



On entering the temple at the Masonic Hall in St Helens (No 2 Hall Street, on the corner of Hall Street and George Street) looking to the right of the tyler's door you will see a large picture of P G Jeffrey on his appointment as Provincial Grand Warden of the Province of West Lancashire, who was then a past master of Ionic Lodge No 2405.

You may consider the mention of a past master of Ionic Lodge a strange way to commence a history of Lodge of Hospitality but it was WBro Jeffrey who in July 1927 instigated the circulation of a letter among the then four lodges meeting at St Helens, Loyalty 897, Ionic 2405, St Helens 4121 and Integrity 4151. His letter requested brethren "Brethren who are keen and enthusiastic and who desired to make progress in the fraternity to meet and discuss the formation of a new lodge."

As a result of that letter 14 brethren attended a preliminary meeting on Friday 7 October 1927 at Hall Street and the minutes of that meeting indicate that it was considered that a new lodge should be formed 'to relieve pressure on the other lodges particularly St Helens Lodge of Loyalty No 897 and Ionic Lodfge No 2405'. The minutes further state that: "an aggregate of over 200 members from lodges had not yet attained the office of steward." The following names were suggested as possible titles for the new lodge; Equity, Friendship, Fidelity, Sincerity, Fellowship.

It must be mentioned that in 1927 the premises at Hall Street had only recently been occupied as a Masonic Hall having previously been a paint warehouse, and a considerable amount of work had been undertaken especially on the domed temple. There was obviously, at that time, an air of optimism with thriving membership and enthusiasm to expand the Craft.

Subsequently, a petition was sent to Provincial Grand Lodge stating that there was at that time a total of 330 members of the four existing lodges (more than our total present membership among eight lodges meeting at St Helens in 2004) and because of a rule that no more than six initiates per year should be permitted per lodge, there was a waiting list for entry. The proposed WM of this new lodge was to be P G Jeffrey.

Those interested in the proposal for a new lodge met on Wednesday 11 July 1928 and were informed that the original five suggested names were not acceptable to Provincial Grand Lodge as they were duplicates of existing lodges. P G Jeffrey then put forward his own proposal for Lodge of Hospitality, which was carried. The fees payable were to be 15 guineas initiation, five guineas joining and two guineas subscription.

On Wednesday 27 March 1929, less than two years after the concept of a new lodge was aired, the consecration of the Lodge of Hospitality No 5074 took place at St Helens Masonic Hall. L C Bailey Provincial Grand Master of the Province of West Lancashire being the consecrating officer and Colonel S T Stephenson the Deputy

Provincial Grand Master as installing officer. At this ceremony the Provincial Grand Chaplain in his address stated: "The founders having chosen the name Hospitality, their aim should be the strengthening of the bond of union between lodges, and so there must come the inspiration of being associated with vast numbers of other Freemasons in devotion to a common purpose, crystallized in the phrase, the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness.

The records of the lodge show that after consecration, Lodge of Hospitality was particularly busy in relieving the waiting list for membership of lodges in the St Helens Group and even resorted to an emergency meeting in June 1929 (not a regular month for a meeting) to accommodate an additional ceremony and a further extra and emergency meeting in November. In addition, there were many proposals for joining and honorary membership as well as initiates. The lodge continued in this vein until the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 when Grand Lodge first decreed lodges should not meet at all. The lodge resumed its meetings in October the same year but met at varying times, 5:30pm, 6pm or 6:30 pm depending on the month of the year.

It is interesting to note that in the early years of the lodge it was customary to call an emergency meeting during weekdays at varying times to coincide with a funeral of a deceased brother. The lodge was opened and closed in the normal manner and tributes paid to departed merit. The assembled brethren attended the church or graveyard for a burial service. One such meeting was held on Thursday 28 September 1939 at 11:45 am due to the death of J Fairhurst PPrAGDC a founder. The brethren then 'repaired to Rainhill Parish Church where Rev S Bradford Vicar of Whiston conducted the Masonic funeral service'.

During the war years the lodge extended an open invitation to all Masonic servicemen staying in or visiting St Helens to attend their meetings and also considered any requests regarding a reduction in lodge fees for any brethren serving in the forces. The war years obviously caused disruption to Masonic business within the lodge, and with the flow of initiates some meetings had to resort to lectures for a brief period in 1941 after which membership surprisingly picked up again. Initiates in the 10 years between consecration and the outbreak of war totalled 37 and in the interim of the Second World War (six years) totalled 17. This flow of initiates continued after the war and it is only in recent times that a fall off has occurred.

Three of our founders, P G Jeffrey, J L Hodgson and Stanley Marsh, eventually became grand officers receiving the rank of Past Grand Deacon. Percy Augustus Shaw was initiated into Lodge of Hospitality on 9 December 1931 aged 29 years,

passed through the ranks, was master in 1948, and eventually also became a Past Grand Deacon and Assistant Provincial Grand Master in the Province of West Lancashire in 1959.

The lodge celebrated its golden jubilee (50 years) in March 1979. The DC of the lodge at that celebration was Eric Latham who was then Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies and his deputy was G H D Bellis then a past master of the Lodge of Hospitality, both of whom have also received Grand Rank. It is worthy of note that in 2004, Paul Lundy a past master of this lodge attended the 75th Anniversary and Banner Dedication Ceremony in his official capacity as Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies following in the footsteps of Eric Latham.

The Provincial Grand Deacon at the consecration of the lodge spoke of the strengthening of the bond of union between lodges as being its aim, so it would please our founders to know that in May 2003, 100 members of the Lodges of Hospitality, including many from 5074. met for a weekend festival at the Abbey Hotel at Great Malvern, Worcestershire. This was a result of Nick Plotnek and other brethren of the Lodge of Hospitality 8325 in the Province of Worcestershire in the millennium year 2000 deciding to visit all the lodges of Hospitality listed in the Masonic Year Book. On visiting 5074 in St Helens the idea of a festival weekend was conceived and it is anticipated 5074 will host a similar event in 2005. The following Lodges of Hospitality were listed on the menu sheet for the festival of 2003: 187, 1697, 5074, 6607, 7927, 8325, 8645, 9299 and No. 4 from Slovenia – surely a fitting epitaph for the founders of the Lodge of Hospitality 5074.

This short history of the Lodge of Hospitality No 5074 was written to mark the 75th anniversary of its consecration.