



WBro. Alfred Bankart

The Prince Of Wales Lodge No.1338 EC



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Much was written about Bro. Bankart since he played a very prominent part in the community as well as in Freemasonry. He was born on the 16th April 1870, at Briton Ferry in Wales. He qualified as an electrical engineer at the Hargrave College in London, and came to N.Z. in 1887 with the family. He joined Campbell & Ehrenfried Company Ltd in 1899 as the secretary of the company, and remained there until he died 34 years later. He was a director or trustee of several other companies and also a partner in the Bankart Brothers Company with his brother Bro. Frederick, who was also a prominent member of Freemasonry, in British Guiana, now Guyana, and later in Auckland. During the First World War he took an active part in the Auckland Provincial Patriotic and War Relief Association of which he was for some time the Treasurer. This earned him the Membership of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). In 1930, he was appointed Knight Bachelor in the Queens Honours list.

He died suddenly at his home in Auckland on the 21st October 1933 aged 63. The cause of his death was "*coronary artery disease three years and coronary thrombosis 18 days*" There were 130 cars at his funeral, a massive number which was a testimony to his popularity.

His extensive Masonic career began with his initiation in the Prince of Wales Lodge on the 1st August 1895 when he was 25 years old, becoming the Master in 1898. He was also the Master of Rodney Lodge in 1917. He, together with several others, joined the Te Awamutu Lodge in 1903, to resuscitate it and move it to Parnell in Auckland, and thus was the Master of that lodge in 1904. He joined Alexandra Lodge in 1916 and was the Master for two years from December of that year. He played a big part in the affairs of the District in several officer positions and was keen to see as much uniform working of the ritual as close to the Emulation working as was possible. This had the effect of removing many of the local lodge 'differences' which had become custom and practice over the years. The view from Grand Lodge had always been not to determine the ritual used by the individual lodges, but that once a particular working was adopted, the lodge should not depart from that working. It was, however possible for a strong and well liked DGM to persuade the lodges to conform to particular procedures. It could probably be said that he was persuading the lodges to follow the recognised Emulation working more closely. When Bro. Reed became DGM in 1907, he appointed Bro. Bankart as his deputy so he thus had a greater influence on the District well before he himself became the DGM

He was a very strong advocate of charity and not just Masonic charity, and initiated many programmes and activities to that end. The principal result of his efforts was the setting up of the Auckland Masonic Benevolent Institution.

In Royal Arch Masonry he was exalted in the Auckland Chapter in 1896 and succeeded to the chair as First Principal in 1901. In 1922, he was appointed to the present, or sitting office of Principal Grand Sojourner in London. Overseas appointments to present Grand Office other than the DGM or the Royal Arch equivalent of Grand Superintendent, were very unusual. They were normally only to past office and not present office since the incumbents could not be expected to travel to London to perform their allotted tasks.



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The Prince of Wales Lodge

www.englishmasons1338.org.nz

The Prince of Wales Lodge, No. 1338, under the United Grand Lodge of England, was founded on the 18th day of December, 1869, and consecrated on Thursday, the 28th day of September, 1871, at the Masonic Hotel, Princes Street, Auckland, by Bro. J.J. Fitzgibbon, Past Master of the Waitemata Lodge, No. 689, E.C.





In Mark Masonry, he was equally well involved. He joined Union Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 154 on the 14th April 1896, was installed as the Master on the 9th January 1900 and installed as the DGM on the 11th February 1902 when the DGL was held during a regular Union Lodge meeting. In those days, the Mark DGM office was held for three years as recorded on the patent itself. He joined Royal Ark Mariners, in Ararat Lodge which was attached to Union Lodge, on 27th February 1912, and was immediately elected to Commander and installed in that office in the April of that year. He joined Southern Cross Rose Croix Chapter No. 88 in 1899, was Sovereign in 1901 and Grand Inspector General for the N.Z. North District from 1923 until his death. He was a member of the DeMolay Preceptory of Knights Templar and it was said that he was credited with bringing these degrees to the country.

His successor, Bro. Major, at the DGL meeting on the 5th December 1933, said:

"His ability, capacity and wisdom were great assets to the District. By his broadmindedness, benevolent mind and charitable heart he had endeared himself to those who knew him; and the esteem in which he was held is evidenced by the expressions of sympathy received not only from our own lodges, but from the Grand Lodge of New Zealand, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Ireland, the District Grand Lodge of Scotland, our sister District Grand Lodges, and many Lodges under those governing bodies.

His fellow citizens, recognising him as a leader of men, availed themselves of his great talents, enlisted his active support and financial assistance in all movements and organisations directed to the well-being of humanity, and now mourn the loss of one who had gained their trust, respect, and gratitude. We have lost a Brother who exhibited all the Masonic virtues, and gave himself freely to the cause of Freemasonry in time, energy and substance for over 38 years. May his life be an inspiration to those of us who have been privileged to be associated with him in the companionship of the Craft. "

Extract from "A History of Freemasonry in North Island New Zealand" by W.Bro. Alan Bevins, the production of which was sponsored by The Prince of Wales Lodge, Remuera Lodge and United Masters Lodge.

The following is an extract from Lord Bledisloe's speech at the dedication of the Whare Rununga and grounds at Waitangi on 6th February 1934, this date being the precursor to Waitangi Day each year - Bankart was Managing Director of Campbell & Ehrenfried and one of the benefactors responsible for the preservation of the Waitangi Treaty House.

"Before responding to the friendly greetings of the Maori tribes here assembled and to the invitation which has been extended to me in such felicitous terms by Mr Tau Henare, M.P., in the name of the Ngapuhi Tribe, to perform the ceremony, I desire, on behalf of the Waitangi National Trust Board, to express our deep gratitude for the many valuable contributions which have been made by generous patriotic friends towards the restoration and equipment of this historic property. But for the money contributions of a little group of generous donors, conspicuous among whom was the late Sir Alfred Bankart, the old British Residency or Treaty House, which was in a sadly dilapidated condition up to a year ago could not have been restored to the condition in which you see it today - a condition resembling as near as possible what it was 100 years ago. To the abounding generosity of the Ngapuhi Tribe we owe not merely the project of the fine Whare Rununga, about to be erected on this site, but also the puriri fencing which for four miles forms the boundary of the Trust Estate, and other lesser gifts: the Maoris of the South Island have contributed this handsome carved totara "Coronation" Chair in which I am sitting and a beautiful block of tangi-wai greenstone to rest beneath it, and those of Taranaki have sent a painting depicting the signing of the Treaty. Other valuable and historic pictures have been received from Lady Pomare and the Royal Society of Tasmania. For other gifts, too numerous to specify, we are grateful to their kind donors. Invaluable services have moreover been willingly and gratuitously rendered by our various Honorary Advisory Architects, Messrs. Gummer and Page, who have devoted an immense amount of time and trouble to the difficult task of restoring the old Residency and improving its surroundings, and to Mr. Lindsay Buick, the eminent historian of the Treaty, both for organising the pictorial adornment of the museum and for his ever-ready expert advice. Mr. F. C. Goldie's generous gift to me of his recently painted picture of Tamati Waaka Nene has enabled the Treaty House to possess a striking portrait of that most valiant Maori warrior and champion of the Treaty and at the same time one of the finest works of art ever executed by that talented artist."

Notes:

The Mr Tau Henare M.P. referred to in the Lord Bledisloe's speech above is the Great Grand Father of Tau Henare, currently a National Party MP.

The reference to the Ngapuhi tribe above is incorrect – it should be to the Ngati Hine tribe. While closely associated with Ngapuhi, Ngati Hine are a separate iwi who struggled for many years to be recognised as a separate iwi.



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