

SPENNYMOOR LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS No. 981

HELD AT THE MASONIC HALL, DUNDAS STREET SPENNYMOOR

IN RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST FROM THE ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER, WBro. RONALD TREVOR LYNN, PAGDC, EACH MARK LODGE IN THE PROVINCE OF DURHAM IS ASKED TO PRODUCE A POCKET HISTORY OF ITS LODGE AS A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE CENTENARY OF THE PROVINCE SINCE ITS SEPARATION FROM THE PROVINCE OF NORTHUMBERLAND TO BE CELEBRATED IN JUNE 2020.

IN THE BEGINNING

THE INSPIRATION FOR A NEW LODGE MUST BE STARTED BY A SINGLE PERSON. IN THIS INSTANCE THAT WAS WBro. FRAZER D. GLEIG, A PAST MASTER OF DORIC LODGE No. 5455. HE ALSO WAS THE PRINCIPAL PROMOTOR OF SPENNYMOOR LODGE OF RAM.

IN ADDITION TO HIMSELF HE RECRUITED A FURTHER FIFTEEN FOUNDERS CONSISTING OF FRANK PARTINGTON, JOHN ASKEW, MARK HUDSON, ERNEST CATOR, CECIL R. PROUDFOOT, ROBERT W. CRAKE, HARRY FORREST, WILLIAM BLYTHE, FREDERICK C. TAYLOR, Dr. SYDNEY V. TINSLEY, Dr. MICHAEL STEIN, Revd. R. SYDNEY BAKEWELL, FRED W. SIMPSON, SIDNEY J. SLADE AND JAMES W. COTTRELL. COMMENCING WITH FRAZER D. GLEIG A FURTHER TEN EVENTUALLY BECAME MASTERS OF THE LODGE.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

HELD JUNE 1942, WHEN IT WAS AGREED TO FORM A MARK LODGE TO BE CALLED THE SPENNYMOOR LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS, WHICH WOULD BE SPONSORED BY THE AUCKLAND MARK LODGE No, 596. SUBSEQUENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS WERE HELD, WHEN FEES WERE SET AT: ADVANCEMENT THREE GUINEAS – SUBSCRIPTION ONE GUINEA AND JOINING ONE GUINEA. THAT AUCKLAND MARK WOULD INITIALLY LOAN THEIR FURNITURE FOR THE MEETINGS. Bro. GLEIG TO DONATE THE STONES, WHICH Bro. E. ALLISON OFFERED TO ENGRAVE. THAT EACH OFFICER AGREED TO PURCHASE HIS COLLAR. AGREED THAT THE LODGE MEET SIX TIMES PER YEAR i.e. JANUARY, MARCH, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER.

MEETING VENUE

THE MEETINGS TO BE HELD AT THE MASONIC HALL, DUNDAS STREET, SPENNYMOOR. UNFORTUNATELY, AS A RESULT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR THE MASONIC HALL HAD BEEN COMMANDEERED BY THE WAR OFFICE TO HOUSE SOLDIERS RETURNING FROM FRANCE. IN THE MEANTIME, THE MEETINGS TO BE HELD AT THE WHEATSHEAF HOTEL.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE WAR THE LODGE TOOK UP RESIDENCE AT THE MASONIC HALL. IN 1966 THE LODGE TOOK UP TEMPORARY RESIDENCE AT THE FERRYHILL MASONIC HALL TO ALLOW FOR THE DEMOLITION AND RE-BUILDING OF A NEW MASONIC HALL AT DUNDAS STREET. AT THE COMPLETION OF WHICH IN 1967 THE LODGE RETURNED TO SPENNYMOOR.

FIRST TEAM OF OFFICERS

WM, F.D. GLEIG – SW, F.W. SIMPSON – JW, S.J. SLADE – MO, T. OXLEY – SO, F.C. TAYLOR – JO, E. CATOR – CHAPLAIN, Revd. R.S. BAKJEWELL – TREASURER, C.R. PROUDFOOT – Reg of MKs, Dr. S.V. TINSLEY – SECRETARY, Revd, R.S. BAKEWELL – SD, H. FORREST – JD, Dr. M. Stein – IG, R.W.R. CRAKE, TYLER, F. WORTHINGTON – IPM, M. HUDSON.

CONSECRATION

THE CONSECRATION WAS HELD AT THE MASONIC HALL, DURHAM ON THE 12TH DECEMBER 1942 IN THE PRESENCE OF THE DEPUTY GRAND MASTER, RWBro. THE Revd. CANON FREDERICK A. HALSEY, MA.

THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER FOR DURHAM, RWBro. R.W.E. DIXON, TOGETHER WITH HIS OFFICERS, CONDUCTED THE CONSECRATION. AFTERWARDS THEY WERE ADOPTED AS HONORARY MEMBERS. SIX APPLICANTS FOR ADVANCEMENT WERE ELECTED.

MARK GRAND LODGE AGREED THAT THE CONSECRATION HAVING TAKEN PLACE IN DECEMBER THE WM REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL JANUARY 1944 THAT BEING THE FIXED INSTALLATION MONTH.

Revd. Bro. F.H. BRITTON WAS THE LAST MASTER TO BE INSTALLED AT THE JANUARY MEETING IN 1955. HE CONTINUED IN OFFICE UNTIL THE NEW SUCCEEDING INSTALLATION MONTH IN MAY 1956. (THERE IS NO CLEAR INDICATION WHY IT WAS CHANGED TO MAY). NEVERTHELESS IT DID CHANGE AND REMAINS SO.

WORSHIPFUL MASTERS

THE LODGE HAS BEEN SERVED BY SIXTY THREE MASTERS COMMENCING WITH WBro. F.D. GLEIG UP TO THE CURRENT MASTER WBro. S.J. BLAIN. BECAUSE OF A SERIOUS DECLINING MEMBERSHIP SEVERAL MASTERS HAVE SERVED MORE THAN ONCE i.e. WBro. J.W. SCOTT (3) – WBro. S. FISNBURN (2) AND WBro. F. FOSTER (2), WHO WILL AGAIN BE INSTALLED IN MAY 2020.

RECORD OF PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

TREASURERS: ELEVEN STARTING WITH WBro. C.R. PROUDFOOT. CURRENT WBro. A. WEIR.

LONGEST SERVING: WBro. TOM OXLEY, THIRTY YEARS.

SECRETARY: FOURTEEN STARTING WITH Revd. R.S. BAKEWELL. CURRENT WBro. J. BULMER.
LONGEST SERVING: VWBro. WILLIAM SWIFT, FIFTEEN YEARS.

DIRECTORS OF CEREMONY: TEN STARTING WITH WBro. J.W. COTTRELL. CURRENT WBro. BRIAN
HENDERSON. LONGEST SERVING: WBro. WBro. GEORGE M. ARMSTRONG, TWENTY TWO
YEARS.

ORGANIST (A SPECIAL MENTION) WBro. RAYMOND ARMSTRONG, FIFTEEN YEARS.

HONOURS

IN ADDITION TO THE PROVINCIAL HONOUR THAT USUALLY FOLLOWS THE SERVICE OF WM
THERE WERE MANY HONOURED IN GRAND LODGE. THE MOST NOTABLE BEING VWBro. Revd.
Canon FREDERICK H. BRITTON APPOINTED GRAND CHAPLAIN AND Revd. RAYMOND THORNHILL
APPOINTED DEPUTY GRAND CHAPLAIN, WHO PRODUCED A HISTORY OF THE LODGE IN 1993.

VWBro. WILLIAM SWIFT, PGJO, PPrGSW, AND WBro. MICHAEL SPENCER BOTH SERVED AS
PROVINCIAL GRAND SECRETARY.

MEMBERSHIP

AT THE CONSECRATION THERE WERE SIX CANDIDATES PROPOSED FOR ADVANCEMENT. THE
FIRST TWO BEING MR. G.W. LEAR AND MR. W.J. SHAND. THEREAFTER, THE MEMBERSHIP GREW
IN STRENGTH PEAKING AT EIGHTY SIX IN 1980. HOWEVER, IN RECENT YEARS THE
MEMBERSHIP HAS REDUCED DRAMATICALLY TO THE CURRENT FIGURE OF TWENTY FIVE. IN
TOTAL THE LODGE HAS ADVANCED TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY CANDIDATES AND ADMITTED
EIGHT JOINING MEMBERS.

WBro. WILLIAM SWIFT HAVING BEEN ADVANCED IN 1973 IS THE LODGE'S SENIOR MEMBER.
HIS PHOTOGRAPH IS ATTACHED TO THIS PAPER.

PREPARED BY: W.Bro. J. Bulmer, PGSD, PProvGJW, Secretary. 10th February 2020.