

Hawkshead Lodge No 4354

Prior to the consecration of Hawkshead Lodge in 1922, several meetings took place amongst local residents of Hawkshead village who were mostly Past Masters of our mother lodge Thurston (Coniston) No. 2525. It was at the second of these meetings that it was decided the Lodge should be named after the village where its' meetings would take place, and that these would be on the third Thursday of the month, September to April inclusive, as they still do to this day.

Also at this meeting the 14 brethren present all made what were most generous donations towards the founding of the Lodge, and the princely sum of £100 was raised.



Hawkshead Market Hall

WD Heelis was elected as Worshipful Master J Walker and JL Handley as Senior and Junior Wardens respectively. A further four meetings took place to finalise all arrangements prior to the consecration of the Lodge on 23rd May 1922.

The eleven founders of the lodge were:

Wm. Dickinson Heelis PPrJGW (Cumberland & Westmoreland) a Past Master of the Ambleside Lodge, was the first Worshipful Master of the Lodge. He was by profession a solicitor, and his business is still in existence today but now known as Temple Bargh Gatey Heelis. He was related to Beatrix Potter by her marriage to his cousin.

James Walker a Past Master of the Thurston Lodge, was the first Senior Warden and was the Worshipful Master in 1923 and 1942. A local joiner, undertaker, and wheelwright, he was without doubt one of the leading lights not only of the Lodge, but also of the local community. He held the Office of Lodge Secretary for no less than 24 years, until 12 months prior to his death in 1958. He was also the Lodge's first Charity Representative.

John Lowe Handley, also a Past Master of Thurston Lodge was the first Junior Warden becoming Worshipful Master in 1925. He lived in Hawkshead and was the Headmaster of the local school.

Thomas Eastwood PPrSGD (Cheshire) a Past Master of the Lodge of St. Matthew No. 539, was the Lodge's first Treasurer.

Harry Hughes, a Past Master of Thurston Lodge, was the first IPM. He was by trade a "Waller" and ran a building and property repair business which today trades as J.M. Kellett.

George Aitchison, was the first Senior Deacon, and at the time of consecration was Ambleside Lodge's Worshipful Master. He became Worshipful Master in 1924, and served as Provincial Grand Secretary for the Province of Cumberland and Westmoreland for many years.

Harold Brocklebank, who never took office in the Lodge. He was part of the Brocklebank Shipping Line of Liverpool.

Edward Coward, was the first Junior Deacon, but never took office again.

John Crossley, who was appointed as the first Lodge Secretary, a position he held for three years. He was the Worshipful Master in 1926. He was a solicitor's clerk at the Heelis practice.

Tom Cookson, was the first Director of Ceremonies, but was never in the chair. Nelson Postlethwaite, who was the first Inner Guard but never progressed.

The Founders – Hawkshead Lodge Consecration – May 23rd 1922

J. Jennings, C. Webb, N. Postlethwaite, T. Cookson, W. Tyson, T. Huddleston, H. Dunning, J. Crossley, T. Eastwood, J. Walker, W.D. Heelis, J.L. Handley, H. Hughes, T.W. Townson

These eleven brethren are the listed founders and ten of them, together with six others were elected officers immediately after the consecration. The six others were all members of our mother lodge Thurston, and were:

Chaplain, Thomas Townson Secretary/manager of Hawkshead Co-op

Organist, James Jennings An architect from Ambleside

Tyler, T.S. Huddleston A plumber from Outgate

Steward, Wm Tyson

Steward, Charles Webb

Steward, Henry Dunning

These latter six were proposed and appointed on 23rd May, but only actually joined the lodge at the first regular meeting held on 21st September 1922. This on its own is probably quite normal, but what makes it unusual is that in between the consecration and the first regular meeting, an emergency meeting was held on 22nd June 1922. At this meeting a candidate, who had been proposed at the consecration ceremony, was balloted for, accepted, admitted and initiated. These six officers took their respective parts in the ceremony before they were actually accepted as members. The candidate, Humphrey Boddington, was the first of the lodge's initiates to reach the chair, which he did in 1931.

In those early days, the meetings of the Lodge were taken up mostly with double ceremonies or on a few occasions a double and a single ceremony, but on the 20th November 1924 a marathon took place. James Walker was in the chair in the absence of the WM, George. Aitchison who was by this time Prov. G. Sec for the province of C&W. Two brethren, James Benson, an estate agents clerk from Ambleside and Wm James McVey, a Windermere auctioneer were initiated and Wm. Robertson an Ambleside dentist and Wm. Swindells the Hawkshead Police Sergeant were both passed to the 2nd Degree.

Benson and McVey were Worshipful Master in 1936 and 37 respectively, and Benson served as Lodge secretary for seven years from 1927 to 1934. Lodge meetings were held at the Red Lion Hotel Hawkshead, at a cost of 10 guineas per year inclusive of fire, lighting and cleaning. The installations took place in the Market Hall, and in October 1935 all meetings were held there at a cost of £1 per meeting. All the Lodge furniture was brought by train to Coniston Railway station, and literally carted from there on the local coal merchant's cart to Hawkshead.

As our meetings are now held in a public room (the Hawkshead Market Hall), all our furniture has to be stowed away after every meeting, and subsequently set out again prior to the next meeting. At the November 1934 meeting it was proposed that the Lodge appoint a serving brother as Tyler, and a ballot was taken on behalf of a Wm Bownass. He was duly elected and accepted as a candidate for initiation to act as a serving brother for the appointment of Tyler.

He was initiated the following month, being passed and raised in February/March 1935. It was resolved that he should receive a gratuity of £1-17s-3d for the season 1934/35, which was to pay for his initiation fees. He received 5/- (5 shillings) per meeting for the season 1935/36 plus supper and a drink for the Tyler's toast ! He resigned in November 1947. This post was then taken up by Tom Barlow who held this office until April 1962.

We owe a lot to the early pioneers and founders who, when travel was difficult with few motorised vehicles and poor roads, provided a firm and lasting foundation for Freemasonry in Hawkshead. Beside the natural bond with our mother lodge Thurston. they also established very close links with the lodges of Ambleside and Windermere although they are in a different province. Those links are

as strong today as they were then. Thanks to our forebears the lodge has flourished for just over 75 years, and we are now eagerly looking forward to our centenary year in 2022.

Should you ever wish to visit Hawkshead lodge, you can be guaranteed a warm welcome and a Masonic night to remember.