

Lodge of Furness No 995

December 22nd 1863 stands out as a memorable day in the Furness district, for on that day the first Warrant to hold a masonic lodge in the district, was granted for a lodge in Ulverston, to be named The "Lodge of Furness" and numbered 995. Brethren who had come to live in the district, and native residents who had been "made" masons in one or other of the nearest towns where lodges were established, were thus able to gather together in their own district and hold their own ceremonies and "Prosper the Art."

The first recorded minutes of the Lodge of Furness indicates that the first meeting of the Lodge was held on 4th February 1864 in premises in Theatre Street, Ulverston, and now used as 'Harrisons' auction rooms and offices. The acting Master at this meeting was Richard Stanton, I.P.M. of the Lodge of Fortitude No. 281, Lancaster. His wardens were John Barrow S.W. and H Barber J.W. At this meeting two brethren were raised, two were passed, and there were eight proposals for initiation. With such a programme it does not seem an over-statement to record that R. Stanton, Past Master, was thanked for all his kindness and attention, in coming from Lancaster, and for his courtesy in "all the business matters the opening of the lodge had given rise to with the Lodge of Fortitude." On 25th February 1864 there were three ballots and initiations, and at this meeting the bye-laws of the Lodge of Fortitude were unanimously adopted for the Lodge of Furness. The acting W.M. at this meeting was F. Dean of the Lodge of Fortitude.

The third meeting on 3rd March 1864 covered four ballots, two separate "thirds", and four initiations. Henry Barber M.D. was duly elected as first Worshipful Master of the Lodge of Furness, and was installed according to ancient custom, and appointed his officers. Proposals followed for four joining members, a serving brother, and two others for initiation. As this was the Installation of the Lodge's first Master, it is interesting to record the names of the first officers: Lodge of Furness Banner

Viz. Worshipful Master Henry Barber Snr. Warden R. F. Case Jnr. Warden J. E. Ransome Snr. Deacon J Grundy Jnr. Deacon W Braithwaite Secretary G. B. Lawrence Treasurer G. Remington

The assistance rendered by members of Fortitude Lodge is amplified by a minute from their records, e.g. "March 9th 1864. The following minute being rather vague and of an unusual character is given "verb et lit." - "Resolved unanimously that a sum not exceeding £5. 0. 0. Be allowed to pay the Railway fee of the P.M. of this lodge on theregoing to Ulverston to assist the Brethren there to work their Lodge."

Succeeding meetings appear to have been fairly routine, though plenty of work had been done. For instance on 5th May 1864 there were seven "thirds" and four "seconds". This type of meeting was fairly general, and during the year 1864, in addition to meeting each month from March to December, there were nine emergency meetings, three of these emergencies being held in December, in addition to the regular December Lodge meeting.

Choice of persons proposed for membership shows the wide variation of occupation or profession. On 7th April 1864 there were proposed for admission two "gentlemen" and a "clogger". One of the gentlemen proposed was H W Schneider, who later did so much for Barrow, serving as its Mayor for



the years 1875-1878, and whose memory is perpetuated by the monument in Schneider Square, Barrow. His munificence was outstanding, but his masonic career with Lodge of Furness did not measure up so well. He was initiated in June, passed in July and raised in August. He became S.W. in December 1864, following which he was installed on 27th December 1865 as Worshipful Master, by Mr Hamer, Prov. Grand Treasurer. During his mastership, whilst he attended the July meeting, the chair was occupied by a past master. But at this meeting he presented a cheque for £105. "to honour a promise that he would give an amount equal to that subscribed by all the brethren of the Lodge, towards the liquidation of the debt in the lodge funds."