

Thurston Lodge No 2525

Foreword

In recording the history of the Thurston Lodge over the past one hundred years extreme difficulty was experienced in determining its origin. It appeared that no records or minutes of any meeting which took place prior to the Consecration were ever preserved, or indeed, ever made, as none were discovered.

It has always been maintained over the past fifty years at least that the sponsoring Lodge was the Lodge of Furness No. 995 with several of their Brethren as the founders. Such however has proved not to be the case as only in the months before the Centenary Celebrations was a petition discovered in the archives of the Lodge of Furness showing that the Hindpool Lodge No 1225 was the sponsoring Lodge with the majority of the founders as members of that Lodge.

Although there has been a strong attachment to the Lodge of Furness in by-gone days it has been a mystery why Hindpool Lodge was in harmony with the Thurston Lodge and why Thurston Lodge members, especially the older brethren, became members of the Abbey Chapter, the Chapter Attached to the Hindpool Lodge.

The newly discovered petition is probably the answer to the question which has been posed from time to time.



Thurston Lodge Banner

Minutes of the Consecration and the Installation of the first Worshipful Master together with the minutes of the regular Lodge meetings have been properly recorded throughout the life-time of the Lodge but it is true to say some, particularly in the early days, are brief and only contained essential information which has made it difficult to form an informative picture on an ongoing basis.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Warrant Dated 2nd July 1894 Consecrated 7th September 1894 It is not difficult to imagine the village of Coniston one hundred years ago nestled at the northern end of Coniston Lake, beneath the surrounding picturesque mountains of the Lake District none more so than "Coniston Old Man". Coniston at that time was a thriving industrial community with its mining on the adjoining "Old Man" and with several other cottage type industries providing employment for a number of the local inhabitants. The primary means of access to the village was by rail, the branch line linking Coniston to the Barrow to Workington coastal line at Foxfield. The only other means of transport, mainly to Ulverston, was by foot or horse drawn vehicle. What is more difficult to appreciate is how a group of dedicated Freemasons decided to form a Lodge in this rather geographically isolated village with limited transport facilities and often harsh weather conditions prevailing during the winter months.

One answer to the question is, of course, that several of the founders whilst residing in Coniston had their places of business in Barrow, Millom, Ulverston etc. and were also members of those Lodges, but felt it was in their best interests to establish a Lodge locally. A list of the Founders as shown in the Petition sponsored by the Hindpool Lodge No. 1225 meeting at the Masonic Hall, Barrow is as follows:

Tom Hunter Hindpool Lodge No. 1225 John Kendall Lodge of Furness No. 995 John Bell Hindpool Lodge No. 1225 Matthew Edw. Redhead Hindpool Lodge No. 1225 James D. Stamper Whitwell Lodge No. 1390 John T. Raven Whitwell Lodge No. 1390 Joseph Tyson Windermere Lodge No.

2217 Thomas Pollitt Hindpool Lodge No. 1225 John Bowness Whitwell Lodge No. 1390 Robert Shaw St. John's Lodge No. 673

By way of interest their profession or calling was varied with such occupations as :-

Civil Engineer Surgeon Registrar Painter and Decorator Quarry Manager Tailor and Draper Hatter & Hosier Boot and Shoe Manufacturer Hotel Keeper Retired Hotel Proprietor

A function, to mark the Centenary of the Thurston Lodge, happily coincided with the date of the Consecration, for on the 7th September 1894 the Lodge came into being and the 7th September 1994 – the normal monthly meeting of the Lodge – saw a celebration of one hundred years of its existence.

The first minute recorded in the minute book of the Lodge reads as follows :-"Waterhead Hotel, September 7th 1894.

Mr Simpson, Provincial Senior Grand Warden of West Lancashire having been appointed by the Right Worshipful The Provincial Grand Master, to open and Consecrate the Thurston Lodge No. 2525.

The Lodge was duly formed in the following order:

Mr Simpson Pr.S.G.W. Worshipful Master J.D. Murray P.G.T. Senior Warden G.A. Harraden P.Pr.G.T. Junior Warden W.H. Baynes P.Pr.G.C. Chaplain W. Goodacre Pr.G.S.E. P.G.S. Secretary J. Cunliff Lodge 750 Senior Deacon E.A. Myers Director of Ceremonies J. Hardwick Marsh Lodge 1730 Junior Deacon J. Slyman P.Pr.G.D.C. Lodge 1730 Inner Guard

The minute then goes on to describe in detail the Ceremony of Consecration according to Ancient Custom and with all its Ceremonial procedure following which Tom Hunter was Installed as Worshipful Master in a Board of Installed Masters.

The Worshipful Master then appointed the following brethren to their respective offices :-

J. Kendall Senior Warden J. Bell Junior Warden J. Bowness Treasurer M.E. Redhead Secretary J.D. Stamper Senior Deacon J.T. Raven Junior Deacon R. Shaw Inner Guard

The next business recorded in the minutes was the proposal for the first candidate for initiation into the Thurston Lodge. The proposal was made by R. Shaw, I.G. and seconded by the Worshipful Master, that Mr. Joseph Lund, a School Master, of Coniston, to be admitted to the Lodge. It was then proposed by R. Shaw, I.G. and seconded by J. Bell, J.W. that Mr. Edward George Woolgar, Station Master at Coniston, be admitted to the Lodge.

Greetings were received from numerous visitors following which the Lodge was closed in due and ancient form. There were 43 brethren in attendance – 25 of which were visiting brethren. The Installation Banquet then took place at the same venue, the Waterhead Hotel to conclude the inauguration of the Thurston Lodge into the Province of West Lancashire.

The first regular lodge meeting was held at the Waterhead hotel, Coniston on the first Monday in October. By way of contrast to the previous meeting there were only eight brethren present. This hotel is still in existence but is now run as a Convalescent Home.