

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SILVER JUBILEE LODGE, No. 5531

FIRST PRESENTED BY W.BRO. P.F. JONES, P.S.G.W. 15.5.1985.

PRESENTED BY W.BRO. G.S. BOUCHER, P.P.S.G.W. 15.3.1994.

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On Wednesday, 15th May, 1985, the Silver Jubilee Lodge celebrated the Lodges Golden Jubilee. The special meeting to mark the occasion was attended by the R.W.Bro. E.F. Hanson, J.P. LL.D (Hon) the Provincial Grand Master, accompanied by eight Grand Officers, twenty five Brethren of Silver Jubilee Lodge, and twenty-five invited Brethren.

After the Provincial Grand Master had addressed the Brethren, and presented the Warrant of the Lodge for the Provincial Grand Secretary to read, the Provincial Grand Chaplain delivered an Oration.

This was followed by a short history of the Lodge given by W.Bro. F.Jones, P.Prov.S.G.W., P.Prov.J.G.W.Warks,,

"In presenting this short report on the history of the Silver Jubilee Lodge, I have to mention the fact that my task has been made difficult through the wanton destruction last year of all our old Minute Books, by a former Master of the Lodge, who had been persuaded to resign as he was not conducting our affairs in a satisfactory manner. Fortunately one of our Founders, Wor.Bro.F.L.Lawton, P.G.Std.B., (who was then 93 years old and in very good health for his age) had kept all his old summonses and various other papers which, aided by his excellent memory, have provided me with a great deal of information. This was supplemented by Bro. Noel Carmichael, Secretary of the Arter Lodge, who also supplied many useful details of our past. Thanks to them I am able to give this report.

I cannot start better than by reading the Foreword to our Lodge By-laws composed by W.Bro. Walter Henman, our first Master and one of the Founders who decreed that it should be read before the Installation of every Master, and was I am told the very first entry in our first Minute Book. (It is, the book returned some time after 1985, is in the Lodge this evening, handle it with care if you wish to see it)

The Lodge was sponsored by Arter Lodge No.2654, following a petition to their meeting on March 25th 1935, by W.Bro.W.Henman, W.Bro.F.W.Hayes and Bro.F.Idiens on behalf of 20 well known Brethren who were to be its Founders and whose names included many who subsequently became famous in the annals of Worcestershire Freemasonry (and indeed elsewhere too), such as Wor.Bro.Harvey Gibbs, W.Bro.T.L.Ellis, W.Bro.C.A.F.Hastilow, W.Bro.R.A.Lambert and W.Bro.R.G.St.George.

The Consecration on May 15th 1935 was held in the Parish Hall, Kings Heath, at 2.45 p.m. preceded by a lunch costing ten shillings, (50p), including wines..... (ah! happy days) It was not held in the then Moseley Masonic Hall in Institute Road, Kings Heath, as that was not large enough for the occasion. The Consecrating Officer was the R.Wor.Bro. General Sir Francis J. Davies, P.G.D., Prov. Grand Master, assisted by Wor.Bro. Alfred Allen, P.G.D., Deputy Prov. Grand Master. The First Master was W.Bro. Walter Henman, the Senior Warden W.Bro.Hayes and Junior Warden Bro. Idiens.

Our second meeting was held at Institute Road on October 15th, 1935, when our first Honorary Members were elected, namely the Prov. Grand Master, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, and the Provincial Grand Secretary, W. Bro. H. V. Stantor P. A. G. D. C. Afterwards the Banner of the Lodge was consecrated, the Officers for the ceremony being the Prov. Grand Master, the Prov. Grand Chaplain W. Bro. R. A. Hayson and the Prov. Grand Director of Ceremonies W. Bro. F. Wilde.

The Founders of the Lodge had decided that Lodge meetings would be held on the third Tuesdays in the months of January, February, March, October, November and December. These dates were changed for reasons of safety in 1941 for the duration of the war to March, April, May, June, July and October, and only reverted to the original dates in October 1944. The Annual subscription which included Grand and Provincial Grand Lodge dues, also refreshments after meetings, was four guineas, (£4.20p); visitors fees were 8 shillings and sixpence, (82½p) for ordinary meetings, and ten shillings (50p) for the banquet after Installations. I understand that the Lodge was very successful from its beginning and earned a reputation for excellent work in the Lodge room, and its very due decorum in the after proceedings.

Wor. Bro. Henman saw to that, he was a stickler for etiquette.

In 1937 the Lodge decided to move to the NEW Masonic Hall which had just been built here in the Alcester Road South. Silver Jubilee Brethren had played a prominent part in its development as W. Bro. Harvey Gibbs and W. Bro. Alfred Allen found this old house and with the enthusiastic support of many Masons, in particular the Architect, W. Bro. L. R. McFarlane, a founder member of Silver Jubilee and its first Director of Ceremonies, the house was transformed into the beautiful temple we all know and love. By agreement at a special meeting of the Lodge held on the 26th April, 1937, our first meeting here was on the 19th October, 1937.

During subsequent years there were four matters of special interest in the life of the Lodge, as follows:

Firstly, in October 1943, W. Bro. Harvey Gibbs, who had by this time attained the exalted rank of Assistant Provincial Grand Master, was installed as Master of the Lodge.

Secondly, in 1945 we had the privilege of sponsoring the Lodge of the Desired Haven No. 5948. It was consecrated by the Provincial Grand Master, Wor. Bro. Sir Francis J Davies, who had earlier been promoted to the very exalted rank of Deputy Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, and the first Master of this new Lodge was none other than Wor. Bro. Walter Henman - as you can see he figured prominently in our history.

Thirdly, on the 18th March 1947 there was given in the Silver Jubilee Lodge, a demonstration of the ceremonial of the Netherlandic Constitution. It was produced and directed by W. Bro. Leslie Biddle, P. Prov. A. G. D. C. (Warks), Past District Pursuivant (South Africa DC), who also as Secretary for the Ceremony, when all three degrees were worked. The Presiding Master, as the Worshipful Master was called, was W. Bro. Fred Lawton, and all the rest of the cast taking part were members of the Silver Jubilee Lodge.

The ceremonies were quite different from our own in many ways, and such interest was aroused that performances were afterwards given at Worcester and elsewhere.

Fourthly, in 1984 the Lodge was honoured by the acceptance of Honorary Membership by the R.W.Bro. Edward F. Hanson, J.P. Provincial Grand Master, also the Very W Bro. Bertram J.W. Chambers, P.G.Swd.B., Deputy Provincial Grand Master, and W.Bro. Frederick L. Lawton, P.G.Std.B., they joined the well loved Past Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Frederick H. Griffiths in that capacity.

W.Bro. Pip Jones went on to say that he personally had the privilege of joining the Silver Jubilee Lodge in 1943, and without the benefit of Minutes to which he could refer, could not recall other matters of particular note. He noted that in recent years we had in common with other Lodges, suffered severe blows through the deaths of distinguished Brethren and we have been short of candidates at times. He thought that the Lodge had now got back on to an even keel, and had every reason to hope that our next fifty years would be just as happy and successful as the first.

Signed by
P. H. Jones.
May 1985.

As stated earlier the Missing Minute books were returned eventually.

Just one or two items that he would have mentioned, there are others, but this is a brief history of the Lodge.

- (A) An Emergency Meeting held on Thursday 18th March, 1937. The W Bro. Rev. Joseph Johnson, M.A., G.Chaplain, delivered the Prestonian Lecture, "The Inwardness of Masonic Symbolism in the Three Degrees". Dress was Dinner Dress.
- (B) The 18th Regular Meeting, held on 15th February, 1938, note the excellent script writing by Bro. W.C. Broodbank, Secretary. W.M. in 1939.
- (C) 23rd Regular Meeting. 17th January, 1939. A combined meeting of Group 10. ! The R.W.Bro. General Sir Francis J. Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., Deputy Grand Master, Provincial Grand Master, was in attendance and delivered the charge to the Initiate. He was accompanied by W.Bro. Alfred Allen, Deputy Prov. Grand Master, and nine other Grand Officers, also 46 invited Brethren, with 22 Brethren of Silver Jubilee Lodge. The W.M. W.Bro. R.A. Lambert invited, W.Bro. J.H. Flint, the W.M. of Kings Heath Lodge to occupy the S.W.s. Chair.

W.Bro.G.E.Walker, the W.M. of Campbell Lodge to occupy the Junior Wardens Chair.
W.Bro.R.Buchanan,P.P.G.W. the W.M. of Wythall Lodge to occupy the S.Deacons Chair.
W.Bro.A.J.Morris, the W.M. of Arter Lodge to act as Inner Guard.

It appears that Bro. R.G. St.George continued to act as Junior Deacon.

They then Initiated Mr. Joseph Wilfred Dodd, who went on to become Master of the Lodge in 1949.

At this meeting W.Bro. Walter Henman drew attention to the Past Masters Board which had been placed on the main staircase.

- (D) During the War years not only did they change the Months of the meetings, by dispensation they changed the day to Saturdays, this commenced from the 26th Regular Meeting held on the 28th October 1939, and lasted for three years. Each time by special dispensation. The meetings usually started at one or more generally two o'clock, with dinner at 4,30 p.m.

Incidentally there is no mention of the war anywhere in the minutes, on one of the Second risings, they received a letter from Provincial Grand Lodge saying that meetings could be resumed.

F.W,Apperley,
Secretary.