

## John Charles BIGGS (1849-1898)

### *1851 Census 100 Haberdasher Walk, St John Hoxton, Shoreditch*

John Walter BIGGS	Head	23yrs	Journeyman bookseller	b St Lukes, Middlesex
Elizabeth Sarah BIGGS	Wife	23yrs		b St Lukes, Middlesex
John Charles BIGGS	Son	2yrs		b Cripplegate City
Alfred Walter BIGGS	Son	3 months		b Shoreditch, Middlesex
Allen JAYNSON?	Servt	14yrs	House servant	b High Wycombe, Berkshire

### *1861 Census Pring... Uxbridge, Middlesex*

John W. BIGGS	Head	32yrs	Cabinet maker employing 4 men	b St Lukes, Middlesex
Elizabeth BIGGS	Wife	33yrs		b St Lukes, Middlesex
John C. BIGGS	Son	12yrs	Scholar	b Cripplegate, Middlesex
Elizabeth A. BIGGS	Dau	5yrs	Scholar	b Hoxton, Middlesex
Ruth M. BIGGS	Dau	5yrs	Scholar	b Uxbridge, Middlesex
Henry W. BIGGS	Son	3yrs		b Uxbridge, Middlesex
Alice E. BIGGS	Dau	6 months		b Uxbridge, Middlesex
Susannah GRIMSHAW	Servt	21yrs	[unmarried]	b Uxbridge, Middlesex

### *1871 Census 8 West St, Gravesend, Kent*

John W. BIGGS	Head	42yrs	Oil & Colour Dealer	b St Lukes, Middlesex
Elizth Sarah BIGGS	Wife	43yrs		b St Lukes, Middlesex
John Chas. BIGGS	Son	22yrs	Oilman's shopman [unmarried]	b Cripplegate, Middlesex
Elizabeth A. BIGGS	Dau	19yrs	[unmarried]	b Hoxton, Middlesex
Ruth Mary BIGGS	Dau	15yrs		b Uxbridge, Middlesex
Alice Emma BIGGS	Dau	10yrs	Scholar	b Uxbridge, Middlesex
Albert Thos. BIGGS	Son	9yrs	Scholar	b Uxbridge, Middlesex
Joseph E. BIGGS	Son	6yrs	Scholar	b Uxbridge, Middlesex
Mary A. S. BIGGS	Dau	2yrs		b Gravesend, Kent

### *Marriage Register Saint George's Church, Gravesend*

No.334 John Charles Biggs, full age, bachelor, oilman of Gravesend, son of John Walter Biggs, oilman and Emily Hansford, full age, spinster of Gravesend, daughter of Daniel Hansford, gardener were married after Banns 29 April 1873. Both parties signed the register. Witnesses John Walter Biggs, John William Tidby and Elizabeth Ann Biggs.

*Register of Contributions, United Grand Lodge of England Freemason Membership Register – No.77/91 Lodge of Freedom, Gravesend*  
John Charles Biggs, aged 25yrs, Grocer, Gravesend – joined 16 Mar 1874; passed 20 Apr 1874; raised 18 May 1874; certificate 03 Nov 1874

*Register of Contributions, United Grand Lodge of England Freemason Membership Register – No.709 Lodge of Sympathy, Gravesend*  
John Charles Biggs – joined 24 Aug 1877; from Lodge 77, Colorman, Gravesend

*Baptism Register Saint George's Church, Gravesend – Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre – City Ark website*  
No.290 05 Sep 1875 Emily Frances Biggs daughter of John Charles and Emily Biggs, West Street – Oil and colour man  
No.487 13 May 1877 Charles Walter Biggs son of John Charles and Emily Biggs, West Street – Oilman  
No.699 02 Feb 1879 Henry Alfred Biggs son of John Charles and Emily Biggs, West Street – Oil and colour man  
No.862 18 Jul 1880 William Sydney Biggs son of John Charles and Emily Biggs, West Street – Oil and colour man

*The Freemason's Chronicle 19 Mar 1881 page 198 St. John's, No.1343*

The Installation meeting of this thoroughly genial and worthy and worshipful Lodge of Freemasons was held on Tuesday, the 15<sup>th</sup> instant, at the King's Arms Hotel, Grays, Essex. Bro. F. J. Ash W.M. presided, and was numerously supported by his Officers and the members, as well as by the following visitors, namely, Bros. T. J. Ralling Prov. Grand Secretary, A. Lucking Prov D.C., and James Eltham Prov. G. Purs. Essex; R. H. Blygh 1136, G. Berry W.M. 1000, E. W. Walter W.M. 554, W. Hicks 483, G. Glasscock 1817, **J. C. Biggs S.W. 77**, H. Mills 257, W. W. Morgan Sec. 211, and J. C. Minchin 972...

*1881 Census 9 West St, Gravesend, Kent*

John C. BIGGS	Head	32yrs	Oil and Colourman	b London
Emily BIGGS	Wife	31yrs	Oil and Colourman's wife	b Irensaca, Dorset
Emily F. BIGGS	Dau	5yrs	Scholar	b Gravesend, Kent
Charles W. BIGGS	Son	4yrs		b Gravesend, Kent
Henry A. BIGGS	Son	2yrs		b Gravesend, Kent
William S. BIGGS	Son	9 months		b Gravesend, Kent
Mary A. H. FORD	Sister-in-law	13yrs	Scholar	b Walditch, Dorset
Elizabeth MILLS		16yrs	Domestic servant	b Hunton, Kent

*1882 Kelly's Directory - Gravesend*

Biggs & Son, 8 West street; John Charles Biggs, Russian consular agent, 8 West street

*Parish Registers Saint George's Church, Gravesend – Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre – City Ark website*

Baptism No.1176	04 Feb 1883	Albert Hansford Biggs	son of John Charles and Emily Biggs, West Street – Oilman
Burial No.347	09 May 1883	Albert Hansford Biggs	West Street, Gravesend – aged 5 months
Burial No.491	16 Oct 1883	William Sydney Biggs	West Street, Gravesend – aged 3 years
Baptism No.1448	01 Feb 1885	Alice Mary Biggs	daughter of John Charles and Emily Biggs, West Street – Oil and colour man
Baptism No.1938	01 Oct 1888	Victor George Biggs	son of John Charles and Emily Biggs, West Street – Oilman
Burial No.598	31 Oct 1888	Victor George Biggs	West Street, Gravesend – aged 2 months

*North West Kent Burial Transcription – findmypast*

Albert Hansford Biggs of West Street was buried 09 May 1883 at the Gravesend Municipal Cemetery aged 5 months  
 William Sydney Biggs of West Street was buried 16 Oct 1883 at the Gravesend Municipal Cemetery aged 3 years  
 Victor George Biggs of West Street was buried 31 Oct 1888 at the Gravesend Municipal Cemetery – aged 2 months

*The Freemason's Chronicle 14 Jul 1888 Provincial Grand Lodge of Kent*

The annual meeting of this Provincial Grand Lodge was held on Wednesday, the 27<sup>th</sup> ult., at Sittingborne, under the presidency of the R.W. Bro. Earl Amherst P.G.M., who was assisted by Bro. James Smith Eastes D.P.G.M., and a number of brethren representing the whole of the Lodges in the Province... The following brethren were then appointed Provincial Grand Officers for the ensuing year:- ... J. C. Biggs P.M. 77 – Director of Ceremonies...

*1891 Census 8 & 9 West St, Gravesend, Kent*

John C. BIGGS	Head	42yrs	Oil Colourman	b Kingsland, London
Emily BIGGS	Wife	41yrs		b Bridport, Dorset
Emily F. BIGGS	Dau	15yrs	Music teacher	b Gravesend, Kent
Charles W. BIGGS	Son	14yrs	Scholar	b Gravesend, Kent
Henry A. BIGGS	Son	12yrs	Scholar	b Gravesend, Kent
Alice M. BIGGS	Dau	6yrs	Scholar	b Gravesend, Kent
Elizabeth A. FRETTE		15yrs	General servant [single]	b Corringham, Essex

*1891 Kelly's Directory of Kent, Surrey & Sussex*

Oil Merchants: Biggs & Son, 8 & 9 West Street, Gravesend, Kent; John Charles Biggs, Russian consular agent, 8 West St, Gravesend

*The Freemason's Chronicle 21 Mar 1891 page 191 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

A Good evening's work awaited the Master of this ancient Lodge at the usual monthly meeting, last Monday, when a large muster of the brethren and visitors assembled at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, to witness the ceremonies. The W.M. Bro. Frank Hitchens presided, and was supported by Bros. R. J. Beamish I.M, G. F. Newman P.M., Henry Doughty P.M., T. G. Sandford P.M., W. E. Hollingum P.M., **J. C. Biggs P.M.**, E. W. Robins P.M., - Solomon S.W., Rev Augustus Jackson J.W. and Chaplain, W. H. Hodger I.G., G. Masters, W. H. Loft, Buckle, Mason, W. L. Bone, Fowle, Lygo, Orilton, Cooper, and a number of brethren from adjacent lodges. The Lodge having been opened and the minutes of the last meeting confirmed, the ballot was taken for Mr Joseph Davis, which having proved unanimous, that gentleman was brought before the Lodge and duly initiated into Freemasonry. Bro. William Parker answered the usual questions, was entrusted and retired. The Lodge was opened in the second degree when Bro. Parker was passed to the degree of Fellow Craft. Subsequently Bro. John Solomon, having proved his proficiency, was raised to the sublime degree. The first two ceremonies were most impressively worked by the W.M., and the last by Bro. R. J. Beamish P.M. The W.M. drew attention to the success of the recent Festival in connection with the Benevolent Institution, when £15,243 were raised, and the Province of Kent headed the list with £3,493. He also stated that this result met with the hearty approval of their P.G.M. Bro. Earl Amherst, who presided on the occasion. The business of the evening being ended the Lodge was closed in perfect harmony and with solemn prayer, and the brethren adjourned to supper.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 21 Apr 1891 page 260 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

At the regular monthly meeting of this ancient Lodge, held at the "New Falcon" Hotel, Gravesend, on Monday evening, Brother John Simpson was admitting as a joining member; Bro. Joseph Davis was passed to the second degree; and Bros. William Parker and John A. Cave were raised to the degree of M.M. The W.M. Bro. Frank Hitchens performed the former ceremony, and the latter was undertaken by Bro. R. J. Beamish I.P.M., the ritual in both cases being impressively rendered. Among those present were Brothers Solomon S.W., Rev. A. Jackson J.W., **J. C. Biggs P.M. Secretary**, W. H. Hedges P.M., W. E. Hollingum P.M. Treasurer, Rackstraw, W. H. Loft, Buckle, Fowle, and several visitors, who subsequently adjourned to the pleasures of the fourth degree, when a very enjoyable evening was spent.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 16 May 1891 page 311 Pegasus Lodge, No.2205*

The installation meeting of this Lodge took place at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, last Saturday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., when Bro. the Right Hon. Charles Spencer, Lord Dungarvan P.G.M. Somerset, was duly inducted into the chair. The ceremony was admirably rendered by Bro. C. F. Matier P.M. P.G.St.B. England, and at its termination the new Master was saluted by the brethren. The following Officers were then appointed for the ensuing year:- Bros. Rev. R. Morris, LL.D., I.P.M., A. N. Clemow S.W., C. Val. Hanter J.W., C. F. Matier Treasurer, John Barnett jun. Secretary, C. W. Hurst S.D., W. Baker J.D., Parker D.C., Passmore I.G., C. H. Chauffourier P.M. and Manot P.M. Stewards, and J. Bowdell Tyler. Past Masters jewels were subsequently presented to Bro. Rev. R. Morris and Bro. S. E. Stembridge. Among those present, in addition to those above mentioned, were the following brethren:- Earl Amherst P.G.M. Kent, Lord Euston P.G.M. Norths and Hants, Col. S. H. Clerke Grand Secretary, Else Deputy P.G.M. Somerset, C. T. Elsworth P.P.G.S.W. Somerset, W. Russell P.G. Treasurer Kent, Alfred Spencer P.G. Secretary Kent, Frank Richardson P.G.D., **J. C. Biggs P.P.G.D.C. Kent**, G. R. Cobham P.M. Royal Kent Lodge of Antiquity, and many others. The banquet was held at the Old Falcon Hotel, on account of alterations at the former hostelry, and the proceedings terminated at an early hour, as most of the brethren had to return to town.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 23 Jul 1892 page 52 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

The annual festival of this ancient Lodge took place on Wednesday, the 13<sup>th</sup> inst., at the Town Hall, Gravesend, when the W.M. Bro. Joseph Solomon presided, being supported by a large number of Provincial Grand Officers, among whom were Bros. G. Adamson P.P.G.S.W., Rev. C. H. Fielding P.G. Chaplain, G. T. Green P.G.A.D.C., Edward Coste P.P.G.R., R. Fry P.P.G.S.D., Col. Joseph Hartley P.P.G.S.W. Cambridge, T. R. S. Champion P.P.G.S.D., Surgeon-General A. Knight Prescott, **J. C. Biggs P.P.G.D.C.**, Henry Doughty P.G.S.B., William Russell P.G.T., Arthur Carter P.P.G.J.D., F. Teece P.M., R. J. Beamish P.M., Frank Hitchins P.M., W. H. Hedger P.M., W. Barlow P.M., &c. Bro. James Terry P.G.S.B. Secretary of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution also attended. Bro. the Rev. Augustus Jackson, M.A., having been unanimously elected W.M. for the ensuing twelve months, was duly installed in the chair according to ancient rite by Bro. Solomon, whose rendering of the ceremony elicited the high approval of the brethren. The new Master having been saluted in the various degrees, then proceeded to appoint and invest the following brethren as his Officers for the year:- Bros. Joseph Solomon I.P.M., George Rackstraw S.W., Thomas Nettleingham J.W., T. R. S. Champion P.M. Treasurer, **J. C. Biggs P.M. Secretary**, J. A. Whitfield S.D., R. C. Fowle J.D., W. Gunn I.G., Joseph Davis Organist, F. Hitchins P.M. and Henry Shaw Directors of Ceremonies, George Masters and John Solomon Stewards, and George Martin, who has held the post for forty-seven years, as Tyler. Bro. Champion was re-appointed Charity Steward. The Lodge was then closed, and the company adjourned to the New Falcon Hotel, where the banquet was served.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 24 Dec 1892 page 404 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

The usual monthly meeting of this ancient Lodge took place at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, on Monday, the 19<sup>th</sup> inst., when the W.M., the Rev. Augustus Jackson, M.A., presided, being supported by the following brethren:- Bros. George Rackstraw S.W., Thomas Nettleingham J.W., Joseph Solomon I.P.M., Thomas Deane P.M., W. H. Hedger P.M., Frank Hitchens P.M., **J. C. Biggs P.M. Secretary**, J. A. Whitfield S.D., R. C. Fowle J.D., W. Gunn I.G., Joseph Davis Organist, G. Masters, W. H. Loft, Friar, F. W. Martin, J. Blythe, R. West, Jonas Hill, Orton Cooper, W. H. Archer, C. Groves, F. M. Lygo, &c. The Lodge having been opened in due form by Bro. Jackson, a Masonic hymn was sung by the brethren previous to the commencement of business. This pleasing innovation was introduced by Bro. Joseph Davis, and was much appreciated by the Lodge. Bro. E. B. Wilks, who was initiated at the last meeting, was passed to the degree of a Fellow Craft, the ceremony being performed by the W.M. in a highly efficient manner. On the motion of **Bro. J. C. Biggs**, it was resolved that the usual Christmas donations be voted from the funds of the Lodge to the following Charities:- Gravesend Hospital £2 2s, Public Soup Kitchen £1 1s, Breakfasts to Poor Children £1 1s, and a gratuity of ten shillings to the Tyler. This concluding the business, the Lodge was closed and the brethren adjourned to supper.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 13 May 1893 page 295 Freedom and Sympathy Lodge of Instruction*

The annual supper in connection with this Lodge of Instruction, held under the banners of the Lodge of Freedom, No.77, and the Lodge of Sympathy, No.483, was held at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, last week, when a fair number of the brethren of both Lodges assembled to enjoy a pleasant evening. Bro. J. Rackstraw S.W. 483 presided, and among others we noticed Bros Rev. A. Jackson, R. J. Beamish, **J. C. Biggs Secretary**, Joseph Davis, E. B. Wilks, J. Martin, J. Hedger, George Masters, C. Woodford, F. Hitchins, &c. Beyond the Queen and the Craft there were no toasts, but references were made to the marked improvement in the ritual that had been made by the brethren attending the Lodge of Instruction during the past year, so that the mother Lodges need never suffer from want of efficient Officers in the future. The pleasure of the evening was enhanced by some capital songs, and the brethren separated at a late hour.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 29 Jul 1893 page 53 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

The annual installation festival of this ancient Lodge, whose warrant is dated 1751, was held at the Town Hall, Gravesend, kindly placed at the disposal of the members by the Corporation, on Monday, the 17<sup>th</sup> inst., when a considerable number of brethren belonging to this and the adjacent Lodges assembled to take part in the interesting ceremony... present... **John C. Briggs P.P.G.D.C.**, ... the new Master proceeded to appoint and invest his Officers for the ensuing year, viz:- ... John C. Biggs P.M. Secretary... Bro. Champion being unfortunately absent through illness, Bros. Biggs and Hedger returned thanks in his name... Bro. J. C. Biggs responded for the Treasurer and Secretary, and said he would convey to Bro. Champion the sympathy of the brethren in his affliction...

*The Freemason's Chronicle 20 Jan 1894 page 22 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

Great regret was felt at the meeting of this Lodge, held at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst., for the absence of the W. M. Bro. George Rackstraw, through illness, and hopes were expressed for his speedy recovery. Bro. the Rev. A. Jackson, M.A., I.P.M., and P.G.C. for Kent presided, and was assisted by the following brethren:- Thomas Nettleingham S.W., J. A. Whitfield J.W., J. Willoughby Brown, J.P., P.M., Joseph Solomon P.M., Jonas Hill P.M., A. Ronaldson P.M., **J. C. Biggs P.G.D.C. Secretary**, W. H. Hedger P.M., R. J. Beamish P.M., R. C. Fowle S.D., George Masters I.G., W. Martin Org., and several other members in addition to many visiting brethren. After the Lodge had been opened Bro. Thomas Holt Sheppard, having proved his proficiency, was passed to the second degree, and Bro. J. G. Caddell was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. Three brethren were accepted as joining members; the sum of ten guineas was voted for the W.M.'s charity list, and the business of the Lodge being finished the brethren adjourned to the banquet room, where a pleasant evening was spent.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 27 Jan 1894 page 29 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

The sixth Masonic ball given under the auspices of this ancient Lodge took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January, at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, the large hall of which had been newly decorated for the occasion by Bro. John Simpson. The ball, which was given by the sanction and under the patronage of Earl Amherst P.G.M. of Kent, was very fully attended, all the available tickets having been taken up some time before the event, so that those who delayed making applications until the last moment were disappointed. Dancing commenced soon after nine o'clock to the enlivening strains of Mr F. Watson's string band, and was continued without intermission, except for a brief interval for supper, until four in the morning. A dispensation to wear Masonic clothing had been granted, and the regalia of the brethren mixed well with the pretty colours of the charming costumes worn by the ladies. All present agreed that the gathering was highly successful, a fact that was owing to the energetic efforts of the Committee, especially Bros. Rackstraw W.M. and **J. C. Biggs Secretary**. Bros. F. Hitchens P.M. and G. Masters acted as Directors of the Ceremonies.

*The Freemasons' Chronicle 21 Apr 1894 page 131 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

The year of office of the present Worshipful Master, Bro. George Rackstraw, will prove a memorable one in the history of this ancient Lodge. Soon after his installation the Member of Parliament for the Borough, Bro. Dampier Palmer, was initiated, and last Monday a large number of Brethren assembled at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, to witness the introduction of Mr E. Casper Paine, the Mayor for the present year, into the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry. Bro. Rackstraw presided, and was supported by his Officers and the following:- J. M. Longley P.M. 299 P.J.G.W. Kent, E. Coste P.M. 1314 P.P.G.R. Kent, W. Russell Prov G. T. Kent, George R. Coblam G.S. of W. Essex, W. J. Light P.M. 299 P.P.G.S. of W., **J. C. Biggs P.P.G.D.C.**, D. Bartlett P.M. 1343, J. P. White P.M. 2277, George Newman P.M. 45, C. Thomas P.M. 151, C. Lane 2404, Fred Mitchell 483, Charles C. Stephen 174, J. Montgomery I.P.M. 2444, Thomas Pallister 2421, Orlton Cooper P.M. 211, Thomas Deane P.M., F. Hitchens P.M., R. J. Beamish P.M., A. Carter P.M., Joseph Solomon P.M., F. Feece P.M. The Lodge having been regularly opened and the minutes of the last meeting confirmed, the ballot was taken for Bro. William F. Goreham, who was accepted as a Joining Member. Bro. Robert Matthews, initiated at the last meeting, was passed to the second degree. In addition to the Mayor, there were two other candidates viz., Mr Samuel Robert Macartney, a son-in-law of his Worship, and Mr Evan Davies. It is many years since three candidates (humorously referred to as "triplets") have been initiated in this Lodge at the same time, so this is another notable fact during Bro. Rackstraw's year of office. Both ceremonies were admirably rendered by the W.M. though it is to be regretted that time did not permit of the Ancient Charge being given. In our opinion the Charge should never be omitted, especially as it is referred to in the succeeding ceremony. This Lodge has long been known for its benevolence, but it is somewhat exceptional for a private Lodge to vote so large a sum as £50 to enable a member to tide over financial difficulties. The sum of three guineas was also voted to the testimonial now being raised for Bro. Alfred Spencer Grand Secretary Kent. Another candidate was proposed for initiation at the next meeting, and the business of the evening being ended the Lodge was duly closed. The Brethren then adjourned to the banquet room, where dinner was served in the usual manner by Bro. John Simpson. The customary Loyal and Masonic toasts were honoured; Bros. J. M. Longley, William Russell and E. Coste responding for the Prov. Grand Officers. In responding for "The Initiates," Bro. E. C. Paine said that he was very proud to have been introduced into the mysteries of Freemasonry, but he thought from what he had heard that evening he must have been a Mason for many years without knowing it. It would always be his duty and pleasure to assist the distressed, and he might mention that his father and grandfather were Masons. He was also thankful for the compliment paid him as Mayor, and he would always do his best for the good old town which had done so much for him. He trusted he would be proved a good Mason and a good Mayor, and considered that whoever did his best was entitled to the respect of the citizens. Cheers greeted this modest speech, which, owing to the lateness of the hour, was necessarily brief; and Bro. Rackstraw having thanked the Visitors for their attendance, and the Officers for their assistance the meeting adjourned. During the evening a telegram was received from Bro. Dampier Palmer, the Borough member, regretting that his parliamentary duties prevented him being present, but cordially congratulating Bro. Paine upon his admission into the Craft.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 23 Jun 1894 page 236 "A Spring of Acacia"*

Death has removed two prominent Freemasons from the Borough of Gravesend, who though occupying totally different positions in life were equally respected by their Brethren of the Craft. On the 8<sup>th</sup> inst., Bro. Robert Andrew Gibbons, Past Master and Treasurer of the Erasmus Wilson Lodge, No.1464, was called with painful suddenness by the Almighty Architect at his residence, Grove House, Northfleet. The deceased, who was the head of the firm of Messrs Robins and Co., cement manufacturers of Northfleet, had just returned from an inspection of the works, and was taking a cup of coffee with a friend, when, without a moment's warning, he fell lifeless to the floor. Death is attributed to diseased heart. Bro. Gibbons was in his 61<sup>st</sup> year, was Chairman of the Local Board of Health, an active manager of the Northfleet National School, a Life Governor of the Gravesend Hospital, and Chairman of the Northfleet Technical Institution Committee. He also took great interest in the National sports, being the President of the St. Botolph's Cricket Club, and a member of the New Thames Yacht Club. He was initiated into Freemasonry on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 1874, in the Lodge of Freedom, No.77, but resigned. In 1877 he was W.M. of 1464, and was appointed Prov. S.G.D. in 1890. The funeral took place at Northfleet Cemetery, being attended by the principal residents of the district, and representatives of the various local and municipal bodies. The following Brethren were also present, and placed the customary sprigs of acacia on the coffin:- E. C. Payne, mayor of Gravesend, W. Russell, P.M. and H. G. Woodford W.M. of the Erasmus Wilson, **J. C. Biggs Secretary** and Thomas Nettleingham W.M. elect of Freedom, H. Doneley P.M. Sympathy, Surgeon-General Prescott P.M. Ubique. On the following Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> inst., Bro. Edward Winter Robins was discovered dead in his bedroom, having retired on the previous evening to all appearance in his usual health. In this case an inquest was deemed necessary, and it was found that death was due to epilepsy. Bro. Robins was Secretary of the Lodge of Sympathy, No.483, and was greatly esteemed by the Brethren of the district. He was also Secretary of the Gravesend Conservative Club, and of the local Licensed Victuallers' Trade Protection Society, to which associations he was of the greatest assistance. The funeral of the deceased, who was 60 years of age, took place on Saturday last, at the Gravesend Cemetery, and was largely attended. Among the Brethren present were Bros. George Rackstraw, Arthur Ronaldson, R. J. Beamish and Joseph Davis.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 30 Jun 1894 page 243 Lodge of Recreation*

The members of the Lodge of Freedom, No.77, having formed themselves into a Lodge of Recreation, started off on Wednesday, the 13<sup>th</sup> instant, for a very pleasant outing. Leaving Gravesend at 8.45 in two special saloon carriages provided by the South Eastern Railway, the Brethren arrived at Hampton Court in due course, where they embarked on board the steam launch 'Formosa', in charge of Bro. Burgoyne of Molesey, and proceeded up the river as far as Staines, whence they returned to Castle Hotel, Hampton Court, where Bro. Mayo received them in his usual courteous and hospital manner. The highly esteemed W.M. Bro. George Rackstraw presided at the dinner, which was provided at his expense, being supported by his Officers and a large number of the Brethren, among who were the following:- E. C. Payne, Mayor of Gravesend, Thomas Nettleingham S.W. and W.M.-elect, J. A. Whitfield J.W., Fowle S.D., **J. C. Biggs P.M. and Secretary**, G. Masters, J. Solomon, Caddell and Joseph Davis, Steward, by whom the arrangements were carried out. The party returned home at a late hour after having spent a most enjoyable day.



*The Freemason's Chronicle 21 Jul 1894 page 33 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

The Annual Festival of this ancient Lodge, now entering upon the 144<sup>th</sup> year of its existence, took place on Monday, at the Town Hall, Gravesend, kindly placed at the disposal of the Brethren by the Corporation. The W.M. Bro. George Rackstraw presided, being supported by his Officers and the following Brethren:- James Terry P.G.S.B., William Russell P.G. Treasurer Kent, George R. Cobham G.S. of W. Essex, Charles Cobham G.S. of W. Durham, W. Hills P.P.G.S.W., G. T. King P.P.G.P., Thomas Deane P.P.G.S.B., W. Barlow, P.P... Organist, J. C. Biggs P.P.G.D.C. Secretary, Rev. A. Jackson Prov G.C., John Russell Prov G.D., R. J. Beamish P.A.G.D.C., Arthur W. Duggan P.M. Hong Kong, H. Hewell W.M. 1050, Vincent E. Stallon W.M. 158, C. J. D'O. Mears P.M. 299, C. B. Wasser W.M. 1424, Orlton Cooper P.M. 211, Thomas Cafferon W.M., C. R. Gramshaw P.M. 483, A. Conglisto P.M. (Italy), and a large number of visitors from the neighbouring districts. The Lodge having been duly opened, the minutes were read and confirmed, after which the Auditors' report, showing the satisfactory financial position of the Lodge, was presented and received. The W.M. then vacated the chair in favour of Bro. William Russell, who kindly undertook the Installation ceremony at the request of Bro. Rackstraw. Bro. Thomas Nettleingham having been unanimously elected at the previous meeting was presented by Bro. R. J. Beamish and signified his adherence to the Ancient Charges and Regulations. The Brethren having temporarily retired, a Board of Installation Masters, consisting of thirty-two members, was then formed, when Bro. Nettleingham was placed in the chair of King Solomon according to ancient custom, the whole ceremony, as well as the delivery of the subsequent addresses, being conducted in a manner that elicits the hearty appreciation of the assemblage. On the re-entry of the Brethren the new Master was saluted in the various degrees, and then proceeded to invest the following Officers for the year:- George Rackstraw I.P.M., James A. Whitfield S.W., R. C. Fowle J.W., T. R. S. Champion (by proxy) Treasurer, **J. C. Biggs Secretary**, Rev. A. Jackson Chaplain, W. Gunn S.I., George Masters J.D., Joseph Davis I.G., F. Hitchens D.C., John Solomon A.D.C., F. W. Martin Organist, H. R. Buckle and E. Wilks Stewards, George Martin (for the forty-ninth time) Tyler, Bro. Frank Hitchens P.M. was appointed Charity Steward for the ensuing year. The first official act of the W.M. was to invest his predecessor with the handsome Past Master's jewel voted by the Lodge, and this was accomplished with a neat eulogium of Bro. Rackstraw's many virtues, which have so thoroughly endeared him to the Brethren. This was further acknowledged by the following testimonial, illuminated on velum and beautifully framed, which was presented by his Officers of the year. This latter gift was entirely unexpected, and Bro. Rackstraw was so overcome with emotion that it was with difficulty he could respond. He, however, thanked the Brethren most sincerely for their kindly thoughts. The address was as follows:- To Bro. George Rackstraw W.M. 1893-94. Lodge of Freedom, No.77. We, the undersigned Officers of the above Lodge, on this, the expiration of your year of office as Worshipful Master, desire cordially to express our high and sincere admiration and appreciation for the kind consideration and support you have granted to us during that period. We also desire to convey to you our great esteem of the fraternal and liberal spirit in which you have directed your Lodge, and which at all times has proved your distinguishing characteristic. That the Great Architect of the Universe may grant you health and strength to be spared to us for many years is our fervent wish. Augustus Jackson I.P.M., Thomas Nettleingham S.W., J. A. Whitfield J.W., T. R. S. Champion Treasurer, J. C. Biggs Secretary, R. C. Fowle S.D., W. Gunn J.D., John Solomon I.G., F. Hitchens D.C., George Masters A.D.C., Joseph Davis Steward, Henry Buckle Assistant Steward. The Master having received the congratulations of the Visitors, the Lodge was closed in perfect harmony, and the Brethren adjourned to the New Falcon Hotel, where a sumptuous banquet was served by Bro. John Simpson, the table decorations being extremely pretty and effective. At the termination of the repast a long list of toasts was submitted, which we will abbreviate rather than report. The usual loyal sentiments were expressed and cordially re-echoed by the Brethren...

*The Freemason's Chronicle 06 Jul 1895 page 3 Church Service*

At the invitation of the Rev. Augustus Jackson, Vicar of All Saints Church, Gravesend, Provincial Grand Chaplain of Kent, a large number of Masons representing the Lodges of the district assembled last Sunday to hear a Masonic sermon by the Rev. J. E. Player P.P.G.C. Norfolk. The text was taken from I Kings vii, 13 and 14. The sermon was in every respect a most admirable one, and it is to be hoped Bro. Player will allow it to be printed and circulated among the Brethren of the Craft. The visitors proved their gratitude by contributing liberally to the collection in aid of the Church Restoration Fund. After the service the Brethren proceeded to the Vicarage, where they were regaled with refreshments, and complimentary speeches were made thanking Brother Player for his discourse and Brother Jackson for his hospitality. Among those present were Brothers William Russell Grand Treasurer of Kent, Thomas Nettlingham W.M. 77, John Russell P.G.S.D. and W.M. 1464, C. A. Paine, Mayor of Gravesend, William Hills P.G.J.D., Thomas Deane P.G.S.B., W. Barlow P.G.Org., **J. C. Biggs P.G.D.C.**, R. J. Beamish P.G.D.C., Joseph Solomon P.M., G. Rackstraw P.M., F. Hitchins P.M., J. P. Moore P.M., W. J. Hayward P.M., George Masters, J. Davis, Dr Sells, E. B. Wilks, F. Mitchell, W. Gunn, W. H. Hedges P.M., A. Coster P.G.J.D., Bowen, Axell, Austin, Mason, Swaffer, Rayner, Bridgeland, Macartney, Gates, Ross, Nash, S. Stanley, W. Stanley, H. R. Buckle, Rowlestone, E. Davis, &c.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 20 Jul 1895 page 29 Lodge of Freedom, No.77*

The original Warrant of this ancient Lodge was dated 8<sup>th</sup> June 1751, during the Grand Mastership of William, Lord Byron, when its number was 211, on the Register. Altogether it has had nine numbers granted to it. The second change was to No.148 in 1755, and in 1770 it became 118. Owing to an error in the new numeration its fourth change raised it to No.96, but altered to No.97 in the following year, at which number it remained till 1792, when it was allocated No.89. On the revision of the Roll at the Union in 1814, the Lodge became No.113; in 1832 it became No.91, and was finally altered to No.77 in 1863. The centenary warrant was granted to the Lodge in 1870. With such a record it is not surprising that the annual festival occasions no small stir in the Province, and that representatives from most of the surrounding Lodges were sent to take part in the proceedings, of last Monday, when Bro. J. A. Whitfield was installed as W.M. The Town Hall of Gravesend was placed at the disposal of the Brethren by Bro. E. Caspar Paine, mayor, who is a member of the Lodge, and was initiated therein; and a special dispensation being granted by Earl Amherst the Provincial Grand Master, the furniture was removed to the Large Hall, which formed an excellent Temple. The present and past Provincial Grand Officers were ranged upon the dais, forming an imposing body in full panoply of Masonic state, while several jewels glittered on the breasts of Brethren on the floor of the Lodge. The Worshipful Master Bro. Thomas Nettlingham opened the Lodge punctually at half-past three, and was supported by the following Brethren: Alfred Spencer P.G.S.B. Provincial Grand Secretary of Kent, James Terry P.G.Sw.B., William Russell Prov.G.Tr., R. J. Beamish P.G.D.C., J. C. Biggs P.G.D.C., G. R. Cobham G.S. of W. Essex, Joseph Hartley P.G.S.W., G. Adamson P.G.J.W., Rev. Augustus Jackson, and Rev. J. E. Player Prov. Grand Chaplains, Henry Doughty P.G.Std.Br., Thomas Deane P.G.Std.Br. Past Masters:- Joseph Solomon, George Rackstraw, W. H. Hedger, F. Teece, Orton Cooper 211, J. P. White 2402, Henry Forss 913, C. Westwood 1343, W. J. Hayward 483, J. Driscoll 1531, J. H. Roach 1527, T. T. Hogg 483, G. A. Burrell 1424. Worshipful Masters:- T. H. Lygo 483, J. G. Turner 299, W. Dawson 827, G. Munro 1424, H. Rowley 907. Bros. Stanley, Hogg and Beamish representing Scotch Lodges, also Bros. Dr Sells, Caspar Paine, W. Mills, Prior, Davis, Martin, &c... invested the following Brethren as his Officers for the year: R. C. Fowle S.W., W. Gunn J.W., George Rackstraw P.M. Treasurer, **J. C. Biggs P.G.D.C. Secretary**, Rev. Augustus Jackson, M.A., P.G.C. Chaplain, George Masters S.D., John Solomon J.D., F. W. Martin I.G., F. Hitchens P.M. D.C., Joseph Davis A.D.C., R. Matthews Organist, E. B. Wilks and A. Reid Stewards; George Martin (for the fifty-first time) was appointed Tyler. Bro. Frank Hitchens was re-appointed Charity Steward of the Lodge for the year. When investing Bro. George Martin as Tyler for the fifty-first year the W.M. said it was a circumstance quite unique in the Masonic world, and the annals of Freemasonry had no record of a similar case. He had much pleasure in handing him the

testimonial and purse of fifty sovereigns that had been subscribed by the Brethren... During the evening a capital concert was arranged by Bro. R. Matthews, in which Bros. Fred Cozens, Ceiley, Reid, and Nettlingham, and **Miss E. F. Biggs, daughter of the worthy Secretary**, took part...

*The Freemason's Chronicle 12 Oct 1895 page 156 Gordon Lodge, No.364*

The regular meeting of this Lodge was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst., at the New Falcon Hotel, Gravesend, when there were present:- Brothers Charles Cobham W.M., J. P. White P.M. 455 as I.P.M., R. J. Beamish P.M. R.M. P.P.G.S.B. as S.W., R. C. Fowle J.W., F. Hitchens S.O., E. B. Wilks S.D., G. Masters I.G., W. Barlow P.M. as M.O., J. Simpson J.O., J. Solomon Std. as J.D., and **J. C. Biggs P.M. P.P.G.S.B. as D.C.** The Lodge was in mourning for the Prov. Grand Master, and Brother George R. Cobham P.M. Sec. Votes of condolence were passed to their representatives. Bro. J. Davis, of Freedom, 77, was then advanced to the Degree by Bro. White P.M. and the charge was given by Bro. S. Des. The Brethren afterwards adjourned to a banquet, when the usual Loyal and Mark toasts were honoured.

*The Freemason's Chronicle 19 Oct 1895 page 170 Lodge of Sympathy, No.483*

A very successful installation meeting in connection with this Lodge, which is now entering upon its fifty-fourth year, was held at the Royal Clarendon Hotel, Gravesend, on Wednesday of last week... Among those present during the ceremony... J. C. Biggs P.P.G.D.C.

*UK Probate Calendar 1898*

John Charles Biggs of 74 High-street Gravesend Kent died 7 July 1898 Probate London 2 September to Emily Biggs widow. Effects £1,099 15s 11d.

*Burial Register Saint George's Church, Gravesend*

No.240 John Charles Biggs, 74 High Street, Gravesend, buried 11 July 1898 aged 49 years

*North West Kent Burial Transcription – findmypast*

John Charles Biggs of High Street was buried 11 Jul 1898 at the Gravesend Municipal Cemetery – aged 49 years

*1899 Kelly's Directory – Kent*

Biggs & Son, oil & color men, 74 High street; Biggs, John Charles, Russian consular agent, 74 High street

*1901 Census 11 Stuart Road, Gravesend, Kent*

Emily BIGGS	Head	51yrs	Oil Colour Merchant on own account [widow]	b Bridport, Dorset
Emily F. BIGGS	Dau	25yrs	Pianoforte Music Teaching [single]	b Gravesend, Kent
Charles W. BIGGS	Son	24yrs	Oil Colour Merchant [single]	b Gravesend, Kent
Henry A. BIGGS	Son	22yrs	Gas Manufacturer Engineer [single]	b Gravesend, Kent
Alice M. BIGGS	Dau	16yrs	Cashier C. C.	b Gravesend, Kent

*1903 Kelly's Directory*

Biggs & Pontifex, 74 High Street, Gravesend [Albert Thomas]; Biggs & Son, 8 West Street, Gravesend [Emily & Charles Walter]

*1911 Census 8 West Street, Gravesend, Kent (4 rooms)*

Emily BIGGS            Head    61yrs            Oil and Colour Shopkeeper [widow]            b Loders, Dorset  
Married 25yrs. Seven children. Four living. Three deceased.

*North West Kent Burial Transcription – findmypast*

Emily Biggs of 46 Waterton Avenue was buried 19 Jan 1940 at the Gravesend Municipal Cemetery – aged 89 years