



Wernleigh Abbey Lodge

No.6356

Historical Notes

1946-1977



Formation of the Lodge

Several Brethren belonging to the ancient Order of Free and Accepted Masons, feeling anxious that a new Lodge should be established caused the necessary petition to be prepared and signed, as required by the Book of Constitutions under the sanction of the Worshipful Master and Wardens of the Halas Abbey Lodge No. 5407, and the same was forwarded to the Right Worshipful Brother General Sir Francis Davie, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., V.L., Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Worcestershire who obtained the necessary Warrant or Charter from the Grand Lodge of England.

The petition read as follows:

“To the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the United Fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England.

We the undersigned being regularly registered Master Masons of the Lodges mentioned against our respective names, having the prosperity of the Craft at heart, are anxious to exert our best endeavours to promote and diffuse the genuine principles of the art: and, for the conveniency of our respective dwellings and other good reasons we are desirous of forming a new Lodge to be named Wernlegh Abbey Lodge.

In consequence of this desire, we pray for a Warrant of Constitution empowering us to meet as a regular Lodge at the Masonic Hall, Newfield, Halesowen, Worcestershire, on the fourth Tuesday of September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April and May and there to discharge the duties of Masonry in a constitutional manner, according to the forms of the Order and the laws of the Grand Lodge; and we have nominated and do recommend Brother Samuel Henry Davis who has served the Office of Warden in a regular Lodge to be the first Master, Brother Cecil Siviter to be the first Senior Warden and Brother Frank Latham to be the first Junior Warden of the said Lodge.

The prayer of this petition being granted, we promise strict obedience to the commands of the Grand Master and the laws and regulations of Grand Lodge.

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| S.H. Davis | Lodge 5407 | Estate Agent and Valuer |
| J.H. Wainwright | 573 | Gas Works Manager |
| H.G. Pinner | 5407 | Chartered Accountant |
| G.A. Linnicor | 5407 | Master Builder |
| Frank Latham | 5407 | Mineral Water Manufacturer |
| Harry Hughes | 5407 | Technical Engineer |
| Herbert Emery | 573 | Company Director |
| John Edward Davis | 3802 | Engineer |
| George Fowell | 4209 | Constructional Engineer |
| Albert Edward Davis | 5407 | Farmer |
| Percy Williams | 573 | Confectioner |
| Percy Victor Goodwin | 1431 | Company Director |
| William Dawson Sadler | 1911 | Barrister-at-Law |
| Cecil Alwyn Siviter | 5407 | Company Director |
| Frank Leslie Drakeley | 5407 | Company Director |
| Kenneth Frank Penny | 5407 | Steel Merchant |
| Albert Percival Bailey | 1474 | Solicitor |

We the undersigned Master and Wardens of the Halas Abbey Lodge No. 5407, meeting at the Masonic Hall, Newfield, Halesowen, Worcestershire having made full enquiries and being satisfied that the reasons given for the foundation of the proposed Lodge are adequate, hereby certify that, with the approval of a majority of Members present at a meeting held this day, this petition was recommended for the favourable consideration of the Most Worshipful Grand Master, and we further certify that notice that this petition was to be submitted for approval was given on the summons convening the said meeting."

Signed in open Lodge this ninth day of May 1945.

G.A. Linnicor,
H. Hughes,
W. Cowe,

Worshipful Master
Senior Warden
Junior Warden

The Consecration

The consecration of the Lodge took place at Halesowen on Saturday 23rd November, 1946 before "a most distinguished gathering" which included 5 grand officers, 29 provincial grand officers and 59 other brethren, in addition to the founders. In the absence of the Provincial Grand Master The Right Worshipful Brother General Sir Francis Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., V.L., Deputy Grand Master, the Consecration Ceremony was carried out by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master the Worshipful Brother Alfred Allen P.G.D. He was assisted by:-

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| W.Bro. F.L. Rose | Prov. S.G.W. | As S.W. |
| W.Bro. L.S. Adlington | Prov. J.G.W. | As J.W. |
| Bro. Rev. E.H. Downey | Prov. G. Chaplain | As Chaplain |
| W.Bro. H.V. Stanton | P.G.D., Prov. G. Sec. | As Secretary |
| W.Bro. H. Dunntoon | Prov. G.D.C. | As D.C. |
| W.Bro. J.F. Parke | P.P.G.W. | As A.D.C. |
| W.Bro. A.H. Lloyd | Prov. Ass. G. Pursuivant | As Pursuivant |

Following the Consecration Ceremony which was carried out in a most dignified and moving manner" the following officers were installed:-

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| W.M. | W.Bro. S.H. Davis | Prov. S.G.D. |
| I.P.M. | W.Bro. G.A. Linnicor | |
| S.W. | Bro. C.A. Siviter | |
| J.W. | Bro. F. Latham | |
| Treasurer | W.Bro. H.G. Pinner | |
| Secretary | Bro. F.L. Drakeley | |
| D.C. | W.Bro. J.H. Wainwright | P.P.G.D.C. |
| S.D. | Bro. H.H. Emery | |
| J.D. | Bro. G. Fowell | |
| A.D.C. | W.Bro. H. Hughes | |
| Almoner | Bro. P.V. Goodwin | |
| Ass. Secretary | Bro. K.F. Penny | |
| I.G. | Bro. J.E. Davis | |
| Stewards | Bro. P.V. Goodwin | |
| | Bro. A.P. Bailey | |
| | Bro. P. Williams | |
| | Bro. A.E. Davis | |
| | Bro. E.W. Mason | |
| Tyler | | |

The History of the Connection of Wernlegh Abbey with Halas Abbey

The following details are summarised from the Domesday Book:-

Robert de Somerie, in 1292, died seised of the Manor of Wernlegh in the County of Worcester, then held by William de Fokenham by service of one Knight's fee, valued at £6. 17. 8d. per annum. In 1308 Sir William Fokeham inherited from his father the Manor of Wernlegh with all his lands and tenements in Wernlegh, Ruggacre, Cakemore, Langley and Wallaxhall, with the Chantry of Beendhall, belonging to the Chapel of St. Katherine.

The Chapel of St. Katherine at the east end of the north aisle of Hales Owen Parish Church, is generally called the Warley Chancel.

In 1321 the last of the Someries died and his lands being divided between his two sisters, Margaret, the wife of John de Lutten, had for her share Dudley Castle, many Staffordshire Manors and the town of Dudley.

Her sister, Joan, the wife of John de Botetort, had the other moiety of the estates including the Manors of Northfield and Warley.

In 1328 a licence in Mortmain was granted to enable Joan Botetort to bestow the Manor of Werneleye upon the Abbot and Convent of Hales Owen. Twenty shillings of the rents arising from the Manor were to be distributed to the poor every year at the Abbey gate. In return for this bounty, prayers were forever to be said for the health of the soul of Lady Joan.

It is most interesting to note that within a period of 36 years – 1292-1328 there is such a wide variation of the spelling of Wernlegh.

Lodge Banner

The Lodge Banner illustrates alms being distributed by the monks to the poor from the Abbey gates. The Provincial Grand Chaplain, W.Bro. E.H. Downey during the dedication ceremony elaborated on the design chosen by the Founders.

"The beautiful design depicts that virtue which can be said to be a characteristic of every Freemason's heart – charity. In the design a tribute has been paid to antiquity, to the charitable work long ago associated with the Abbey from which the Lodge had taken its name.

It might therefore be well to bear in mind that the monks of old realised the necessity of careful organisation to promote such characteristics. The Banner will be a perpetual reminder and a challenge to the Brethren to act conformably with the sentiment enshrined in it."

W.Bro. Downey concluded his address by saying:

"May this Banner never be sullied, may it forever inspire those who look upon it to true Masonic charity, and may the donor and all who range under it, ever find peace and blessing."

Founders' Rules

The Founders' Rules were drawn up prior to the Lodge Consecration but were formally ratified:-

"At the meeting of Past Masters and Officers held on Monday 3rd March, 1947, W. Bro. H.G. Pinner proposed and W. Bro. H. Hughes seconded that the following procedure be adopted."

Procedure re Candidates.

1. The Proposer must write to the W.M. naming the Candidate and the Secunder.
2. At next Officers' Meeting both the Proposer and the Secunder must attend and report on Candidate. If the Officers approve the Candidate, the Secretary is instructed to write to the Candidate for the names and addresses of four referees (2 Masonic and 2 non-Masonic), and to write to the referees for their references.
3. At next Officers' Meeting the references are reported and if all are satisfactory and approved, two Brethren are appointed to visit the Candidate at his home. The Grand Lodge application forms are issued to the visiting Brethren for completion if they are satisfied at the end of their visit.
4. At next Officers' Meeting the visiting Brethren report and, if satisfactory, the Secretary is instructed to issue the Confidential Circular. Permission is also given for the Candidate to be proposed and seconded at the next Lodge.
5. The Candidate is balloted for at the next meeting of the Lodge, one ball excludes.
6. The Candidate is initiated at a subsequent Lodge. Under no circumstances shall a Candidate be balloted for and initiated at the same Lodge meeting.

Procedure in Lodge

1. The Warrant of the Lodge shall be framed and exhibited in front of the Secretary's desk.
2. The V.S.L. shall be opened so that the W.M. can read it and the C...s shall be placed with the P...s towards the W.M. and on his right.
3. The I.P.M. shall not salute the W.M. during the opening and closing when adjusting the C...s but shall bow to him.
4. The Lodge shall be squared on every occasion except where Emulation working directs otherwise.
5. All Brethren must stand while the Warrant is being presented to the W.M. on Installation.
6. The D.C. shall join the Deacons with his wand during the reciting and sealing of the Obligation in all Degrees.
7. The P - sign shall not be discharged until the Candidate has sealed the obligation.
8. The L...s in the third Degree shall be extinguished before the T...s report is announced by the I.G. to the J.W. in accordance with ancient Emulation working as practised in British Lodge No. 8 and others.
9. The Lodge shall always be properly closed in the third and second Degrees and never resumed unless it is the intention to re-resume in the original degree before closing.
10. The D.C. or A.D.C. shall, on retiring, proceed round the Lodge room twice before the W.M. is escorted out. On the first occasion he shall be joined by the Deacons and on the second occasion by the Wardens.

Procedure in the Dining Room

1. The Wardens shall stand during all proposals of toasts and when the W.M. is standing, unless directed otherwise by the W.M. They shall not stand during responses except when the W.M. is the responder.
2. After taking wine with the W.M. following the Masters song the Wardens shall return to their seats without turning their backs on the W.M.

At the same meeting Bro. A.P. Bailey proposed and Bro. W. Fairhurst seconded:-

Joining Members

Upon acceptance into the Lodge, joining members shall take precedence over all applicants for Initiation not initiated at that date.

Subsequence Minutes of Past Masters and Officers meetings record that:-

On Monday, 3rd March, 1952, W. Bro. S.H. Davis proposed and W. Bro. F.L. Drakeley seconded:-

Procedure in Lodge

When processing in

Tyler

D.C.

J.D. S.D.

J.W. S.W.

W.M.

Grand Lodge Officers

A.D.C.

The D.C. only will bow to the W.M. and Wardens after having escorted them to their pedestals.

When processing out

Tyler
A.D.C.

J.D. S.D.

W.M.

J.W. S.W.

Grand Lodge Officers

I.P.M. Chaplain

Provincial Grand Lodge Officers

Visitors

D.C.

Note: Deacons when forming an arch in the N.W. will stand "square".

Visitors:

Will at all times be vouched for before the Lodge is opened by the Brethren inviting them, or if this is not possible, tested by the D.C.

Squaring:

There is to be no exception to this Rule except as laid down in the Founders Proposals.

Procedure in the Dining Room

Toasts:

It is the W.M.'s prerogative only and not that of the D.C. to invite Brethren to join him in taking wine.

Notable Events taken from the Lodge Minutes

23rd November, 1946

Consecration of the Lodge with
W.Bro. S.H. Davis Prov. S.G.D. installed Master.

25th March, 1947

Right W.Bro. General Sir Francis J. Davis,
K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., V.L., Deputy
Grand Master, Provincial Grand Master.
W.Bro. Alfred Allen, P.C.D., Deputy Provincial
Grand Master.
W. Bro. Ben Marsh, J.F., A.G. STD.B., Assistant
Provincial Grand Master.
Elected Honorary Members of the Lodge.

23rd September, 1947

W.Bro. C.A. Siviter installed Master.

28th September, 1948

Bro. F. Latham installed Master.

27th September, 1949

Bro. H.H. Emery installed Master.

28th September, 1950

Bro. F.L. Draxley installed Master.

27th February, 1951

The Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master,
Right W.Bro. Ben Marsh, J.P., P.G.D., assisted by
W.Bro. Rev. E.C. Downey, P.P.G. Chaplain,
unveiled the Lodged Banner — The Banner donated
by W.Bro. G. Fowell was painted by W.Bro. E. Napier.
At the same meeting W.Bro. H.H. Emery presented
Regalia to the Lodge in the form of a set of
Officers Collars.

24th April, 1951

W.Bro. Dr. E.L. Bunting P.G.D., Deputy Provincial
Grand Master and V.W. Bro. Seth Somers, O.B.E.,
P.G. Treasurer elected Honorary Members.

27th September, 1951

W.Bro. K.F. Penny installed Master.

23rd September, 1952

Bro. J.E. Davis installed Master.

22nd September, 1953

Bro. P.V. Goodwin installed Master.

28th September, 1954

W.Bro. H.G. Pinner, J.P., P.P.G.D., installed Master.

27th September, 1955

Bro. W. Fairhurst installed Master.

25th September, 1956

W.Bro. C.A. Siviter P.P.G.D. installed Master for the
second time.

24th September, 1957

Bro. O.N. Veale installed Master.

28th October, 1958

W.Bro. H. Pugh installed Master.

25th November, 1958

W.Bro. W. Cowe P.P.G.D. elected Honorary Member.

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| 24th March, 1959 | Bye-laws altered to reduce number of meetings to seven, the September meeting being omitted. The date of the December meeting was also altered to read "the last weekday in December." |
| 27th October, 1959 | Bro. H.P. Warwick installed Master. |
| 25th October, 1960 | Bro. A.H. Haining installed Master. |
| 24th October, 1961 | Bro. H. Shipway installed Master. |
| 23rd October, 1962 | Bro. W.H. Hand installed Master. |
| 22nd October, 1963 | Bro. J. Bennett installed Master. |
| 27th October, 1964 | Bro. A.C. Gordon installed Master. |
| 23rd February, 1965 | W.Bro. J. Bennett presented an illuminated Bible to the Lodge. |
| 25th October, 1966 | Bro. A.E. Wheeler installed Master. |
| 25th April, 1967 | W.Bro. H.G. Pinner O.B.E., D.L., J.P., P.P.G.W. resigned the office of Treasurer after twenty one years. |
| 24th October, 1967 | W.Bro. W.J. Baker, P.P.G.D. installed Master. |
| 17th October, 1968 | W.Bro. H.G. Pinner, O.B.E., D.L., J.P., invested Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearer by the M.W. The Grand Master His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., A.D.C. |
| 22nd October, 1968 | Bro. A.W. Tyrrell installed Master. |
| 28th January, 1969 | W.Bro. W.J. Baker, P.P.G.D., presented Regalia to the Lodge in the form of Deacons and Director of Ceremonies Wands and a replacement set of Officers Collars. |
| 28th October, 1969 | Bro. M.E. Wallage installed Master. |
| 27th October, 1970 | Bro. L. Pearce installed Master. |
| 24th November, 1970 | W.Bro. M.E. Wallage presented a set of Working Tools to the Lodge. |
| 23rd October, 1971 | Bro. J.G. Bennett installed Master. |
| 24th October, 1972 | Bro. C.E. Johnson installed Master. |
| 27th November, 1973 | Bro. C. Whitehouse installed Master. |
| 22nd October, 1974 | Bro. H. Mole installed Master. |
| 28th October, 1975 | Bro. T.G. Gilmore installed Master. |
| 26th October, 1976 | Bro. H.W. Green installed Master. |
| 25th October, 1977 | W.Bro. M.E. Wallage P.P.G.D. installed Master for the second time. |