

## Warrington Lodge of Concord No.1250



An initial and very brief history

This was read at the first meeting of the Warrington Lodge of Concord No.1250 which was held on 12th September 2006.

It may appear somewhat presumptuous to refer to the History of The Warrington Lodge of Concord which has only existed since the 14th June 2006, created in the United Grand lodge, on that day, as an amalgamation of the Warrington lodges: Gilbert Greenall Lodge No.1250, St. Elphin Lodge No.3287 and Red Rose Lodge No.6007. but history it certainly has. There are already historical records for this lodge, contained within the files in front of me.

The series of events, which have culminated in us being here this evening, have their origin on 9th February 2005. W. Bro. J. F. Walker P.Pr.J.G.W. of Gilbert Greenall Lodge No.1250, wrote a letter to those lodges which use the same ritual book. These became known as the "Blue book lodges". The letter contained the dreaded A word, as in A for Amalgamation.

This was a courageous step to take; everyone had talked about the problems within their lodges, of falling numbers and increasing age profiles, but this was the first time such problems had encapsulated within a written document and distributed to the lodges for their consideration.

You have heard in the history of the individual Lodges, how growing membership lead to the formation of new lodges, it was a logical thought that in the reverse situation of falling membership, when recruits were few, that perhaps lodges should coalesce back together.

The initial meeting to discuss these issues was held on 9th March 2005, involving those "Blue book" lodges.

After an excellent and well prepared presentation by members of Gilbert Greenall lodge, the dreaded A word, Aas in Amalgamation was given it's first public airing and did not seem quite so frightening after all.

Lodges were asked to commit to the principle of amalgamation if they so wished and initial discussions began. Some did and some decided not to. It soon became apparent that Gilbert Greenall, St. Elphin and Red Rose not only had historical connections but also that there was a genuine desire to pursue the idea of an amalgamation between them. There was also a “good feeling” to the meetings between us, no more than that at this early stage ...

....and so, gradually and slowly we began to formulate policy.

Each department within the lodge was involved and the “Heads of those Departments” ...Secretaries, D. C’s, Charity Stewards & Almoners etc. met to agree a consensus of ritual and procedure.

We were all at pains to ensure the members of each lodge approved the negotiations as we proceeded, hence resolutions appeared on summonses each month, reports were presented at each meeting in each individual lodge throughout the year to ask for agreement from all, for what had been agreed, between a few. This was vital to keep the Brethren informed of what was happening on their behalf and to maintain support for the ongoing process.

The name evolved by consensus but not without some last minute hitch; there being a very old lodge named Lodge of Concord No.343, meeting in Preston, and understandably they took issue with another of the same name within West Lancashire; hence the name change to the Warrington Lodge of Concord No.1250.

The rules of amalgamation, set down by Grand and Provincial Grand lodge were poured over, interpreted, misinterpreted, guessed at and eventually complied with, after a fashion.

W. Bro. James Walker found a new friend in Arend van Duyvenbode, Provincial Deputy Grand Secretary, who was of great assistance in smoothing the passage with Provincial and Grand Lodge.

We eventually reached the point where we had, what is referred to as, a “settled will between all three lodges” and we required a firm commitment to proceed to amalgamation. This was obtained in yet another resolution within the three lodges.

We then had to present our findings to Province. We expected to be asked for a lengthy submission, written documentation and resolutions proposed and passed with numbers voting for and against; so we prepared thoroughly for this meeting.

At the meeting we were asked the following question by the Assistant Provincial Grand Master: -

“Have you reached a settled will?”

“Yes” we replied and that was it. No further information was required.

After the meeting I questioned the lack of detail required from us. The answer was simple “We are all Freemasons and if you say you have a settled will, then your word is your bond, and as fellow Freemasons, we believe you.”

..... and so we arrive to this evening, [12th June 2006], the first meeting of the Warrington Lodge of Concord No.1250.

All that has transpired is now the History of this lodge.

The negotiating committee which lead up to this point is now disbanded and the affairs of this lodge are in the hands of its' members. Success or failure, starts from tonight. I am sure we all agree that amalgamation is not an end in itself, but an opportunity to build from a more solid foundation and it is in the hands of each of us to do that.

I referred above, to the initial "good feeling" when the first meetings were held. That good feeling has permeated all our meetings since and lead to a deeper feeling of unanimity and concord. This lodge is well named! This positive attitude allowed us to have free and frank discussions, held in mutual respect and a genuine desire to consider other people's points of view, but never failing to face and address difficult issues. At no time did any individual member of any individual lodge insist on retaining (my/our/it's) individual way.

The lodge therefore has been born out of true Masonic principles and we feel genuinely that we are all of one lodge made from three:-

E PLURIBUS UNUM...from many, we are one.

We will all remember with affection our individual past and may regret that it could not continue as it was. Your mother lodge is unforgettable.

The success of this lodge depends on our individual contribution as members of one lodge and of course, this lodge, the Warrington Lodge of Concord No.1250, will become the mother lodge to those who join it from today onwards.

**J. McIntyre 2.9.2006**