

## **Runic Lodge No 6019**

The founding of a lodge is a serious undertaking at any time but to contemplate such an exercise when the country was involved in a global war must have been a particularly daunting task, especially when one considers the many and varied requirements which would have to be met and bearing in mind the shortage of supplies and the many controls in force at the time. The first practical step was taken at a meeting of past masters of Heysham Lodge No 4108 on 26 June, 1944.

WBro Harold Parker explained that as Heysham Lodge and Sandylands Lodge had no less than 16 candidates and 23 candidates respectively awaiting initiation it would appear there was ample scope for the formation of a new lodge. It was therefore resolved a new lodge be formed by Heysham Lodge, the founders of which should be limited to Heysham and Sandylands lodges.

WBro Harold Parker should be the first WM of the new Lodge and WBro F Clayton should be the first IPM of the new lodge.

The decision was reported to the Province and the group. And this having been done a second meeting was held on 3 July at which it was reported that the APrGM, WBro T.W Helme PSGD and the group chairman, WBro T Atkinson PAGDC had signified their approval of the enterprise.

Present at this meeting were WBro H Parker (in the chair), WBros F Clayton, G Kirkby, F E Child, C Hardy, F Bland, R Todd, J Edmonson, H Gee, J .H Beaumont and Bros J W Gregory and W Lupton. Further discussion resulted in the decision that, along with W Bros. Clayton, Kirkby and Parker, six additional past masters should be chosen as founders and the following were elected by ballot: WBros. F land, J Edmonson, H Gee, C Hardy, R Todd and F E Child.

A further resolution was adopted limiting the number of founders to maximum of 20. To the list were added Bros J W Gregory, W Lupton (Heysham) and H Brooks (Sandylands).

Invitations to join the founders were issued to Bros H E Brown, P Stocks, W Smith, A S Homas and F H Lamb (Heysham Lodge) and H Pickles and W C Swaits (Sandylands Lodge). Finally Bro H Brooks, S W of Sandylands Lodge was invited to become acting secretary to the founders until the consecration of the lodge, an appointment he graciously accepted.

The Founders at Work:

A meeting of the founders held at the Masonic Hall, Morecambe, on Friday 7 July was informed that, with the exception of Bro W Smith, all the brethren who had been invited to become founders had signified their desire to act. Details concerning the new lodge were then discussed, significant among the decisions taken being the following:

Choice of name for the Lodge to be considered later.

Annual subscription - three guineas

To apply through the Provincial Grand Secretary for permission to present a petition.

To acquaint the APrGM, the chairman of the group and the other lodges in the town of our proposals.

To apply to the Masonic Hall Committee for permission to use the rooms and furnishings.

To ask Sandylands Lodge for the loan of Collars etc.

To ask Heysham Lodge to sponsor the new lodge.

To appoint the first officers of the new lodge.

That the new lodge should meet on the second Friday of the months January to June, October, November and December, and the practice meetings be held on the first Tuesday of each of those months.

On Friday, 21 July 1944 it was decided that the new name, suggested by Bro W C Swaits and approved unanimously, be Runic Lodge.

This name is singularly appropriate for a daughter of Heysham Lodge, it also derives from the Runic Stone preserved in Heysham Church Yard. WBro F Bland kindly offered to design a badge for the lodge.

Progress continued on 11 September when the founders met to sign the petition received from the Provincial Grand Secretary on the authority of the Provincial Grand Master. Also at this meeting WBro F Bland presented his proposed design for the lodge badge. This was adopted with hearty thanks and commendation for the excellence of the design.

Friday 10 November 1944 marked several important developments. It was reported that approval had been received for the foundation of the lodge and that it would be No 6019 on the register of the United Grand Lodge of England. The consecration ceremony took place on 13 December at 2:30 pm.

The by-laws, as drafted by the sub-committee, were adopted by the founders on 28 November.

A committee was formed to interview and report on candidates. Whilst considering the admission of joining members and candidates for Initiation the view was expressed that, providing for a succession of worthy masters, numbers should be restricted "so as to secure the hope of advancement to men returning from service in H M Forces, for whom the lodge was mainly formed".

Brethren assembled on the Central Pier, Morecambe, for the consecration of Runic Lodge No 6019 on Wednesday 13 December 1944 at 2:30pm.

The consecrating officers were as follows: RtWBro. Arthur Foster, PGD, Provincial Grand Master, Installing Master RtWBro W S S Hannay, PGW, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, assisted by grand and Provincial grand officers. In addition to the founders and elected members of the lodge there were 220 visiting brethren to witness the occasion.

The deputy Provincial Grand Master, RtWBro W S S Hannay, PGW. took the chair and installed WBro Harold Parker as the first WM of Runic Lodge.

The first two candidates for initiation were proposed as follows: Rev CJ Stranks, Vicar of St Barnabas Church, Morecambe and Mr J Steel Master of Dredging Craft at Heysham Harbour.

The dreams and aspirations of a group of enthusiastic brethren, first mooted on 28 June 1944, assumed reality on 13 December that year, after months of dedicated toil and individual examples of generosity, thereby helping to overcome the shortages and restrictions of wartime conditions.

The Lodge has been honoured by having four members gaining Grand Lodge Honours:

WBro H.Parker PGD, WBro G Kirkby PGStdB, WBro G P Cousen PJGD and WBro J A Edmonson, PJGD.

WBro Parker is especially notable for service to the craft. Not only could he be called the founding father of Runic Lodge but, in addition, he served the Lancaster and District Group its representative at the Alpas Festival in 1950, as vice chairman the Group from 1952-1957 and chairman from 1957-1970.

WBro GP Cousen has held the office of WM of Runic Lodge on two occasions, in 1973/4 and 1990/1. He also held the office secretary of the group from October 1986 to May 1988, vice chairman, to 1996 and chairman 1996 to 2004.

Family connections within Runic Lodge have been, and still are prominent among its membership.

An explanation of the Runic Stone in St Peters Church, Heysham is given below:

## THE RUNIC STONE

The Angles swept over Northumbria from East to West, and in A.D. 613, at the Battle of Chester, defeated the Celtic inhabitants, who had Christianised the Strathclyde, and drove them into Snowdonia and the Lake District. One Anglian Clan occupied and settled in Heysham, forming the Ham, or Vill, of their leader Hess, which had remained in its more or less primitively picturesque condition until 1895, when the site for the formation of the Harbour was chosen, and suddenly pitchforked the area with its inhabitants into modern conditions. The Angles, who were heathens at the time of their invasion of this country, had destroyed the original church built by St. Patrick, just before he sailed for Ireland, leaving the ruin much as it stands today, and were not Christianised until after the Synod of Whitby A.D. 664. In their enthusiasm for the new

religion they first set up one of their beautiful Stone Crosses to mark the site where they would build their Church. Scarcely one of these Crosses can be found to-day as originally set up, as the flood of bigoted Puritanism which swept through the country in 1649, encouraged all kinds of irresponsible damage to what were termed monumental Idols. The Lodge has adopted for its symbol what is now left of the original Anglian Cross at Heysham - the base, and a small piece of the shaft. The Angles, used an early form of writing, the characters of which were called Rune-Staves or, less correctly, Runes, from the 7th to the 9th Century, and whilst none of these Runic Characters have actually survived on stones in Heysham to be readable, there is yet to be seen on the shaft of the Heysham Cross, the form of Interlaced Ornamentation known as Runic Knots. These characters on the Stone Cross representing the tremendous revival of Christianity in this area, have been very appropriately adopted as the symbol for Runic Lodge.

Compiled by WBro B Waterhouse in April 2009

The lodge meets at Morecambe Freemasons Hall, Derby Street, Morecambe on the second Friday in the Months of October to June. The Installation meeting is in November.