

A Story of Brotherly Love and Relief

M W bro. R S Cropley PGM UGLNSW is well remembered in NSW for his 30 years service as Superintendent of the William Thompson Masonic School, which cared for the orphans of Masons. But there much more to the story of this truly caring Mason.

In 1922, together with 4 other Masons, Cropley decided to share their business successes with an orphanage. Arriving with a car load of presents, they were asked, "What is your name?" They replied "Smith, we are all Smiths, in fact we are the Smith Family" So was born one of the most fantastic public charities in our land today.

From that beginning, the **SMITH FAMILY** has grown to a charitable organisation, distributing food, clothes and presents etc. until in 2001, more than \$30 million was spent on its community programmes and Christmas hampers. There were 650 paid staff and 2000 volunteers.

The Five Founders.

RUPERT CROPLEY, born 1881 died 1949.

Initiated on 28/1/1909 in Lodge Manoah No.41 UGLNSW. Installed as foundation Master of Lodge Fortitude No. 439, Baulkham Hills in 1922. The rank of PGM was conferred upon him in September 1938. Was he a Royal Arch Mason? Yes ! Exalted in Chapter Temperance No.219 Scottish Constitution and was foundation First Principal in Chapter Hurlestone No. 444 where he remained a member until his death.

BENJAMIN DRUMMER was also a member of Lodge Manoah No. 41, was WM in 1899 and secretary from 1908 to 1926.

H B CARRINGTON became a Mason on 4/9/1912 in Lodge Cosmopolitan NO. 67 he died 23/4/1946.

J G BANNERMAN was a member of Lodge Manoah No.41 and a foundation member of Lodge Fortitude No.439 serving as WM in 1925.

L C PACKER served as a Grand Steward in the UGLNSW in 1890.

Lodge Manoah was a strictly temperance Lodge and remain so throughout its 113 years, however not all its members were so devout. As legend has it that the idea of the SMITH FAMILY was conceived over a beer in a Parramatta hotel!

We are grateful for the time and energy spent in researching this piece by Rt. Ex. Comp. Graham Cumming PGH, SGC of M and RA Masons of NSW and ACT and thank him for his permission to reproduce this fascinating piece of Australian and Masonic history.