

## A brief history of Goodwill Lodge No 3896



On 26 February 1919 Goodwill Lodge was consecrated, the meeting being held at the Central Hotel, which no longer exists, but was located at or about the traffic lights on Victoria Road, Widnes.

There were 20 founders as follows: J E Edwardson, J H Cleal, J Williams, F Sherratt, J C Evans, J A Squires, C F Hill, W E Ashton, H Watson, H H Williams, J Laws, J Hardman, F Taylor, S Welding, G P Wright, R Wright, J H Crabtree, W C Jones, E Hartland and S Hartland.

The first Worshipful Master was J E Edwardson who was a prominent citizen in Widnes and also a member of several other lodges in the Widnes Group.

The Goodwill Lodge is a daughter lodge of the Lodge of Equity and Appleton No 1384. It was formed due to the extremely strong membership of the mother lodge and the long lists of men wishing to become Freemasons at the time. The decision to form a new lodge in Widnes at that particular time after the horrors of the Great War and the employment difficulties that occurred shortly thereafter is also very interesting. It is perhaps indicative of the strong need to help others by forming into fraternal organisations at that difficult time.

In the 1920's the lodge continued to meet at the Central Hotel and then moved to St Paul's Rooms (also known as the Windsor rooms) until 10 June 1959 when the lodge changed its meeting place to the newly built Freemasons Hall on Kingsway and it has met there up to the present day. The present membership is 36 and consists of a wide range of ages and occupations. The lodge boasts a strong base of family members also being members of the lodge.

It is not known where the lodge name originates from but the emblem on its founders jewel would seem to indicate that the founders obviously felt that a name based on the Masonic principles of friendship and brotherly love was most appropriate with the handshake being the universally acknowledged symbol of that principle.

It seems strange that with such a simple name there are only four other lodges under the United Grand Lodge of England with the same name, in Essex, London, the Province of East Lancashire and South Africa. Goodwill Lodge No 3896 has developed over recent years a strong relationship with its namesake Lodge No 7904

in Chingford, Essex. This relationship was rekindled in 2013 when David Redhead was invited to the golden jubilee celebration of Goodwill Lodge No 7904 in June of that year in recognition of the fact that the WM of Goodwill Lodge No 3896 had been present at the consecration of 7904 .That brother was the late Harry Hindley, a brother well known and remembered by many Widnes Freemasons.

Goodwill Lodge has been successful in recruiting new members into its ranks over the years but in 2005 it was approached by members of Wilmere Lodge No 8472 in Widnes to consider an amalgamation of the two lodges due to the fact that the Wilmere Lodge was struggling to attract new members. This was agreed and the lodges were formally amalgamated in December 2005 and a formal ceremony of amalgamation was held in January 2006 in the presence of the then Provincial Grand Master Colin Penty Wright. This amalgamation has been highly successful and the lodge is going from strength to strength. One of the strengths of the lodge has been the strong family ties within its members which include fathers and sons, brothers in law etc.

More recently Bold Lodge No 7583 in the Widnes Group had to surrender its warrant and seven of its members joined Goodwill Lodge so that they could continue their membership of Freemasonry and they have been warmly welcomed and it is hoped that the members can continue to enjoy their Freemasonry in the true spirit of 'Brotherly Love and Friendship' which are the basis of the lodge emblem.