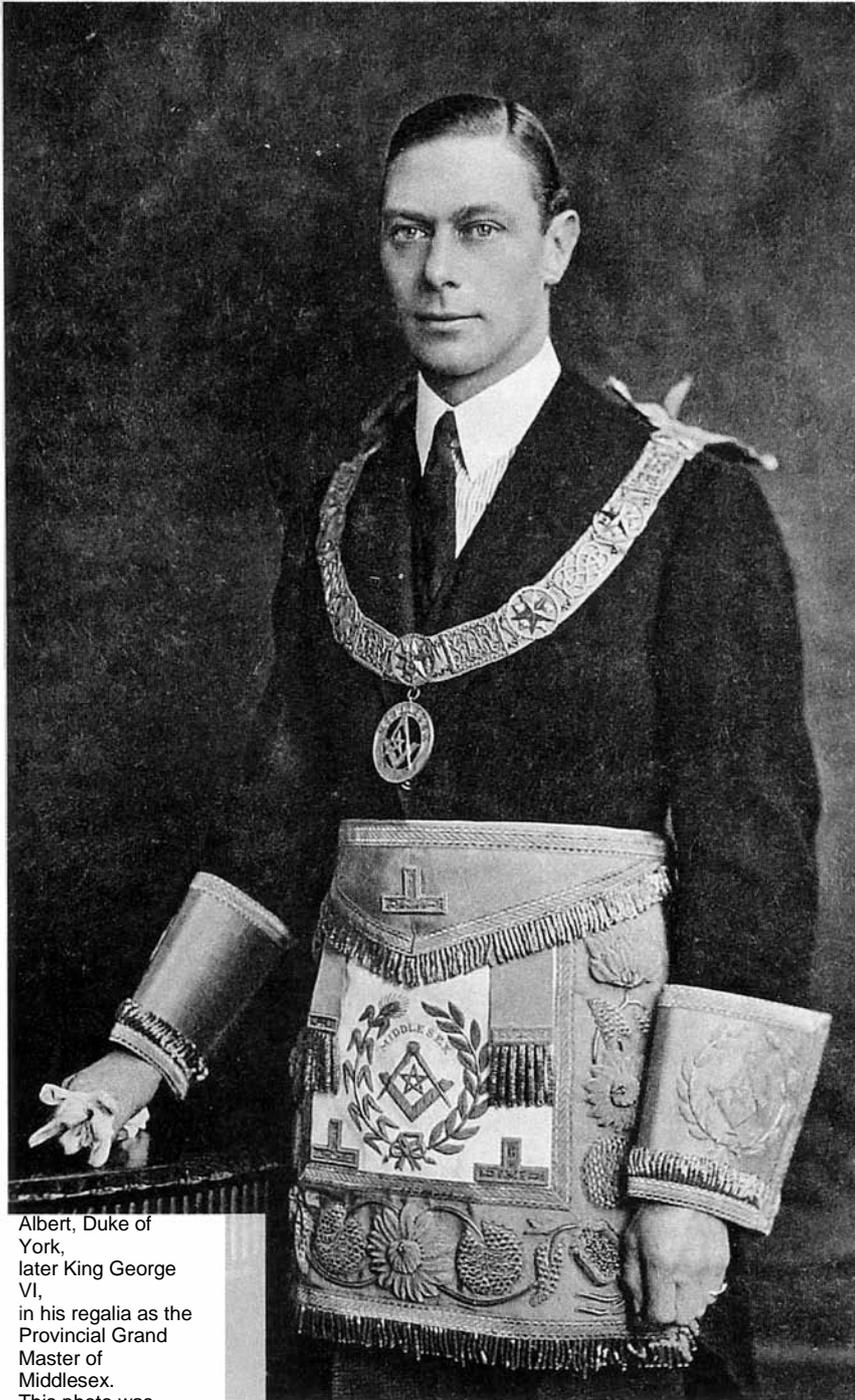


THE KING'S FREEMASONRY



Albert, Duke of York, later King George VI, in his regalia as the Provincial Grand Master of Middlesex. This photo was issued in 1931

Albert

There is no mention of Freemasonry in the Oscar-winning film about KING George VI. Paul Hooley puts us right

The King's Speech has been critically acclaimed as one of the finest motion pictures of recent years and has renewed the public's interest in, and affection for, King George VI, who reigned from 1936 to 1952.

The film, which chronicles the constitutional crisis created by Edward VIII's abdication and George's struggle to overcome his pronounced stammer, focuses on the moving relationship between the King and speech therapist Lionel Logue, which had such a happy ending.

What the film does not mention, however, is that both men were members of the Craft; or that the King believed Freemasonry had also helped him overcome his disability - which rarely surfaced whenever he performed masonic ritual. Logue, who had been the Master of St George's Lodge, Western Australia, was also speech therapist to the Royal Masonic School.

KING GEORGE'S LOVE OF FREEMASONRY

Following service with the Royal Navy in the First World War, he was initiated in December 1919 into Navy Lodge, No. 2612, of which his grandfather King Edward VII had been founding Master. On that occasion he noted: 'I have always wished to become a Freemason, but owing to the war I have had no opportunity before this of joining the Craft: From that moment he became a most dedicated and active Freemason. He was invested as Duke of York in 1920 and the following year installed as permanent Master of Navy Lodge. He joined other lodges and degrees and was appointed Senior Grand Warden of The United Grand Lodge in 1923.

George V died in January 1936 and was succeeded by his eldest son Edward, who had been initiated (also in 1919) into the Household Brigade Lodge, >

'AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR, KING GEORGE WROTE, "FREEMASONRY HAS BEEN ONE OF THE STRONGEST INFLUENCES ON MY LIFE"'



Colin Firth as George VI and Geoffrey Rush as Lionel Logue in The King's Speech

See-Saw Films/The Kobal Collection

No. 2614. But before the year was out Edward had abdicated. Of the moment of change King George VI wrote, 'On entering the room I bowed to him as King ... when [he] and I said goodbye we kissed, parted as Freemasons and he bowed to me as his King:

Protocol required George to resign his masonic affiliations, however when it was suggested a new position of Past Grand Master be created especially for him, he immediately accepted, declaring, "Today the pinnacle of my masonic life has been reached:

THE VICTORY STAMPS

After the Second World War, King George wrote that 'Freemasonry has been one of the strongest influences on my life' and in collaboration with engraver Reynolds Stone helped create a postage stamp, part of the '1946 Victory Issue; which is filled with masonic symbolism.

The 3d Victory Stamp was widely praised for the 'strength and simplicity of the design: It depicts the King's head in the East, his eyes firmly fixed on illustrations of a dove carrying an olive branch (representing peace and guidance), the square and compasses (in the second degree configuration) and a trowel and bricks (the sign of a Master spreading the cement that binds mankind in brotherly love).

On the stamp the images appear in white, the colour of purity, out of purple, the colour of divinity. The three coupled illustrations are surrounded by a scrolled ribbon made up of five figure threes - sacred numbers in Freemasonry - and was the unusual positioning of the wording meant to represent two great pillars? By its name and intention, the stamp proclaimed victory over evil, yet by its appearance it expressed compassion and hope.

King George VI once stated, "The world today does



The 3d Victory Stamp featuring masonic symbolism and issued in 1946

require spiritual and moral regeneration. I have no doubt, after many years as a member of our Order, that Freemasonry can play a most important part in this vital need:

The Victory Stamp captured those words in a graphic representation that also expressed the King's belief that the building of a new and better world could best be achieved by adhering to the principles of the square and compasses.

MAINTAINING VALUES

He reinforced those thoughts in 1948 in an address he gave to Grand Lodge: 'I believe that a determination to maintain the values which have been the rock upon which the masonic structure has stood firm against the storms of the past is the only policy which can be pursued in the future. I think that warning needs emphasising today, when men, sometimes swayed by sentimentality or an indiscriminate tolerance, are apt to overlook the lessons of the past. I cannot better impress this upon you than by quoting from the book on which we have all taken our masonic obligations: "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set:" Q