

Victoria Lodge No 4629



The Warrant for Victoria Lodge No. 4629 was issued on the 25th February, 1924, and the Lodge was consecrated in the following October. Victoria Lodge, through its lineage, can be traced back through the Lodge of Fellowship No 3799, Widnes Lodge No. 2819 and the Lodge of Equity No. 1384 to the Lodge of Loyalty No. 86 that meet at Prescot and was formed in 1753. A diagram of the Widnes Group lodges can be found [here](#) where you can see how Victoria Lodge fits in to the group

The Lodge was named to represent the Victoria District of Widnes that existed at the time of formation and not, as widely may be thought, in the name of Queen Victoria. A further move away from association with the late queen is evidenced from the Lodge Summons when the emblem used right from the early meetings contained, as it does today, a representation of some of the jewels and ornaments used in Lodge Ceremonies including the square, level and heavy maul, laid in front of a Mason's tool bag and an decorated column.

As can be seen from the chart, other Lodges were later to take their names from areas in and around the town and so this may have been the start of that practice. However, an effigy of Queen Victoria is used on the Past Masters' Jewel and as the centrepiece to the Lodge Banner so there may have been a wish from the Lodge Founders to indicate a royal connection as Queen Victoria's eldest son, later to become Edward VII, had been such a prominent Freemason.

Seventeen of the Lodge Founders were drawn from the Lodge of Fellowship and one from the Widnes Lodge under the leadership of Dr. S. McCausland, who was to become the first Master. A local doctor, he was a significant force in Widnes Freemasonry and later became a Founder and Master of two other Lodges – St. Paul's Lodge (1934) and Appleton Lodge (1947). He was assisted and supported, of course by the other 17 Founding Members, particularly A. E. Edwards and the Rev. J. E. Edwardson, who equally provided inspiration and stability to the foundling Lodge. The strength of those early days led to the solidarity, unity and concord that has been maintained for more than 80 years.

Mention is also be made in the early minutes to Dr. Creighton Hutchinson who, even though not Founding Member of Victoria Lodge, added his own support and encouragement to the start of the new Lodge. He was an eager and powerful friend of the new lodge who, because of his diligence and assistance, was made the first Honorary Member of Victoria Lodge. Dr. Hutchinson was a local physician who spent his life helping Widnes people and, following his death in 1927, local people contributed to a lasting memorial. A bust of W. Bro. Hutchinson can still be seen in the gardens on Victoria Promenade.

Victoria Lodge has flourished over the years and many members have been sons, brothers or other family members associated with the original 18 Founders. Today, there remains a direct connection with the first days of Victoria Lodge through Arnold G. Clark whose father was a Founder Member in 1924. Looking through the minutes of meetings, membership has remained strong with, at times more than 60 members, and on several occasions double

ceremonies were held to cater of the number of applications to join. It was often referred to as a Lodge of shopkeepers as the regular meeting was, andf still is, held on a Thursday, the day that was traditionally half day closing in Widnes.

One unusual event happened in 1947 when the Master of Victoria Lodge, Richard Kirby, was asked to perform a Ceremony Raising on behalf of a Lodge in the United States for an American Serviceman who was stationed at the United States Army Base at Burtonwood. Four Victoria Lodge members have been prominent in Widnes Freemasonry and have shouldered the responsibilities as Chairman of the Widnes Group of Lodges – Dr. S. McCausland, R. Clibborn , A. Morris and, latterly, A. J. Tallon.

Today, with a membership is 46, and Victoria Lodge remains one of the strongest Lodges in numerical terms in the Widnes Group of Lodges. Whilst other Lodges have seen a drop in membership and a shortage of candidates, Victoria Lodge continues to enjoy new members and maintain a relatively high membership. Even in modern times with a far greater commitment required for family and work responsibilities, candidates are still looking to join and we have recently been encouraged with younger members becoming members of our Lodge. This is a welcoming development and one we hope to build on.

David Wilkinson