

Hedworth Lodge No 2418

A SHORT HISTORY – 1891 - 1941

The history of a Masonic Lodge is pictured in its Minute Books. To read through the whole of the recorded minutes might be an interesting thing to do, but the reader, from the matter before him, would never be able to compile in a true perspective the innumerable acts of devotion and self-sacrifice which have been the means of welding the Brethren together over the passage of years.

No Secretary could ever hope to record all the acts of kindness and words of encouragement that have passed from one to another and which have helped to make life a little better and happier, nor would it be wise for him to attempt to formulate the many unseen qualities which tend to transform our meetings into true fellowships. These are the things which make a Lodge not merely an assembly of Freemasons but a body of Brethren striving for the ultimate realization of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

The consecration of Hedworth Lodge took place on Thursday, 17th December, 1891, at a meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham, held in the Masonic Hall, Ingham Street, South Shields. The consecrating Officer was the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Very Worshipful Brother Reverend Canon Henry Baker Tristram, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., Past Grand Chaplain, Canon Residentiary of Durham, a man who was eminent as a Clergyman, distinguished as a scientist and man of letters and beloved as a Freemason. The absence of the Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Sir Hedworth Williamson, Bart., was occasioned at the last moment on doctors' orders through illness, and this was very much regretted as the founders of Hedworth Lodge had taken the first name of the Provincial Grand Master as the title of the Lodge.

There were 19 founders of the Lodge, all of whom have since passed to the Grand Lodge above. The first three principal officers of the Lodge were:-

W Bro. Thomas Grieves Mabane	Master
Bro. Thomas Bilton Appleby	Senior Warden
Bro. William Dalziel	Junior Warden

and Hedworth Lodge thus became the second daughter Lodge of St. Hilda Lodge, No. 240.

At the next regular meeting of the Lodge on Friday, 15th January, 1892, 19 Brethren became joining members, and three candidates were duly initiated – Philip Sligh Wood, Charles William Kent and Peter Thornton.

Bro. T. B. Appleby, S.W., presented a silver snuff box to the Lodge, and this has been handed on to each succeeding Master of the Lodge, though it cannot be said with any degree of confidence that present day members make as much use of this gift as their forebears appear to have done.

On Friday, 21st October, 1892, our present senior Past Master, W Bro. James Reid Wheldon was duly initiated. It is customary nowadays for each Master duly to install his successor, but in the early years of Hedworth Lodge it appears that W Bro. W. E. Moffett, as well as doing work regularly at Lodge meetings, specialised in installation ceremonies. W Bro. Moffett held a position which was unique in Masonic circles in South Shields. He was regarded as being an authority on Masonic matters, and his opinion was always sought when any difficulty arose which required more than normal handling. He was ever keenly jealous to preserve in every detail the ancient customs and established landmarks of the Craft. His genial smile, his remarkable memory, his adaptability and readiness at all times to meet emergencies were an inspiration to Masters and an encouragement to the younger officers and

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Brethren of the Lodge, in whom he always took a very fatherly interest. He was a true Mason in every sense of the word, and his work for the good of the Lodge will be long remembered.

The first Senior Warden of the Lodge, Bro. T. B. Appleby, unfortunately died during the first year of the Lodge, thus the first Junior Warden, Bro. William Dalziel, became the second Worshipful Master of the Lodge.

On 28th April, 1897, the Master, W Bro. J.B. Nelson, presented a banner to the Lodge as a memento of his year of office and to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria.

W Bro. J. R. Wheldon was duly installed as Master on 26th January, 1899, when W Bro. W. E. Moffett once more fulfilled the duties of Installing Master. It must be a far cry for W Bro. Wheldon during these present days to look back over these forty-two years since his installation, and he will no doubt recall that Ingham Street at that time was in an unpaved condition and the Masonic Hall itself was merely gas lit. The services of W Bro. Wheldon to Hedworth Lodge have been of exceedingly high value, and the performance of his duties while D. of C. was a model of efficiency, tact and dignity. It is very largely due to his efforts that we have our Lodge Bye-laws in their present satisfactory state, and the compilers of the ritual as used in Hedworth Lodge will ever be grateful for his advice, judgment and kindly assistance in a work which future officers of Hedworth Lodge will find to be of great value.

It was during his year of office as Master that W Bro. Wheldon announced that Bro. Charles Edward White of Hedworth Lodge had been installed as the first Master of the newly-consecrated Mount Malcolm Lodge in Australia, and a letter of congratulation was sent out to Brother White with good wishes from his Mother Lodge. We are all delighted to have W Bro. Weldon still with us, and I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of all his fellow members in Hedworth Lodge when I say that we thank him sincerely for all he has done for us and all he means to us, and we entertain the earnest desire that he will be spared many years yet to grace our proceedings in the Lodge and have his light so shine before men that they may see his good works and endeavour to emulate them.

Hedworth Lodge has a very good record in donations to charities, and in March 1900, subscribed to the South African Masonic Relief Fund at the conclusion of the Boer War. It is interesting to note that the Province of Durham was the only Province in which every Lodge had contributed to this fund.

On 26th April, 1900, there was initiated into Hedworth Lodge a Brother who has ever since proved to be a most ardent Freemason and has endeared himself to all the Brethren, Bro. Thomas Greenwell Short by name, a name now so well known in Masonic circles that it immediately conjures up the melodious strains of the organ, with which instrument Bro. Short will ever be associated. During the forty one years of Bro. Short's masonic career he has officiated as organist in all the Lodges and Chapters in South Shields and has received the collar of Organist on no less than 360 occasions. In the whole of his Masonic career he has missed only six attendances in the Craft Lodges, Royal Arch Chapters, Mark Lodges, a Royal Ark Mariners' Lodge and the St. Lawrence Rose Croix Chapter, and he has served under six Provincial Grand Masters. In 1920 Bro. Short was presented by the Lodges in South Shields with the regalia of Provincial Grand Organist, and in 1930 he was presented with a cheque, a set of pipes and a silver snuff box to mark his 25 years as organist of the Lodges being made by the late W Bro. John W. Wood, of Hedworth Lodge, who was Mayor of the town at the time. Bro. Short's record in Freemasonry is one to be proud of, and we thank him for all he has done for us. In wishing him well for his future happiness and prosperity, we look forward to the day when he will preside at the organ at the celebrations which we know will be held when a victorious peace has been concluded after this present dreadful world war.

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The Lodge continued in very harmonious mode through the next few years, during which many eminent Brethren passed through the Master's chair.

Even in those days our Lodge suffered the loss of Brethren at sea, and in February, 1904, the Master, W Bro. W. G. Morant, referred in feeling terms to the death of Bro. G. A. Pettersen, who was lost at sea in the foundering of the s.s. "ESLINGTON".

At the installation meeting on 23rd February, 1905, the newly-installed Master, W Bro. Joseph Willis presented to the Lodge a silver alms dish which is still used at each initiation during the address given in the north-east part of the Lodge.

In February, 1906, W Bro. Henry Goudie was installed Master. He was a native of Edinburgh and was beloved by all who knew him. With his versatile accomplishments and his keen sense of humour he was often found to be the centre of sociability, and there were always many ready ears to listen to his very attractive Scottish accent. At our Lodge festive board he often gave his "CUDDLE DOON" to the great appreciation of the Brethren.

An illuminated address and silver tea service were presented on 29th November, 1906, to W Bro. Moffett who had been D. of C. for the first fourteen years in the life of the Lodge.

It is worthy of note that during the Mastership of W Bro. John Potter in 1908 when a report of the Board of General Purposes adopted by Grand Lodge was read to the Brethren of Hedworth Lodge, the Tyler was brought into the Lodge to hear the paragraphs relating to the need for greater care with respect to the examination and admission of visitors.

On relinquishing his duties as Treasurer in September, 1908, after serving fifteen years in that office, W Bro. C. F. Sutcliffe was presented by the Brethren with a silver salver and entree dishes as a token of their esteem.

W Bro. William C. Everson was installed as Master on 23rd February, 1911, and he served his Lodge faithfully and well during his lifetime, being Treasurer for 21 years. He must have been a justly-proud father when his own son was admitted into the Lodge in 1925, a son who had previously been solo boy chorister in Durham Cathedral.

It was at the installation meeting of W Bro. Everson that the consent of the Lodge was given to the petition for the formation of a Royal Arch Chapter in connection with the Lodge under the name of the HEDWORTH ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER. The Chapter was eventually consecrated on 18th January, 1912, and has since proved a full justification of the hopes and aspirations of the petitioners. Eighteen Past Masters of Hedworth Lodge have occupied the Chair of First Principal of the Chapter.

In April, 1912, during the Mastership of W Bro. Charles D. Fleming, a donation was sent from the Lodge towards the Relief Fund for dependants and relatives of those lost in the sinking of the s.s. "TITANIC."

The present constitution of the Permanent Committee of the Lodge was agreed to in September 1912, and it speaks for itself that 29 years have elapsed with this committee still carrying out its duties to the satisfaction of the Lodge in general. The first meeting of the Permanent Committee was held on 20th February, 1913, at which meeting was inaugurated the procedure of candidates for initiation or joining having to receive the Committee's approval satisfactory and is still followed.

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The next installation meeting, 26th February, 1914, saw W Bro. Joseph D. Martin as Master of the Lodge, and at the regular meeting in May of that year, the sum of one hundred guineas was voted from the Lodge funds to the fund being raised by the Freemasons of South Shields to pay for the erection and equipment of a lift at the Ingham Infirmary. W Bro. Martin and W Bro. Moffett were nominated by the Lodge as life-governors of the Infirmary.

When W Bro. A. J. Wares succeeded next as Master in 1915, a most interesting presentation was made to him, that of a silver cradle as a memento from the Brethren of the Lodge in commemoration of the birth of his son during his year of office as Worshipful Master.

Donations, many and varied, were made at this period, among them being those to the Red Cross Fund, the Belgian Relief Fund, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the Shipwrecked Mariners, as well as to the usual Masonic Institutions, and parcels of food and clothing were sent out to Bro. T. B. Storey who was interned a prisoner of war in Germany.

Having completed 10 years as D. of C., W Bro. Wheldon relinquished that office in February, 1916, and the Brethren presented him with a gold watch to mark their appreciation of his valued work. W Bro. Joseph D. Martin succeeded him in that office.

The present Tyler of our Lodge, Bro. William Riddle was initiated on 31st August, 1916, and a more lovable and self-sacrificing Mason it would be difficult to find. May he be long spared to continue his most useful and much appreciated work.

During the years of the war, many reports of Brethren affected by enemy action were received. At the installation meeting of W Bro. Magnus Blanch on 28th February, 1918, the Brethren were informed that word had been received from the Admiralty that Bro. J. W. Shields, who had been previously reported as lost at sea when his ship was destroyed in the Indian Ocean by the German raider "WOLF," was now reported to have been landed as a prisoner of war at Karlsruhe, Germany.

When W Bro. Charles H. Lawrence was Master of the Lodge in 1919, we elected as our first Honorary Member W Bro. John G. Finlayson who had rendered such valuable services to the Craft. During these present troublous times while W Bro. Finlayson is living away from South Shields, we miss his cheery and encouraging presence, but we hope he will soon be back amongst us in happier days.

It must have been a very pleasing meeting for W Bro. John J. Madden on his election as Master on 29th January, 1920, when the Lodge voted 100 guineas to the South Shields Children's Hospital War Memorial Fund.

So many candidates for initiation were coming forward at this period that the Brethren were recommended to withhold from proposing further Candidates until further notice and were informed that a waiting list would have to be made.

At the installation meeting of W Bro. C. Sigsworth on 24th February, 1921, a point of interest was raised as to whether a Candidate for initiation who was "a lewis" should have preference over any other Candidates on the waiting list, although his name is well down the list. The ruling on the matter which had been given by the Grand Secretary was that the only privilege it is customary to afford "a lewis" is that of taking precedence over other Candidates initiated on the same day as himself. He cannot claim to be initiated before Candidates whose proposals were received previously to his own.

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Hedworth Lodge by the year 1921 had become a most flourishing Lodge in every respect, and as the creative spirit is so evident in all of us, the time had arrived when it was deemed expedient to have a daughter Lodge. W Bro. Sigsworth on 28th April, 1921, proposed from the Chair that petition forms for a new Lodge be signed in open Lodge, which was accordingly done. The name proposed for the new Lodge was "CAER URFA", W Bro. Thomas Sykes being elected as Worshipful Master Designate. The consecration of "CAER URFA" Lodge eventually took place on 23rd November, 1921, and we are very proud to see our daughter Lodge so strong and healthy. We are very pleased indeed to welcome here to-day W Bro. Madden as the present Master of "CAER URFA" Lodge. His keen interest in Freemasonry appears to rejuvenate him, and we extend to him our sincere congratulations and good wishes for a very happy and successful year in the Chair of our daughter Lodge.

On behalf of the founders of "CAER URFA" Lodge in 1921, W Bro. Madden, who was in office as I.P.M at the time, presented to W Bro. Sigsworth a silver salver inscribed with the names of the Founders, to commemorate the formation of a daughter Lodge of Hedworth during his year as Master.

The regular Lodge meeting on 26th May, 1921, was honoured by a visit of the Officers of Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham, and it was also an occasion for voting 100 guineas to the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys 1921 Festival. The total amount from Hedworth Lodge given to that Festival in 1921 amounted to the handsome sum of £650 - 0s. - 0d.

W Bro. William Braid had a most successful year as Master in 1922, during which he was privileged to see his own son initiated into Hedworth Lodge. Many of us present to-day will recall with pleasure the great feeling and understanding with which W Bro. Braid always administered the M.M. degree.

The following year saw W Bro. E. S. Slater in the Chair, a most efficient Master with an enviable record for his delivery of the ritual.

W Bro. J. Dawson Martin was Master in 1924, when Hedworth Lodge considered arrangements for leaving its old premises, and agreed upon details for the erection of this present Temple here at Westoe. The foundation stone was laid on 19th November, 1924, by the Provincial Grand Master, Lord Ravensworth, in the presence of a large assembly of Brethren.

The Secretary of the Trustees and Building Committee, W Bro. J. D. Carmichael, who exercised such untiring energy during the building of this Temple, was installed Master on 26th February, 1925. On Wednesday, 26th August, of that year, the building was opened and dedicated by Lord Ravensworth with impressive dignity. The following evening, Thursday, 27th August, 1925, witnessed the first regular meeting of Hedworth Lodge in this new Temple.

W Bro. John W. Wood was installed Master on 25th February, 1926. Being a member of the South Shields Town Council it was a very pleasing meeting for him on 29th April, 1926, when he initiated the Mayor of South Shields at that time, Bro. J. R. Curbison, The other Candidate for initiation at that meeting was none other than our present energetic Charities Representative, W Bro. John R. Grant, who also continues to put in such valuable services as Secretary of the Trustees of this Temple. He must have been greatly impressed, for the attendance of Brethren that evening was so great that extra chairs, even in this spacious Temple, were necessary to accommodate the large assembly.

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The two pillars at the door of this Temple were presented in October, 1926, by a Brother of Hedworth Lodge, W Bro. W. A. White, who was also a Past Master of Washington Lodge, No. 86, -New Jersey, U.S.A.

W Bro. G. Ferguson Shepherd was installed on 24th February, 1927. It is due to his fertile brain and enthusiasm that the Hedworth Lodge of Instruction was formed, and that the higher degrees in Freemasonry are now flourishing in South Shields.

W Bro. James Smith, P.M., of John Readhead Lodge, No. 3217, was elected an Honorary Member of Hedworth Lodge in November, 1927.

On 23rd February, 1928, our present Director of Ceremonies, W Bro. R. Hood Coulthard was installed Master, and since that time his lectures on the many branches of Freemasonry have always been a great help to us in making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

We now come to the more recent years in the history of the Lodge, with successive Masters all giving good service, and continuing by their presence to support our Lodge meetings.

W Bro. Joseph D. Martin continued as D. of C. until 1934, when he was followed by W Bro. J. Dawson Martin who carried on his good work until this present year, when extra duties due to war conditions made it necessary for him to relinquish the office. We see, then, that in 49 years since the consecration of the Lodge we have had only four Directors of Ceremonies, W Bro. W. E. Moffett serving 14 years, W Bro. J. R. Wheldon 10 years, W Bro. Joseph D. Martin 18 years, and W Bro: J. Dawson Martin 7 years.

We have elected two other Honorary Members of the Lodge, Bro. James P. While in March 1934, and during; this current year our worthy Tyler, Bro. William Riddle.

Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham has honoured many of our Brethren, and we are pleased to record the honour conferred by United Grand Lodge of England in 1932 on W Bro. Wheldon, when he was appointed Past Grand Standard Bearer.

The offices of D. of C., Treasurer and Secretary remain without change over a number of years, but it has never yet been found necessary to call upon a Brother to occupy the Master's Chair for a second time.

And so we come, Brethren, to our present day meetings, with many of our members on active service or fulfilling Home Guard and A.R.P. duties, with our records and Lodge Warrant deposited in a bank strong room for safety from bombing and enemy action, our meetings interrupted by the wail of the air raid siren and gunfire. But we carry on in the full knowledge that the G.A.O.T.U. will one day bring peace on earth to men of goodwill.

To-day we celebrate our 50th anniversary, and Brethren in years to come will probably read the minutes of this meeting with as much interest as we here to-day are experiencing in the enjoyment of its celebration.

The smooth running and harmonious working of the Lodge is largely dependent upon the work of the various Brethren who have filled the offices of Treasurer and Secretary, and we appreciate the

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assistance they have given, assistance which is very often carried out behind the scenes. We also take this opportunity of expressing our grateful thanks to W Bro. Albert E. Spraggon and W Bro. John R. Grant for their valuable services during the last twelve years in their respective capacities of Treasurer and Secretary of the Trustees of this Temple, services which they continue to give with great efficiency.

Brethren, I am sure you will readily appreciate that in the compilation of this short history it has been quite impossible to mention every detail of the Lodge's career, and that there have been many eminent Brethren whose names have not been mentioned.

To those who have passed on to the Grand Lodge above, we cherish fond memories of faithful service and devotion, and we place on record our thankfulness and appreciation of their work.

To those who are with us, our fervent hopes are that these items in the history of the Lodge may strike a chord of happy memory which will vibrate through the Lodge for many years.

To the younger members of the Lodge and to those who will follow in the years to come, may we say that you have the honour of the Lodge in your hands. The well-being of the Lodge will be measured by your wisdom in guiding its affairs and your devotion in serving it. See to it that, by putting your trust in the Divine Creator, it goes on from strength to strength.