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**HISTORY OF OLD DUDLEIAN LODGE NO. 6734**

**FIRST FIFTY YEARS**

**BY**

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**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL**

A short history of Dudley Grammar School was written by the Headmaster, Hugh Watson in 1926 to coincide with the opening of the Hugh Watson wing. This book was enlarged and revised in April 1962 in commemoration of the Quarter Centenary of the school by the then Headmaster, D.C. Temple, who later became the first initiate of the Lodge. A copy of the book can be found in the archives of the Lodge. Briefly, it is to Richard Foley the Ironmaster that credit must be given for initiating of the proceedings by which land for the building of the school was recovered and for building the new school-house. Richard Foley is by tradition credited with having introduced the nail-making industry into Dudley. He was known in Black Country folklore as "fiddler Foley" because he once disguised himself as an itinerant fiddler, who travelled in Sweden and Germany to acquire the secrets of nail-making although later research has cast doubts on this story.

The original site of Dudley Grammar School was next to St. Edmunds Church Dudley (known locally as "Bottom Church"). The Lodge presented a brass plaque to the Church which reads :-

"Dudley Grammar School

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Originally adjoined the Church

1562

Old Dudleians Lodge 6734"

The first known Headmaster of Dudley Grammar School appointed by Richard Foley in 1638 was Richard Baxter, who later became the celebrated Puritan divine and one of the best known men in England. His fine Hymn "Ye Holy Angels Bright" was adopted as the school hymn and sung at the beginning and end of each term, as well as on such formal occasions as the Annual Prize Day. However, in the Old Dudleians Lodge at every meeting after the visitors toast we still sing the original school song known as "The Dudley Chorus" with music by J. Firstbrook and words by Hugh Watson. \*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the school did encounter some financial problems, with a reduction in the number of pupils caused mainly by poor accommodation, firstly at Queens Cross, then Wolverhampton Street and finally High Street, Dudley. Then in 1884 the Reverend John Shapland Vesey became Headmaster and it was during his term of office that the present school buildings were erected. The movement for the erection of new buildings began in 1894, and in 1896 the Earl of Dudley offered the School Governors the present site in St. James's Road. The necessary work was put in hand and the foundation stone of the present buildings was laid upon 27th July 1898 by the Countess of Dudley. Thereupon, the school continued with increasing success until sadly, despite all opposition mounted by the Old Boys Association it was forced to become comprehensive in 1972, after more than 400 years of undoubted excellence.

## **FOUNDING OF THE LODGE**

Following the end of the Second World War a number of the old boys of the school, who were also Masons, had the desire to have an old boys Lodge and no doubt this was stimulated when a number of them attended the consecration of the Old Edwardian Lodge, Stourbridge in November 1945. However, credit for the first positive step in this direction must go to Brother W. Norman Chilton of Dudley Castle Lodge who on 19th 1948 called a meeting attended by ten Brothers who were also old boys of the school, to consider forming a Lodge limited to Dudley Grammar School old boys and to be sponsored by Dudley Castle Lodge No. 4437.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Ben Marsh was informed of the intention to form an Old School Lodge. At the same time, W. Bro. W. Kent the Secretary Elect wrote to the Provincial Grand Secretary H.V. Stanton and asked for any information and guidance as a result of which on February 25th 1948 a form of Petition was received with a cautionary note that sufficient founders and candidates should be available in order to give the Lodge a good start. In a letter dated 3rd March 1948 W. Bro. Wilf Kent replied that it was hoped that James Mainwaring, a Master at the school would be the first Master of the Lodge, which would meet four times a year. Some time later, on 21st June a letter was received saying that the Deputy PGM was not happy with four meetings a year and suggested six meetings. Rather than delay the Petition to Provincial Grand Lodge, this was accepted.

On 9th March 1948 another meeting was held to discuss the name ("Old Dudleian") the days of meetings and proposed founders. At this time, W. Bro. Kent sent letters to many old boys who were

Masons to enquire if they would like to be founders of the new Lodge. On 10th March 1948 a letter was received from the caterers Pattison-Hughes to say that the cost of Lodge dinners would be 5s.0d per head. This included both sweet and cheese and biscuits and if we provided our own fish as an entree, they charged 3d per portion for cooking it!

On 11th June the Petition for the warrant accompanied by clearance certificates for 28 founders was forwarded to the Provincial Secretary. At a meeting held on 31st May 1948 it had been decided that the founders would contribute the sum of 10 guineas to Lodge funds. It was also noted that to be a founder one had to be a Master Mason for at least three years.

We have a copy of a letter dated 25th May 1948 to the Provincial Secretary stating that the Headmaster of the Grammar School, D.C. Temple would be the first initiate. It was thought that James Mainwaring, the very popular History Master at Dudley Grammar School should be the first Worshipful Master and this would have been a splendid appointment.

However, on 25th March 1948 W. Bro. Mainwaring had been written to stating that after due consideration it was thought that the first Worshipful Master should be an old boy of the school, following the example set by the Old Edwardians Lodge and would be accept the office of IPM, DC or Senior Warden. It was pointed out that the first Senior Warden of the Old Edwardian Lodge was also an ex-master of the school and was also stated that W. Bro. J.R. Napier PPG Treasurer (Warwickshire) the First Master of the Lodge of Truth No. 6606 had been invited to be the First Master of the Lodge.

In reply, James Mainwaring said that he thoroughly agreed that the first WM should be an old boy of the school and that W. Bro. J.R. Napier would be an excellent choice. He therefore accepted the office of IPM.

Those of us who knew W. Bro. Jack Napier will remember him as a wonderful ritualist, a man of determined views and given to writing long letters in immaculate handwriting. It is fair to say that from that time the ritual and workings of the Lodge would be as he wished. Thus we find, as distinct from other Lodges in Dudley and the Province, the Wardens in the opening answer for the duties of Inner Guard and the Deacons and also the Lodge is squared during the perambulations of the candidate. This is a tradition which has continued to the present day and should not be altered. It was because W. Bro. Napier being a Warwickshire Mason followed their custom which is much closer to strict Emulation than is practiced by some Lodges in Worcestershire. In addition, it was decided that the differences should be set out in writing and listed in the Lodge of Instruction Minute Book. A reading from the Volume of the Sacred Law was to be included as an item on the summons at all meetings. At the Festive Board, the Dudley Chorus would be sung after the visitors toast.

#### **EVENTS PRIOR TO CONSECRATION**

On 21st June 1948 a letter was received saying that the Deputy Provincial Grand Master was not happy with four meetings a year and suggested six meetings. Rather than delay the Petition to Provincial Grand Lodge, this was accepted.

In November 1948 it was decided that the annual subscription should be 4 guineas and also that the cost of the founders jewel

would be 2 guineas, but this was optional. However, as far as can be remembers all the founders did purchase one.

The Lodge Banner was largely based on the school badge and the obvious choice to design this most beautiful Banner was W. Bro. J.R. Napier. Again, the self evident and logical choice to carry out the needlework was Betty Walker, wife of W. Bro. F.G.G. Walker the first Chaplain of the Lodge. Betty Walker was formerly Headmistress of the Art and Needlework School of Dudley and nearly twenty years earlier had made the Banner for Mosaic Lodge designed by W. Bro. Harry Cherrington our first DC. It should be noted that the design by W. Bro. Jack Napier had to be submitted to Grand Lodge for approval; which was duly granted upon 21st August 1948. However, it was not possible to have the Banner designed and completed in time for the consecration meeting and so W. Bro. Napier painted a Banner as a temporary measure.

On 11th July 1948 a letter was received from the Provincial Grand Secretary saying that the Petition to Grand Lodge had been approved and that the number would be 6734. The cost of the warrant was £10. 10s. 0d and founders fees (27 at 2s-6d per head) i.e. £3 7s. 6d) and the proposal form of 8s.0d came to a grand total of £14. 5s. 6d!!

We may also note the following gifts to the Lodge :-

1. A cushion embroidered to a design by W. Bro. J. Napier and presented by W. Bros. W. and J. Chilton the father and uncle respectively of W. Bro. W. Norman Chilton who called the first meeting.
2. A silver mounted baton, useful for pointing to tracing boards, presented by W. Bro. J. Mainwaring, who had previously used it as his conductors baton and it is still used today.

3. A Bible by W. Bro. Harry Cherrington.

Later in 1950 when W. Bro. A.H. Crump was installed as Worshipful Master, he presented a mahogany Past Masters Board to hang in the Lodge of Instruction Room.

Eventually the Lodge used the existing furniture at Wellington Road. The Officer's collars and jewels were paid for out of the founders contributions and the Worshipful Master's collar was donated by W. Bro. Napier.

Mr. D.C. Temple had indicated to W. Bro. A.H. Crump that he was desirous of being initiated into the Lodge. Therefore, it was agreed that he would be a most suitable first candidate with the possible exception of the much revered Headmaster Hugh Watson. He was approached by W. Bro. James Mainwaring, but nothing came of this.

In conclusion of this section about events prior to the consecration, it should be mentioned that there is a file of correspondence with suppliers of Masonic regalia, jewels and furniture. Indeed it is quite remarkable that we have such a complete record of events, prior to the consecration

### **CONSECRATION OF THE LODGE**

Prior to the ceremony on 13th November 1948, rehearsals were carried out by the founders under the supervision of the provincial LC W. Bro. H.E. Hearne. The founders of the Lodge were the old boys of the school listed in Appendix A.

A letter from the Provincial Secretary asked if W. Bro. G. Mills the Provincial Organist could be provided with tea at the end of the evening as he wished to travel back to Evesham. However, this was not necessary as in the meantime he was asked to stay overnight by his nephew, Brother A.G. Walker.

Consecration was carried out at Wellington Road, Dudley on Saturday 13th November 1948 at 2.30 p.m. by Deputy Provincial Grand Master In Charge, W. Bro. Ben Marsh PGD because the Provincial Grand Master, General Sir Francis Davies had not been active for some time, due to his declining years. The attendance at the ceremony was in the region of 150. After opening in the three degrees and an address by the Deputy PGM the Lodge was consecrated by him and his Provincial team in pure and ancient form and in a most impressive manner.

Following the consecration an excellent and impressive oration was given by Brother Reverend John Mort B.A. Provincial Grand Chaplain and Curate at St. Thomas's Church Dudley ("top Church"). The Reverend R.H. Fowler PPG Chaplain and the Incumbent at Wordsley Parish Church gave assistance with the very important work of the Chaplain during the ceremony. Then followed the installation of W. Bro. Jack Napier into the Chair according to ancient custom, followed by the Presentation of the Working Tools and the Investiture of the other Brethren.

One must make particular note of the splendid music for the Consecration. W. Bro. G. Mills, the Organist, was one of the leading organists in the Country and formerly at the Church of the Messiah, Birmingham from where he used to give a weekly broadcast. He also accompanied members of the choir from Lichfield Cathedral, who provided some of the musical items. Appropriately, the Anthem was "Behold How Good And Joyful A Thing It Is, Brethren, To Dwell Together In Unity". Investiture of the Organist was deferred until the next regular meeting when Bro. Ken Buckler would be proposed as a joining member, but the Worshipful Master invited him to act as Organist in the meantime.



After the Addresses and Appointment of Officers of the Lodge, as listed in Appendix B, the following Brethren were made Honorary Members of the Lodge:-

Worshipful Brother Ben Marsh JP PGD Deputy Provincial Grand Master in Charge

Worshipful Brother E.L. Bunting PPGW Assistant Provincial Grand Master

Worshipful Brother H.V. Stanton PGD Provincial Grand Secretary

Worshipful Brother H.G. Hearne Provincial GDC

### **EARLY DAYS**

At the first meeting seven Brethren were proposed and seconded as joining Members as follows:-

(List all Members)

and the last three Brethren may well be familiar to the present Brethren. The reason that they were not Founder Members is that they did not fulfil the necessary founders qualification of having being a Master Mason for three years. Mr. D.C. Temple the Headmaster of the School and Mr. A.R. Young who was President of the Old Boys Association were then proposed and seconded as candidates for initiation. The Worshipful Master then acknowledged the various gifts to the Lodge and Members of the Lodge were informed that their Provincial Representative would be W. Bro.

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{ Note: Provide list of the joining members and provide }  
{ confirmation of the Provincial Representative } }

At the second Meeting in January 1949, Mr. D.C. Temple was initiated and also the formation of a Lodge of Instruction was

approved by the Lodge. David Temple will be remembered as a popular and splendid Mason a good ritualist, who supported the Lodge of Instruction. He even attended the Lodge when he had retired to Ludlow and it is a tragedy that he died soon after his retirement.

In the quarterly communication from Grand Lodge it is interesting to note that a message of congratulations had been sent to H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh on the birth of their son Charles.

In the early life of the Lodge there was no lack of applicants to join. In fact, some old boys joined other Lodges in order to avoid too long a delay, and this in spite of emergency meetings and doubling up of ceremonies.

After the seventh Meeting in 1949. W. Bro. Jack Napier installed W. Bro. J.W. Davies as Worshipful Master with the ancient (so called) and extended inner workings. It was also a proud moment for W. Bro. A.G. Walker when he was invested as the Sixth Steward!

The subsequent regular and emergency Meetings followed the usual routine of initiations, passings, raisings and installations. However, one can make note of the following interesting facts :-

At the initiation of Frank Simmons (one of the first men to apply to join the Old Dudleians Lodge) his father W. Bro. Sam Simmons presented the working tools.

At the May Meeting in 1950 after the passing of Brothers Tilley and Simmons, the Worshipful Master Jack Davies and W. Bro. J.R. Napier gave the second section of the second lecture. Also at that time the Lodge was in mourning for the death of one of our Founder Members W. Bro. H. Preedy PP GD. At the September

Meeting 1950 it appeared from the quarterly communication that it was left to the Lodge's discretion whether or not white gloves should be worn during the Ceremonies. Also, it was decided that "calling off" was undesirable and the Worshipful Master's song must not be sung on Ladies Night. It is worthy of note that at Installation Meetings the Lodge was opened at 4.30 p.m.!!

At the December Meeting in 1950 the sad news was announced of the death of W. Bro. F.G.G. Walker PPGD founder and the first Chaplain.

An emergency Meeting was held on Thursday 18th April 1951 when Brother T.W. Warton was raised by W. Bro. J.R. Napier who performed the first part of the ceremony and W. Bro. J.W. Davies who gave the traditional history. The meeting continued with the passing of Brothers Winnington and Freeman by W. Bros. W. Kent and A.H. Crump respectively. This subsequently proved to be the longest meeting on record in the history of the Lodge, and in effect a real marathon!

At the meeting of the Lodge in September 1951, it was reported that Grand Lodge had decreed that ball point pens must not be used for signing Masonic records, neither must there be any demonstration of foreign rituals without Grand Lodge permission.

(check minutes) During the October Meeting in 1951, W. Bro. J.W. Davies presented the working tools at the initiation of his brother Harold Davies. One notes that the balance sheet of October 1951 includes a donation of £11 towards a new piano for the Masonic Rooms.

At the March meeting in 1952 the death of King George VI was minuted - He had been Provincial Grand Master of Middlesex

and had always been looked upon as one of the greatest Royal Masons.

### **LODGE BANNER**

During the Meeting in 1952 Mrs. F.G.G. Walker sought admission. The Worshipful Master asked the ADC to enquire the reason for this unusual request, and he reported that Mrs. Walker accompanied by Mrs. Cherrington and W. Bro. H. Cherrington wished to present the Lodge Banner in memory of her late husband W. Bro. F.G.G. Walker PPGD. The Lodge was then called off and the banner was duly presented by Mrs. Walker. It proved to be a very emotional event and in appreciation the Lodge presented a decorative brooch to Mrs. Walker. She was always proud of the fact that she had been into the Lodge itself. What she never knew was that the Lodge had been "called off" and she had only entered the Lodge Room and not the Lodge itself! Subsequently, at the Meeting in February 1986 the history and explanation of the banner with its Masonic significances were explained in a Lecture presented by W. Bro. A.G. Walker PPSGW nephew of Mrs. F.G.G. Walker, a summary of which is re-produced in Appendix C.

### **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE LODGE HISTORY**

At an emergency Meeting on 15th December 1952 the Ceremony consisted of the consecration of the Lodge Banner by the Provincial Grand Master, R. W. Bro. Ben Marsh who was assisted by the Deputy PGM W. Bro. Dr. E.L. Bunting. Also present were the Provincial GDC W. Bro. H.E. Hearne and Provincial Chaplains, W. Bro. The Reverend Canon R.B. Jolly and W. Bro. Ven Canon A.V. Harley.

At the Meeting in January 1953 W. Bro. Frank Simmons was thanked for his gift of song books for use at Meetings. At the March

1953 Meeting the WM of Old Edwardian Lodge of Stourbridge No. 6141 was present and the Worshipful Master W. Bro. S.B. Simpson invited him to close the Lodge.

In about 1953 the Lodge joined the Federation of School Lodges, which had been formed a few years earlier. The Lodge's first representatives were W. Bros. J.R. Napier and W. Kent.

During the March 1954 Meeting, the Secretary reported the receipt of a letter from Mr. Hugh Watson the former Headmaster, thanking the Lodge for its expression of sympathy on the death of his wife.

During 1954 W. Bro. J.R. Napier was honoured by being given Grand Lodge rank and the Lodge assisted with the obtaining of his regalia, a presentation of which was made in the Lodge.

At the January 1956 Meeting the Headmaster Brother D.C. Temple said that the school was in need of a Bible for the lectern. W. Bro. S. Jennings presented his family Bible to the school, suitably inscribed by W. Bro. J.R. Napier.

During the September Meeting of 1956, reference was made to the loss that the Lodge had suffered by the death of W. Bro. A.H. Crump, a Founder Member and at the next Meeting the W. Master referred to the death of our Tyler Bro. R. Cooksey; and just two Meetings later reference was made to the death of our newly appointed Tyler Brother H. Armstrong. He was succeeded as Tyler by Brother D.O. Roden who served the Lodge in that office for many years. Also at that meeting in recognition of his services to the Lodge, W. Bro. H. Cherrington was made an Honorary Member. Sadly, at the May 1958 Meeting the Lodge was again in mourning for the death of the PGM R.W. Bro. Ben Marsh, who had been the Consecrating Officer. Again, at the Installation in November 1958,

W. Bro. Gilbert Mills, Provincial Organist was invited to act as Organist. It will be remembered that during the Festive Board, he entertained the Brethren with "The Bluebells of Scotland" played in the style of various classical composers - ending with one as a little girl learning the piano!!

The September 1959 Meeting was a unique occasion when three brothers participated in the Ceremony. The candidate was Brother Harry Davies. W. Bro. Jack Davies was invited to act as Senior Deacon and Brother Harold Davies presented the working tools. In 1959 the Worshipful Master of the Lodge W. Bro. J.R. Napier made two collecting bowls for the charity collection and presented them to the Lodge.

At the September 1961 Meeting the Worshipful Master recorded the death of our Founder Member, Brother James Mainwaring. He was formerly History Master at the School, and Brethren many of whom had been taught by him, stood in respect to departed merit. Those who had been his former pupils remembered his passing with much sadness and affection.

During the September 1962 Meeting, Brother N. Scott from New Jersey was invited to demonstrate the signs of the American third degree. On September 21st 1962 the Lodge hosted the fifteenth annual Festival of the Federation of School Lodges which was held at an emergency Meeting at the New School Hall of Dudley Grammar School. W. Bro. Alan R. Young was in the Worshipful Master's Chair, which was entirely appropriate as he had been the architect for the school hall. W. Bro. Jack Napier gave a Lecture entitled "A Point Within a Circle". The Meeting was most successful with 211 visitors.

It was rather significant that the work for the October 1962 Meeting was an explanation of the first tracing board. This was the first time that there had not been a ceremony either an initiation, passing, raising, or installation at one of our regular meetings.

At one of the Committee Meetings during 1963, W. Bro. Alan Young proposed that the old school tie be worn at Lodge Meetings. This was passed but promptly vetoed by Worshipful Master, W. Bro. W. Tilley. Subsequently, the proposal was passed and the old boys tie is still worn at Lodge Meetings by old boys of the school.

For the 1963 Meeting there was a Lecture by Brother Venerable A.P. Shepherd DDPPG Chaplain Canon of Worcester and former Vicar and Archdeacon of Dudley entitled "The Hidden Background of Freemasonry".

On March 6th 1964, the Sutton Coldfield Study Group gave a demonstration of the Ceremony of Initiation as practiced 200 years ago - all dressed for the part together with a jovial but somewhat inebriated Tyler!!

On the occasion of the October 1964 Meeting W. Bro. W. Kent PPGW initiated his son Mr. G.C. Kent, the first Lewis in the Lodge.

When W. Bro. W.R. Tilley presented Brother W.R. Butler with his Grand Lodge Certificate at the February 1965 Meeting, he pointed out to the Brethren that this was the first time that the revised Certificate had been presented in the Lodge.

The one hundredth regular meeting of the Lodge coincided with the Mastership of W. Bro. R.J.W. Hadley, the actual date being 15th March 1965, and the past Masters of the Lodge were invited to occupy the various offices to carry out the third degree ceremony. The Master's Chair was occupied by W. Bro. W. Kent for the first

part of the raising and W. Bro. J.R. Napier for the traditional history and the second part. The candidate was Brother G.C. Kent.

Some time after the hundredth Meeting W. Bro. W. Kent was presented with a cut-glass jug and six firing glasses to mark his attendance at the first one hundred meetings of the Lodge. When he left England in 1968 for residence in Australia, he was elected an Honorary Member of the Lodge. When in 1970 W. Bro. W. Kent returned to England he gave the glasses back to the Lodge and hoped that they would be used upon Installation Nights.

At the October 1965 Meeting the Lodge was in mourning for W. Bro. H. Cherrington PAG St.B Founder and Honorary Member of the Lodge.

At the March 1966 Meeting it was announced that the Lodge would present an annual prize for original creative work to the most outstanding pupil at a Dudley Grammar School.

At the next Meeting in April 1966 the Brethren were informed of the death of Brother Arthur Russell, a Founder Member and uncle of W. Bro. A.G. Walker.

During the October 1966 Meeting W. Bro. W. Kent announced that he would retire from the office of Treasurer after twelve years service and also that he had achieved the unique distinction of having attended every Lodge Meeting since its consecration.

Mr. Philip Rogers, the then current Headmaster of Dudley Grammar School was the initiate at the January 1967 Meeting. During the Lodge's existence, Headmasters of the School have shown a lively interest in the progress of the Lodge. No doubt had it been founded earlier, both Headmasters, Mr. Hugh Watson and Mr. Tom W. Watson might well have been Members. As it was, Mr. D.C. Temple as well as Mr. P.W. Rogers were initiates of the Old