

Bootle Pilgrim Lodge No1473

1874 – 1999.

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery but today is a gift”

Before reflecting on the last quarter century, it is appropriate to look back to the first 100 years to see how Bootle Lodge has grown from a firm foundation and built around it a solid framework to protect us for the future and allow us to continue to be a monument to honest Masonic endeavour.

It is difficult to imagine a picture of the village of Bootle-cum-Linacre (population 27,000) in the latter half of the 19th century. With the continuing growth of world trade and the ever expanding merchant fleet, the Liverpool dock system was soon to extend over the boundaries of the village. Its beaches disappeared and its elegant homes were replaced by business premises changing it from a pleasurable resort to a habitat of ‘ruffians, loose women and men disposed to riot and strikes’.

However, within these boundaries lived many reputable merchants, businessmen and gentlemen of character. In particular, one of these was a certain Samuel Ellis Ibbs. A gentleman by nature and an iron founder, WBro. Ibbs was a past master in both the Downshire Lodge No 594 and Toxteth Lodge No 1356.

Prior to 1874 there were only two Lodges in existence in the Bootle area, namely Fermor Hesketh Lodge No 1350 and Skelmersdale Lodge No 1380, both of which were founded in 1871. With the dramatic build up to membership, it was thought opportune to form new lodges. Subsequently at a meeting held in the Browne Cave Assembly Rooms, Bro S E Ibbs as Chairman and other Masonic brethren sent a petition to the The Grand Master, requesting a warrant of constitution. Happily the Lodge Warrant was granted naming Bro Samuel Ibbs as the first worshipful master and it was at the Molyneux Rooms on 19 February 1874 that the lodge was formally consecrated.

After the ceremony of consecration, the chair was taken by WBro. H A Alpass, PGS, and he duly installed Bro Samuel Ellis Ibbs as the first WM of Bootle Lodge No 1473.

This healthy situation relative to new members is illustrated in the May 1899 meeting of Bootle Lodge when 10 brethren were passed and 10 brethren were raised. It was on 7 February 1907 that the lodge initiated a certain Mr William Alan Gale who became a well-known character not only in Bootle but throughout West Lancashire Freemasonry. He was subsequently a founder of Litherland Lodge No 3676 and worshipful master of Bootle Lodge in 1920.

In 1933 he was instrumental in kick-starting the Bootle Masonic Temple Fund and with the assistance of the late WBro Alex Ross, PPrJGW of this lodge succeeded in raising the monies for the purchase of the original Masonic Hall in Bootle. WBro Gale’s portrait hangs proudly in the Masonic hall.

On 19 April 1974, the lodge assembled on a warm afternoon to celebrate 100 glorious years with Bro Tom Hunter as the very proud Worshipful Master, who had a delightful ‘geordie’ accent.

On that occasion the lodge was greatly honoured by the presence of the Provincial Grand Master, Bro Sir Knowles Edge, Baronet.

In 2010 Bootle Lodge No 1473 amalgamated with Pilgrim Lodge No 6207 and is now called Bootle Pilgrim Lodge. The amalgamation took place at Litherland masonic Hall when 19 members members from Pilgrim lodge moved from Ormskirk Masonic hall. The members decided to continue to use the master’s collar from Bootle Lodge for the Master of Bootle Pilgrim and to us the Master’s collar

belonging to Pilgrim Lodge for the Senior Warden of Bootle Pilgrim. It was agreed to keep Bootle Lodge's number 1473 as it was the oldest