

ESLINGTON LODGE NO. 4623

100 YEARS OF HISTORY

RW Provincial Grand Master, Distinguished Brethren and Brethren all.

It is my pleasure to present to you a short history of Eslington Lodge. On the dining table is a more extended History for you to take home with you. Also at the Festive Board you will be presented with a commemorative engraved glass to mark this evenings celebration.

THE WARRANT of Eslington Lodge is dated 8th February, 1924 and was consecrated on the 9th April, 1924 at the Industry Masonic Hall, Jackson Street, Gateshead, by the Right Worshipful Bro. The Rt. Hon. Lord Ravensworth, Deputy Lieutenant, Past Grand Warden, Right Worshipful Grand Master of the Province of Durham assisted by his consecrating team and there were thirty-four Officers of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham present.

The twenty-five founders of the Lodge were all members of our Mother and Sponsoring Lodge, Liddell Lodge, No. 3616.

WBro. Lt. Col. James Woodbury Thompson, Victoria Decoration, Past Deputy Grand Sword Bearer, Past Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Past Master of Reserve Forces Lodge, No. 2666, Founder and Past Master of Liddell Lodge No. 3616 Founder and Past Master of Durham Lodge of Installed Masters, No. 4441 Founder of Clavering Lodge No. 3290, Founder of Northumbrian Masters' Lodge No. 3477 and Hon. Member of Winlaton Lodge No. 4546, Worshipful Master Designate, was then Installed into the Chair of King Solomon according to ancient custom. This evening we have the Worshipful Masters of 3 of those Lodges and if you could please stand when your Lodge name is mentioned they are Reserve Forces Lodge, Liddell Lodge and the Durham Lodge of Installed Masters.

W Bro. Dr. Andrew Dougal, was invested as Senior Warden and W Bro. Arthur Trotter Brunswick, as Junior Warden.

An Oration on "*The Nature and Principles of the Institution*" was given by the Provincial Grand Chaplain, The Reverend G.A. Walters, MC.

The ceremony of Consecration was followed by a banquet at Hawks' Assemblage, Coatsworth Road, Gateshead, for which tickets were 6s/6d. (For the benefit of the younger Brethren like myself this equates to around 32 Pence).

The name of the Lodge was taken from Eslington Hall the country seat of the Lord Ravensworth who was the first Worshipful Master of our Mother Lodge, Liddell Lodge No. 3616. Eslington Hall is situated near Whittingham in Northumberland, in the foothills of the Cheviots. The Lodge Crest clearly shows the Peel Tower of Whittingham on the south bank of the River Aln closely associated with Eslington Hall.

The first Meeting of Eslington Lodge was held in the Lecture Hall, Ravensworth Road, Dunston, on the 14th of May, 1924.

On 5th March 1930, at a meeting of Grand Lodge the Worshipful Master was presented with this Jewel and Collarette, making Eslington Lodge a Hall Stone Jewel Lodge, to mark the contribution that the Lodge made to the Masonic Million Memorial Fund.

The Foundation Stone of this Building in Holmside Avenue, Dunston was laid on the 16th July, 1932 by The Right Worshipful Bro. The Rt. Hon. Lord Ravensworth, Deputy Lieutenant. Provincial Grand Master. The first meeting of Eslington Lodge in the new building was held on the 11th of January, 1933.

The Founders of Eslington Lodge decreed in the By-Laws that the refreshments supplied at or by the Lodge after, or in connection with any meeting, should be of a "non-intoxicating nature". Despite economic considerations and social changes, and attitude towards drink, there wishes were still being observed, until October 2018. When the By-Laws were changed to allow alcohol to be served.

Over the whole life of the Lodge music has been provided by only five Brethren namely, WBro. W.S. Jorden; Bro. W.M. Clapperton, (for 38 years); Bro. J.M. Laws; WBro. D. Younger and WBro. L. Easton, an Honorary

Member of the Lodge who occupied the Office of Organist. Recently W Bro. Dr. Tony Richardson a Past Master of the Lodge of Industry has been playing at our recent meetings and we are grateful to him for providing music this evening.

One Brother who is worthy of a mention is the late W Bro. Fred Whaley who was Initiated in November 1933. He was installed as Worshipful Master in April 1949 being the 26th Master and was appointed to the rank of PPAGStdBr in 1959. WBro. Fred was a prolific visitor to the Dunston and Gateshead Lodges and well-known and respected throughout the Province. He died shortly after completing 55 years' service in November 1988 and left half of his estate to Eslington Lodge. The funds were invested wisely over the years in the "*Fred Whaley Memorial Fund*" with the interest being available and used to support the Lodge whilst the capital amount was maintained in a High Interest Account to maximise income. A further bequeathment to the Lodge from the estate of Bro. T. Barber was made in 2003. At this time it was decided that the original fund being renamed as the *Whaley, Barber Memorial Fund*. Each new Initiate on completion of his Third Degree still receives a Masonic Bible purchased from this Fund which is suitably inscribed.

There have been many family connections in the Lodge in the names of Jordan, Nicholson, Tindale, Easton, Younger, Alderdice, and Rankin, whereby sons have been proposed by their Fathers, also we have W Bro. Gregory Wake, who proposed his father Bro. George Wake.

The 50th Anniversary of Eslington Lodge was celebrated on the 8th May 1974 when the membership was 128, the 60th Anniversary was celebrated on the 13th June 1984 when the membership was 102, the 75th Anniversary was celebrated on the 10th March 1999 when the membership was 52, today the membership is 15.

In recent years Eslington Lodge has been fortunate and proud to have members appointed as Officers of United Grand Lodge. These include WBro. J.H. Easton to PAGDC in 1985 and promoted to PJGD in 1994 Harold passed away in 2015. WBro F.A. Rankin PAGDC in 2002 and promoted to PJGD, in 2021, WBro J.A. Easton PGStB in 2005 and W Bro. M. Rankin AGStB in 2018 and promoted to the acting rank of AGDC in

2024. These Brethren have served our Lodge, our Province and Grand Lodge well and we thank and congratulate them all.

We currently have 3 members who have received long membership certificates Bro. Tom Havis who was initiated in 1956 and is 93 he currently lives in Inverness after moving there to be near his family. We have also have W Bro John Spoors who was initiated in 1967 who is also 93 and lives in Staffordshire. Both Tom and John do not currently attend the Lodge but are kept informed of events by W Bro Philip Borlace who was the Lodge Almoner. We also have W Bro. George Parkinson who is here this evening with his good friend W.Bro Alf Adams. George was granted Honorary Membership in 2021 and was for many years the Lodge Director of Ceremonies and would travel from Gilsland where he lives to every Lodge Meeting and Lodge of Instruction, he received his 50-year Certificate in Haltwhistle Lodge in the Province of Northumberland in 2020. Later in this year we will have two Brethren who will reach the landmark, of 50 Years of Membership these are W Bro. Frank Rankin and W Bro. Tony Easton. These Brethren were both initiated, passed and raised together and we look forward to their celebrations in October. I would suggest booking early Brethren if you wish to attend as they both tell me they have many friends from various Companion Orders who would like attend their celebrations.

The Lodge reduced its Meetings from ten to seven in February 2015; this resulted in no further meetings in June, September, and January; historically these months were poorly attended.

Eslington Lodge No. 4623 is firmly established as a friendly Lodge to visit. Over the years we have received many accolades about our ritual work, our charitable donations, our hospitality and our standing in Dunston and our support to the Province of Durham remains unwaivered. We are a Lodge that believes in standards, both ceremonially and in the conduct of its Members and the Visiting Brethren. Long may these precepts be continued within Eslington Lodge and as we reach 100 years in age, we are grateful to all those who have went before us and thankful for all those who support us.

RW Provincial Grand Master and Brethren I thank you.