

Toast

Coquetdale Lodge No 5122

Worshipful Master, Worshipful Assistant
Provincial Grand Master, Worshipful Brethren,
Brethren All.

The toast I have the honour and great
pleasure to propose this evening is to the
Coquetdale Lodge No 5122

Firstly, may I thank W. Bro Robin Murray for
the summons and information regarding the
history of the lodge, may I also thank the
brethren of Coquetdale for the warmth of your
welcome, your kind hospitality, and the way
you have received the Provincial team this
evening. Thanks also go to W. Bro Ian Brown
at the Provincial office for his hard work and
historical research.

The Province of Northumberland has a long
and varied history, with historical evidence for
Lodges holding meetings since the beginning
of the Eighteenth Century.

The Old Historical Records very rarely gave the name of a Lodge, but more often indicated the location where it met. By 1757, only one Lodge in Northumberland had received an 'Official Name': St. John's, meeting at Newcastle.

In subsequent years, as the number of Lodges grew, some consideration was given to naming the Lodges. When a Petition was forwarded for a new Lodge, one of the first things that to be done was the selection of a name for the Lodge.

This seldom caused any difficulty, the exception being that no Lodge should normally be named after a living person (although there were exceptions to this rule in the early 20th Century: Napier Clavering Lodge and John Page Lodge)

Most Lodge names tend to reflect an actual geographical location such as Newcastle, Blyth or Ashington. Others took the name of eminent Freemasons such as Sir John Swinburne or the Percy and Ridley families.

Some Lodges were named after architectural terms such as Doric, or Ionic. Characteristics associated with Masonic Precepts, such as Temperance, Prudence or Fidelity were commonly used as Lodge names, not just locally, but nation-wide.

The Roman Occupation of Northumberland is remembered by several Lodges named after Roman placenames such as Segedunum (Wallsend), Corstopitum (Corbridge), and other locations indicated their proximity to the Roman Wall; Heddon on the Wall, and the name of Hadrian himself was also remembered.

The countryside was not forgotten. At least three Lodges are named after a physical feature of the landscape: Tyne Valley; Heart of Glendale, and Coquetdale.

The Heart of Glendale is generally taken to refer to the area at the foothill of the Cheviots, which includes Wooler, Ford, Etal and Chillingham.

The River Coquet rises in the Cheviot Hills, in the wild Border area known as Thirlmoor, and wends its way, some fifty-six miles through sparsely populated areas, towards the sea. One theory suggests the name Coquet means 'Red River' from the red pebbles that lie in parts of the river.

Coquetdale – the name 'dale' comes from the Old English 'dael' meaning valley- is thought to begin at Alnham, then continuing towards Alwinton and Whittingham, passing through many small hamlets and villages, finally branching out at the 'capital' of the dale : Rothbury.

It is interesting to note that between Alwinton and Whittingham stands Callaly Castle, at one time, the ancestral home of the Clavering Family, from whom one of our Provincial Grand Masters was descended. Thus, as we have seen, despite the rural locations, and the distances between towns and villages, Freemasonry in Northumberland continued to grow and prosper.

In the county town of Morpeth, there was a steady growth and expansion, and the Brethren of Morpeth Lodge No 4176 agreed to sponsor a new Lodge.

On February 14, 1929, sixteen brethren, predominantly from Morpeth Lodge, convened at Jubilee Hall, proposing the establishment of a new lodge named 'Coquetdale Lodge'. Brother Sam Cordrey of Lodge de Ogle made the initial proposal.

With the support of Morpeth Lodge's Past Masters Committee, plans were set in motion. The Provincial Grand Master, Colonel Charles Warren Napier-Clavering was approached, estimating the establishment cost at £100. Various venues were explored for meetings, ultimately selecting the County Hotel.

On March 7, a delegation was sent to Morpeth Lodge to formalize the request for 'mother' lodge status. The County Hotel's billiards room was chosen for meetings, with Brother Stopford designing the lodge crest and W.Bro Shotton offering to embellish the lodge with decorations.

Subsequently, the pace quickened, culminating in a meeting on March 27, chaired by WM Elect W.Bro Hugh Dickie.

Subscriptions were set, with notable decisions including the choice of the billiards room over the ballroom, contingent on rate reduction negotiations.

Further meetings ensued to finalize fees, leading to the consecration on June 27, 1929, at the County Hotel Billiards Room, officiated by W.Bro Charles W Hodgson, DPGM. The consecration drew a significant turnout, including brethren from Middlesex and even a lodge from New Zealand.

W.Bro Hugh Dickie assumed the mantle of the first master, presiding over a busy inaugural year characterized by frequent meetings and a substantial influx of candidates and joining members. The First Senior Warden was W Bro. Thomas W Curley and the First Junior Warden was Bro Charles F Murphy.

The lodge's prosperity necessitated considerations for expansion, leading to the purchase of the Sharps school building in 1931.

The subsequent alterations transformed it into a suitable Masonic meeting place. W.Bro P Grayston's generous offer facilitated this venture, with the dedication ceremony held on July 12, 1932. The membership nearly tripled in three years, indicative of the lodge's flourishing status.

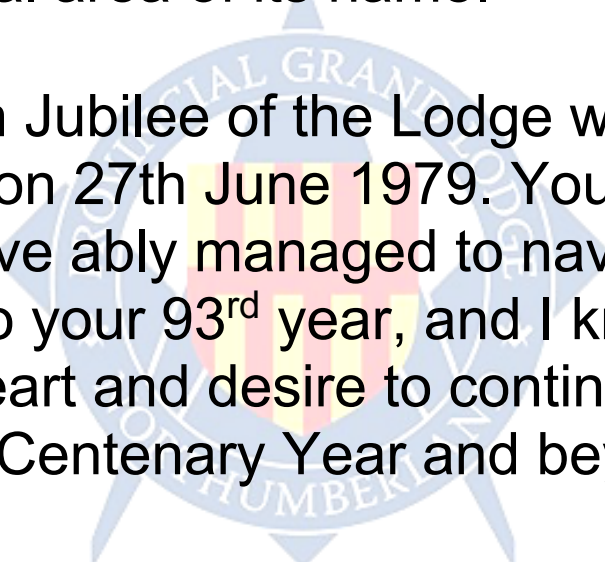
Throughout World War II, Coquetdale Lodge persevered, maintaining meetings despite disruptions. Noteworthy initiatives included excusing serving HM forces members from subscriptions and the presentation of silver pencils to them.

The lodge's charitable endeavours during this period, exemplified by substantial donations, underscored its commitment to community welfare.

The lodge's membership included a diverse array of individuals, from prominent figures like Sir Archibald Woollaston White, along with local craftsmen and professionals.

When the County Hotel became unavailable, the Lodge moved to the Masonic Hall in Morpeth in 1933, and then to Alnwick Masonic Hall in 2003, bringing it a lot nearer to the geographical area of its name.

The Golden Jubilee of the Lodge was celebrated on 27th June 1979. You yourselves as a lodge, have ably managed to navigate working into your 93rd year, and I know you have the heart and desire to continue and reach your Centenary Year and beyond.



Worshipful Master and brethren of The Coquetdale Lodge may I thank you for the warmth of your welcome, your kind hospitality, and the way you have received this toast.

W/Master can I ask that you remain seated, brethren can I ask you to stand and honour the toast.....

Which is to The Coquetdale Lodge No 5122

W. Bro Dr Chris Ainsley
Provincial Junior Grand Warden of
Northumberland

