

Lodge of St. George



The desire to form a new lodge (which became the Lodge of St George) was first conveyed to a meeting of the past masters of Ionic Lodge No 2405 in March 1944 when they were asked to sponsor the same. The meeting resolved to give the project its support provided that more complete arrangements were submitted for approval.

There followed a meeting of prospective founders in April 1944 when 12 past masters and two wardens agreed to become founders. A further meeting in May 1944 added 12 master Masons to the original 14 following which a letter to the WM, officers and brethren of Ionic Lodge, dated 8 May 1944, formally asked that they approve the formation of a daughter lodge and recommend the favourable consideration of Grand Lodge.

Tentative approval was given at the meeting of Ionic Lodge in September 1944 and final approval was granted in November 1944.

At a meeting of the founders in October 1944, it was resolved that the name of the new lodge was to be St George and that the first WM would be J Collier (Snr) PM lodge and that H Abbott PM Lodge and T NMcIntosh PM Lodge of Hospitality should be senior and junior wardens respectively.

In February 1945, at a meeting of the founders, HO Cowper PGStdB the Chairman of the St Helens and Prescott Group of Lodges informed them that the Grand Master had been pleased to accede to the prayer to found a new lodge which would be numbered 6048. It was resolved at that meeting that the badge would be the badge of St George with the legend "Lodge of St George No 6048".

The consecration of the Lodge of St George took place on Friday 4 May 1945 at the Masonic Hall, Hall Street, St Helens at 2:30 pm. The Provincial Grand Master, Arthur Foster, having entered in procession, accompanied by his officers and officers of Grand Lodge, and taken the chair, appointed as his officers:

Installing Master: W S S Hannay PGW Dep PrGM

Senior Warden: T W Ward PrSGW

Junior Warden: J W S Warmington PrJGW

Chaplain: Rev R A Roston PrGChaplain

Secretary: E A Nicholson PGDPrGSec

Director of Ceremonies: A A Boutriller PPrSGW PrGDC

Senior Deacon: L Bailey PrSGD

Junior Deacon: F A Clark PrJGD

Sword Bearer: E Denson Pr G SwdB

Standard Bearer: S Foster Pr GStdB

Standard Bearer: A Keenan PrGStdB

Immediate Past Master: J Robinson PPrGD

Inner Guard: J Brough PPrGDC

Presenting Officer H O Cowper PGStdB

Presenting Officer: R Richardson PPrGD

There were also present:

J E Hewlett PGD APrGM

H Harrison PGD PAPrGM

P Jeffrey PGD

Together with all founders (with the exception of W A Heaton), 13 Past Provincial Grand Officers, seven masters of lodges and 51 other brethren.

The Provincial Grand Master then proceeded to consecrate the lodge, after which the Deputy Provincial Grand Master installed James Collier (Senior) as the first WM.

The address to the WM was given by T W Ward PPrSWW, that to the wardens by J W S Warmington PrJGW, and to the brethren by J E Hewlett PGD APrGM.

In considering the first few years after the consecration, it is necessary to put the position of the lodge in the context of what was happening in the world. The consecration took place on the day that the German forces in NW Europe signed their surrender at Luneburg Heath, to be effective from 5 May and Victory in Europe Day was celebrated on 8 of May 1945. Victory over Japan Day was on 15 August 1945 before the lodge held its first ordinary meeting.

Though the war was over, austerity continued and rationing only finally ended in 1953. This affected the lodge in several ways.

To buy lodge clothing would have required clothing coupons (generally under the control of and jealously guarded by the ladies) and so Ionic Lodge kindly loaned theirs until the 31 coupons necessary were acquired by the lodge members. The

clothing was finally bought in 1948 and a contribution made to Ionic Lodge to assist them in the expense of having their lodge clothing refurbished.

Another borrowing was the lodge floor cloth from the Lodge of Loyalty No 897 until Rex Winter presented one to the lodge in 1948.

Food was another problem, 'Ladies Night' was restricted to 140 persons in the early days and the reports of the allocation of tickets show that they were often oversubscribed. In 1947, the number dining was reduced to 100 to comply with the Food Restriction Order so that there had to be two classes of ticket for dining and non-dining guests.

It was about this time that the first WM of the Lodge, J Collier, Senior, was in charge of the catering at the Masonic hall and there is no doubt it took a lot of ingenuity to keep the members happy and fed. There are reports that he occasionally served 'mountain lamb', a euphemism for goat.

Despite these problems, or perhaps even because of them, the lodge continued to prosper on the well-laid foundations.

Statistics can be sterile of themselves but some numbers do serve to illustrate the fortunes of the lodge.

The lodge started in May 1945 with 26 founder members and ended the year with 38 members, nine joining members and three initiates added to the former 26. The numbers increased reasonably steadily, reaching a peak of 70 in 1968, falling to 57 in 1973, rising again to 62 in 1975 and then falling to 40 in 1990 and remaining in the lower 40s since that time.

To the end of 1994 there have been 26 founders, 112 initiates and 27 joining members, making a total of 165. Those departing total 124: 47 deceased, 64 resigned and 13 excluded.

The first Olde England Night was held after the February meeting in 1947 when the founders carried out the ceremony, and this continued until 1955 when the founders/past masters' night was changed to March and the Olde England Night to the December meeting, where it has remained ever since. The only time when there were no festivities was when W L Else was WM and on the first Wednesday in February 1952 His Majesty King George VI died. The brethren dined and then dispersed as a mark of respect.

In the early years the Lodge of Loyalty provided a choir until the lodge organist H Lowe FRCO trained up a choir from the stewards and members of the lodge. The fall in lodge membership saw the end of the choir and of late we have relied more on community singing.

The pattern has remained more or less the same though there have been changes due to ever-rising costs. At the start the stewards wore wigs and Georgian costume, church wardens' pipes and tobacco were provided, as were glasses as souvenirs often etched with the lodge badge and the date and name of the master, though shapes and sizes varied through the years.

The first Ladies' Night was held in February 1946 on a Thursday, (half day closing in St Helens) and continued on Thursdays until 1968 when it was changed to a Saturday evening in November where it has remained ever since.

In the early years there was whist as an alternative to dancing, but again due to the fall in numbers of those wishing to play this ceased.

For the first 17 years two founders, Peter Dickson and Jack Pimblett supplied red roses at Ladies Nights and installations. Peter Dickson resigned in 1962 and Pimblett continued supplying them for a further five years. Since 1968 the senior and junior wardens have supplied the roses and additionally for Olde England Night.

The saddest occasion to be recorded was in 1960 during R Grundy's year as WM. He and his wife had received their guests, dinner had been announced and they had reached their places at table when his wife suffered a heart attack and died.

Dinner dances were started in 1950 to raise money for the RMBI 1952 Festival after which they became a regular event and were held twice a year in September and March. The September dance has now unfortunately fallen by the wayside due to lack of support.

Crown green bowling has been a regular feature in June since its inception at various venues including St Helens Bowling Club to the Police Sports Ground in Bishop Road, via several public houses. For the last few years, members' ladies have been invited and this has greatly enhanced both the numbers attending and the pleasure of the evening. A silver cup, presented to Jim Ball on his retirement as director of ceremonies, was returned to the lodge by his wife after his untimely death and is now presented as the annual prize to the winner of the gentlemen's competition. A cup presented to the lodge by N Brown in memory of his wife Gladys, is presented to the ladies competition winner.

The banner dedicated to mark the golden jubilee of the lodge is a replica of the emblem used on the lodge summons since the consecration. This in itself was based on the reverse side of full sovereign coins.

It was crafted by Harry Boscoe PPrSGW of St Oswald's Lodge No 5170 of Warrington assisted by his wife Dorrie.

Harry Boscoe was a headmaster who took up banner making on his retirement and has made some 70 banners for Craft, Royal Arch and other Masonic Orders both

within and outside the Province of West Lancashire. He never took payment for either his or his wife's time or for materials, but asked that a donation to charity be made in his name. In West Lancs, this was generally to the Alpass Benevolent Institution. In this way he raised some £17,000, a truly magnificent achievement.

He also liked to carry 'HIS BANNER; at the dedication ceremonies but in the case of the Lodge of St George this was not to be. He died shortly after completing our banner and is no doubt watching our usage of from the Grand Lodge above.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The compilation of this history owes much to the dedication of the secretaries of the lodge over the years who have faithfully recorded the proceedings of both the lodge and its committees.

In addition, the father of Alan Glover PPrJGW the late W Glover PPrGD who was secretary for a short time, was a great believer in keeping his own statistics and record of events not to mention filing all his circulars, installation programmes etc. etc.

The late Stanley Marsh PGD and W Glover were very great friends so that before even joining the lodge Alan had heard tales of the early years of the lodge and these memories have been of great help in compiling this history.

Alan expressed his thanks at the conclusion of this history to the lodge committee for allowing him the honour and pleasure of writing for the brethren an outline of the heritage we hold in trust for future generations.