



Lancaster & District Masonic Group News Letter

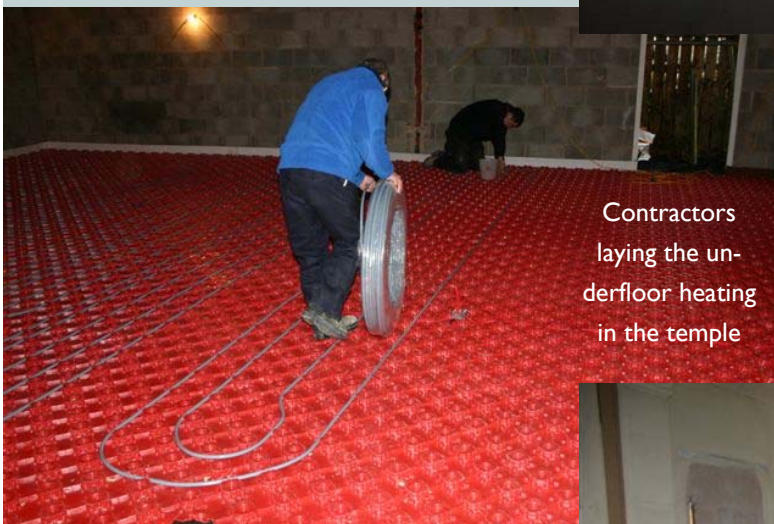
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Rowley Court Progresses

Over fifty masons attended Rowley Court on Monday the 28th April to receive a presentation on the new building by W.Bro Stuart Brackstone and W.Bro Doug Willoughby. They were also able to inspect the building for themselves and see how the work was progressing. In the presentation they were given a financial breakdown of the costs involved in the move, this detailed the process from the first decision to sell the building to the projected and budgeted shortfall of £100,000 once it is occupied. It was also revealed how this shortfall was to be covered by renting the main hall and by bar income. It was stated that the intention was to keep the running of the bar in house and only



The main hall of the building on the night of the meeting



Contractors laying the underfloor heating in the temple

to employ staff for specific events where high volume was expected. It was also announced that the decorating and final fitting of the building was not covered by the budgeted amounts and that it was intended to try to raise the sum of £20,000 to cover this by inviting donations of £500. Those donating would become patrons of the building. The £20,000 would be for the supply of materials only, it was hoped that the manpower for the job would be provided by volunteers. The omens look good for this if the

following Friday was anything to go by. At least twenty masons turned up to help with the move from Church Street to Scotforth. Instead of taking all day it was completed by 11.00 am. Further volunteers have transformed the main hall into a temporary temple as the picture opposite shows. There is still a long way to go. The temple still has scaffold in it but it is obvious that when completed the building will be a modern facility with all that is



The dining hall as it is now, set up for use as a temporary temple

needed to meet the needs of freemasonry in Lancaster. Congratulations must go to those who have put so much effort into making the move possible. They should be given all the support they need over the coming month to complete the job. SO IF YOU CAN HOLD A PAINT BRUSH YOU CAN BE OF HELP - RING DOUG (01995604191) OR STUART (01229585040)

Generosity at Pilling Lodge Installation

The last craft lodge installation in the group for this season, that of Pilling Lodge, took place on the 10th May. The principal guest was the Assistant Provincial Grand Master W.Bro Peter Hosker, and he is pictured opposite with the new Master of Pilling Lodge Bro Helm. The meeting had the benefit of the presence of one of the Provincial Deputy Directors of Ceremony W.Bro Kemp, who controlled events with his usual style and efficiency. The event was attended by almost one hundred masons, that figure being greatly exceeded at the festive board which had to be held at the Garstang Golf and Country Club due to the numbers attending.



W.Bro Hosker A.P.G.M. with W.Bro Helm

The Garstang lodges have long been noted for their generosity and Pilling again followed this tradition. At the festive board it was announced that in the year of W.Bro Rea, the installing Master, an incredible total of £4,956 had been raised and donated to various charities. The 2010 Festival received £1,600 giving Pilling Gold Patron Status. First Responders, Air Ambulance and Bryan House Children's Hospice each received £500 and Trinity Hospice received £350. Other smaller amounts went to various local charities to give the huge total.

Masonic Facts -The Festival of St John

You may have noticed that some Lodges describe their Installation Banquet as 'The Festival of St John' - Why ? There are two Festivals of St John in the church calendar - St John the Baptist, held on June 24th and St John the Evangelist, held on December 27th. Then, unless the Installation Banquet is being held on either of those dates, surely it is incorrect to describe it as 'The Festival of St John'. Where and when did this practise arise ? To discover the origins we must go back in time. Early Freemasonry had adopted St John the Baptist as their patron saint. He was a close relative of Jesus, their mothers being cousins. He was a splendid example of uprightness, square conduct and unshaken fidelity even in the face of death, accepting execution rather than betray the trust reposed in him. He was born on Midsummer's day - June 24th, when the sun, that 'great luminary of nature', reaches its highest station. It therefore seemed appropriate to hold an Annual Masonic Festival on that date. Also the first Grand Lodge of England (not to be confused with the later - United Grand Lodge of England) officially came into being on June 24th 1717 and it held its annual festival (investiture meeting) on that day for several years.

The other saint - John the Evangelist, was a fisherman's son who became one of the twelve disciples. He was also being recognised as a patron of Freemasonry, this may have been because some found it difficult to differentiate between the two - or even thought that they were the same man under different descriptions.

However, having two patron saints does have an advantage as this allowed them to celebrate two conveniently spaced annual festivals, one in midsummer and the other in midwinter.

Between 1799 and 1815 the Lodge of Fortitude used to celebrate both festivals by holding its installation on those dates and thus appointing a new Master and Officers twice per year - June 24th and December 27th. After the Union of the two Grand Lodges (Ancients and Moderns) in 1813 this practice was outlawed. Obviously, communications in those days were not as efficient as they are today but, true to form, news which Fortitude didn't want to hear travelled very slowly indeed and they continued to celebrate both St John's days by electing two Masters per year until they were brought into line in 1816.

W.Bro Peter Mason Group Chairman

Chairman's Reflections



The month of April commenced with the well attended Group Meeting held at Carnforth Masonic Hall on Monday April 6th. No doubt your Lodge Representative will have given details of what took place. If you have any concerns about Freemasonry, the Group or your Lodge/Chapter - Please ask your Group representative to raise them at the next Group Meeting.

Tuesday April 3rd was the meeting of my own Lodge at Silverdale with a very able demonstration of the ceremony of initiation undertaken by the WM - W.Bro. Eric Proctor PPrJGW and Officers of the Lodge.

Wednesday April 4th heralded the much awaited amalgamation of Rowley, Sandylands and Poulton Hall Lodges into Poulton le Sands Lodge No 1051. What a splendid occasion it was, almost like a mini Provincial Grand Lodge as so many acting officers were present. The very impressive ceremony was led by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master ably supported by members of the Provincial team. Congratulations to all who took part with my very best wishes for the future of Poulton le Sands Lodge.

Thursday April 5th marked the installation convocation of Carnforth RA Chapter No 4951, in the company of the Deputy Grand Superintendent - E.Comp. S.P.J. Reid, PGSwdB, with E.Comp. Barry Hogg, the installing Z leading the team which placed E.Comps W.N. Harwood, A.E. Procter and E Beswick in the chairs of Z, H and J respectively. My very best wishes for the coming year.

Wednesday April 11th and a splendid attendance at Warton Lodge No 8411 to celebrate the very well supported 50th Anniversary of W.Bro. Rev Cannon F Brian Oddy, PJGD's initiation into Freemasonry. The excellent celebration was conducted by the Provincial Grand Master with the Assistant Provincial Grand Master and many Grand Officers and other guests present. The speeches at the Festive Board were excellent and complimented this special occasion - Congratulations Brian not only on reaching your 50th but for your much appreciated contribution to Freemasonry in general.

Thursday April 12th at Morecambe to support the Principals of Sandylands Chapter at their installation convocation. Due to circumstances, all three Principals had been elected to carry out a second year in Office and E.Comp's E.S. Greenhalgh, C Westwell and F.H. Heath were duly proclaimed as Z, H and J for the ensuing year and proceeded to invest their Officers - Congratulations to all who took part in a most enjoyable evening with my best wishes for the ensuing year.

Tuesday April 17th and a visit to Torrisholme Lodge for another 50th Anniversary celebration. On this occasion it was to celebrate W.Bro. Dennis Butterfield, PAGDC's initiation into Freemasonry. Another well supported and most enjoyable evening presided over by the Assistant Provincial Grand Master - W.Bro. Peter Hosker, PSGD. Well done Dennis with our thanks for all you have done as a member of our Order.

Friday April 20th at Heysham Lodge with Bro. Nigel Parrish for a showing of my Power-Point presentation 'What is Freemasonry' - An aid for Lodge Mentors to assist in informing potential candidates about Freemasonry before they make the decision to join

us. A copy of this presentation will be available for all Lodges to use in presenting a uniform picture of the facts about our Order. Nigel, whose vocation, is a Management Training Officer, will eventually be available to assist Lodge Mentors with the art of 'mentoring'.

Sunday April 22nd and a visit to Crosby in Liverpool to present 2 cheques for £1000 each on behalf of the West Lancashire Masonic Charity Bowling Tournament to the Friends of the two West Lancashire based RMBI homes - Tithebarn and Eccleshome. If you every get chance to visit one or both of these excellent homes, please take the opportunity and see what Freemasonry is doing for those less fortunate than ourselves - I guarantee, what you see will make you proud to be a Freemason !

Monday April 23rd at Scorton RA Chapter to support the installation of E.Comp's. R Sherwood, W Williamson and P.D. Grisdale as Z, H and J in the company of E.Comp. I.M. Davies, PAGSoj, Asst to the Provincial Grand Principals. The installing Z E.Comp. W.E. Rowlandson is to be congratulated on leading the team which produced a very good and very well attended ceremony. My congratulations and best wishes to all.

Tuesday April 24th and off to London with my colleagues from the Furness and South Lakeland Group to attend Grand Lodge and Supreme Grand Chapter, but first a visit to South Africa Lodge No 6742 which meets in Grand Lodge and is attended by many South Africans who were to receive appointments to or promotions in Grand Rank on the following day. A most enjoyable night, with a Father initiating his son in the company of his Father - The Initiates Grandfather.

Wednesday April 25th was the Investiture meeting of Grand

Lodge, presided over by the Grand Master - HRH the Duke of Kent, in a very warm and full house to support the many brethren receiving appointments to or promotion in Grand rank. My congratulations go to W.Bro. H.R. Saunders, my colleague as Chairman of the Furness & South Lakeland Group on his promotion to Past Junior Grand Deacon.

Thursday April 26th brought the investiture meeting of Supreme Grand Chapter where I had the unbelievable honour and probably the highlight of my Masonic career by being appointed to acting rank as Assistant Grand Sojourner by the Pro 1st Grand Principal - The Marquess of Northampton. As the last Companion to receive this high appointment in our Province was in 1985, it is indeed a great honour and a great pleasure to receive it on behalf of you all and was a day I will never ever forget. Unfortunately, I am not allowed to bring my 'Chain of Office' home, which is not surprising considering its gold and of great antique value. My sincere congratulations go to my Vice Chairman - E.Comp. Phil Gardner, who received his first appointment as PGStdB - Well done Phil !

Friday April 27th and on the coach to the Cotswolds for the annual 'long weekend' with members of the Furness & South Lakeland and Lancaster & District Groups with their wives. This year after 'bacon buns and coffee' at Leyland Masonic Hall followed by a visit to Cadbury's World in Bournville, we arrived at a really superb 4 Star hotel (the best yet) in Solihull, from which outings were organised to such places as Warwick Castle and Blenheim Palace. The weather was excellent and those who attended had one of the most enjoyable weekends since the 'annual trips' started in 2000, rounding off the weekend by calling at Ironbridge for a buffet lunch on the way home. - Roll on 2008 !

Peter Mason Group Chairman



The Beginnings of Freemasonry in Lancaster and District



Where did the Founder members of the Lodge of Fortitude in 1798 come from ?

What happened to St John's No 534 which met in Lancaster in 1793 ?

Did you know that the first Royal Arch Chapter in Lancaster - Universality No 96, was constituted in 1795 ?

Did you know that the first Masonic Lodge to meet in Garstang - The Lodge of Economy No 855, was constituted in 1830 ?

What is the ceremony of 'Passing the Chair' ?

The answers to these questions and many more interesting facts are revealed in a new book researched by Peter Mason PJGD and entitled 'The beginnings of Freemasonry in Lancaster and District'. This work has been catalogued by the Grand Lodge Library and Museum and a limited number of copies are to be published for sale within the group - The book is priced at £10 per copy - All proceeds from the sale are towards the NMSF 2010 Festival.

The Last Mason To Be Passed in Church Street

Perhaps it was fitting that the last mason to go through a ceremony in the Masonic Hall at Church Street should have a name that is easy to remember. Brother Anthony Quinn was that last mason. He was passed to the second degree on the very last meeting in the building, the regular Meeting of Lancaster Castle Lodge on the 26th April. The ceremony of passing Bro Quinn was carried out by W.Bro Roger Baron a past master of the lodge who had been delegated to do so by the worshipful Master Bro Ian Albert Modley. W.Bro Baron a veteran of several second degree ceremonies gave a faultless performance. The festive board by necessity took the form of an informal buffet in the bar area, with the toasts being injected at suitable points. The circumstances different as they were, made for a relaxed and enjoyable evening. An evening that nevertheless was tinged with sadness, as the Masonic Hall Church Street was used for the last time.



A visit to Royal Forest Lodge No 401 a very good Masonic night out in our 'closed season'

A visit to Four Now't One which meets in Waddington will be arranged if enough brethren are interested in attending their meeting on Wednesday August 29th. All interested brethren should contact Tony Harrison on 01524 380000 ASAP to express their interest and reserve a place