

Resume of the existence of Coronation Lodge Number 3479

Coronation Lodge was Consecrated on 8th March 1911 in Blackburn Town Hall. It's Regular meetings were held at the Masonic Hall, Lord Street, Blackburn, and Sadly the loss of the First minute book has deprived us of important and detailed knowledge of the early and formative years of the Lodge.

Who were our founding Brothers one hundred and ten years ago? We know from a presentation given by the late W Bro Stephen Bentley PPSGW on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Lodge on 13th March 1986, that George Golbourne Dickinson of Redlam was clearly the 'driving force' behind the creation of Coronation Lodge

The nine Petitioners, from five Lodges, formed the necessary deputation to the Province. Following many meetings and with the eventual approval of United Grand Lodge, it was finally agreed that the Consecration of Coronation Lodge Number 3479 would take place on 8th March 1911 in the Town Hall in Blackburn. the Consecration was undertaken by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Very Worshipful Brother John Benjamin Goldburn. W Bro G Golbourne Dickinson was understandably duly installed as Worshipful Master.

We know from the 'Number 2' Minute book of the Lodge, that the Lodge held its Regular Meetings at the Masonic Hall in Lord Street, Blackburn until July 1918. When it moved to its present home on Richmond Terrace

Over the ensuing years Coronation Lodge continued to gain in strength and to prosper. They would hold Regular meetings of the Lodge every month of the year except for the month of August, notwithstanding eleven Regular meetings each year the Minute Book for the fifteen-year period 1918 to 1933, consistently records the Minutes of Emergency meetings to enable Candidates to be Passed or Raised. These meetings were always very well attended the October Installation meetings tended to attract between eighty to over a hundred attendees throughout this period

The Lodge continued to flourish throughout the late 1930's, regularly attracting an attendance of between forty to sixty members and visitors. On 3rd September 1939, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. For the first time ever Coronation Lodge did not hold a regular meeting in September by decree of Grand Lodge owing to the outbreak of war.

On only two occasions during the six years of WW2 (September 1939 to August 1945) did the attendance at the regular meetings of the Lodge fall below thirty. Installation meetings continued to attract large gatherings, clearly visitors played a very important role then as indeed they still do.

Throughout the immediate post war years and into the 1950's, Coronation Lodge continued to prosper and grow and individuals who are well known to the current members of the Lodge were commencing their Masonic careers as Initiates into Coronation Lodge. Sadly those revered names are now serving in the Grand Lodge above.

On the 9th March 1961. Coronation Lodge celebrated its Golden Jubilee. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master for the Eastern Division of Lancashire, V W Bro W Horrocks JP, demanded admission to the Lodge. V W Bro Horrocks was offered and accepted the Gavel and he occupied the Chair of King Solomon from where he gave a short address to the Brethren. There is mention in that history that the 1st minute book was missing so it was not lost in the fire of 1974 as many believed.

Coronation Lodge maintained rather than significantly increased its membership and attendance levels at the regular Lodge meetings mostly remained stable in the middle to high thirties but almost always supported by numerous visiting Brethren. Installation meetings continued to attract attendance levels of eighty or more.

The pattern throughout the 1970s was similar in many respects to the previous decade.

At the regular meeting held in the Masonic Hall, Richmond Terrace, Blackburn on 9th May 1974, the name of one James Abbott was proposed for membership of Coronation Lodge. On Wednesday the 11th September 1974, Mr James Abbott was balloted for and afterwards initiated into Coronation Lodge but this regular meeting was held in the Masonic Hall, Whalley Road, Clayton-Le-Moors, due to the Masonic Hall in Richmond Terrace having sustained severe fire damage. Now, over forty-seven years later, that same Brother Abbott is W Bro James Abbott PPSGW, he is the Senior subscribing Past Master in Coronation Lodge and is the 'Father' of the Lodge. May 13th 1976 witnessed the last regular meeting of Coronation Lodge at its temporary home in Clayton le Moors and on 9th September 1976, Coronation Lodge returned home to Richmond Terrace.

Coronation Lodge continued to attract initiates and some joining members over the course of the following eight to ten years but due to bereavements, resignations and exclusions, the overall membership of the Lodge began to dwindle. In the early 1990's the numbers of members and visitors attending the Lodge regularly fell below twenty in number and towards the end of the 1990's the number of Lodge members actually attending the Lodge on a regular basis fell to as few as ten members. That said, those ten or so members were not to be beaten as they continued striving to keep the Lodge viable when sadly other Lodges were failing and returning their Warrants.

The new Millennium dawned and with it an Epiphany for Coronation Lodge. For the first time in the Lodge's history, a father Installed his son into the Master's Chair. A Ceremony that was to be repeated exactly ten years later

Despite Coronation Lodge's relative longevity and despite having amongst its ranks a number of distinguished Brethren, the Lodge had never had amongst its membership a Brother holding Grand Rank. In September 2007, W Bro CJ Oversby became the first and only Initiate of Coronation Lodge to be awarded Grand Lodge honours on his appointment to the Grand Rank of PAGDC.

Sadly the last twenty years of the Lodge have had their difficulties due to losses of some of the most senior members and so in conclusion, we, the current members of this Coronation Lodge Number 3479, are extremely sad that the Lodge is to hand its warrant back to the Grand Master, not because we failed but perhaps it is a sign of the times that sadly Blackburn is to lose its Masonic Hall. However those Brethren which are still members are all moving to other Lodges where it is to be hoped that their Masonic Careers will flourish as have so many fine Masons from Coronation Lodge No3479 who have gone before them.

John M Rimmer
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