traced and explaining that he personally executed the work somewhere about twelve years ago; that he had copied the central part of the drawing from an American publication, and had added the galleries at the side as something of the sort seemed to be in keeping with the rest of the drawing and he had to fill up the fore edge. It seems worth while putting this on record, as it is more than likely that the book in question will be turning up from time to time, and may cause misunderstanding owing to its plausible show of genuineness. A photograph of the fore edge drawing is reproduced with this note. Fore edge drawings were originally made by one Edwards during the period *circa* 1795-1820, but it seems that at a fairly recent date a number of books have been embellished in that way and some of them bear every appearance of antiquity.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Mr. C. W. F. Goss, F.S.A. (Librarian of the Bishopsgate Institute), and to Bro. Dr. William Martin, F.S.A., for valuable advice and assistance given in the elucidation of some of the points which have arisen.

It must be conceded that the demand for an illustration of the Goose and Gridiron as it appeared in 1717 was bound, sooner or later, to result in the discovery or invention of such a picture. The craving for verification of so interesting an allegation was a natural sequence. That craving will apparently remain for ever unsatisfied.

The subject is obviously one which has special interest for Freemasons and it has been dealt with more fully from their standpoint in a paper by the present writer, published in the *Transactions of Quatuor Coronati Lodge*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 44-50.



The Sign of the GOOSE AND GRIDIRON, now in the Guildhall Museum.
Block lent by the *Quatuor Coronati Lodge*.
