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# Union Lodge No. 129 celebrates its 250th anniversary

Tuesday, 12 August 2014

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Shown (l to r): Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies Phillip Reeves, George Francis, Senior Warden David Kellet, Phillip Newhouse, Junior Warden Terry Wotton, Norman Thompson and Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies Tony Wilner



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## 250 YEARS OF UNION

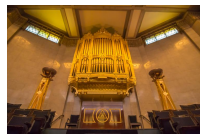
### UNION LODGE NO. 129, WHICH MEETS AT THE MASONIC HALL, STATION ROAD IN KENDAL, WAS 250 YEARS OLD ON THE 31ST JULY 2014

Records can trace their history back to when the lodge was formed and constituted on 31st July 1764. Last Thursday the lodge's current members and guests held a day of celebration to mark their 250 birthday. Union Lodge is the oldest surviving lodge in the Province of Cumberland and Westmorland which has approximately 3000 members across 80 lodges who meet in every town within the pre-1974 county boundaries.

To mark this special occasion, today's Union lodge members organised a special meeting at the Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal, followed by a banquet at the Castle Green Hotel. To start the celebrations, 40 lodge members and guests including the Provincial Grand Master RW Bro Norman James Thompson DL, gathered at the Black Swan public house, Allhallows Lane in Kendal, the original building where the Lodge was formed and first met. The W. Master of Union Lodge presented the current landlady of the Black Swan with a manuscript to mark their 250 year association.

The lodge holds records which show that in 1762 eight 'worthy gentlemen' met at the Black Swan at the top of Allhallows Lane in Kendal and discussed the possibility of forming a Masonic lodge, their professions are not recorded but their names were: Thomas Swainson, his brother Gerrard Swainson, James Bellingham, Edmund Ridley, James Fell, Mathew Holme, John Tattersall and Thomas Foster, they originally named their lodge 'Swan Lodge', to be able to form a lodge they needed to communicate with the United Grand

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Lodge of Freemasons in London, which in those days during the Reign of George III was by either by stagecoach or pack horse.

They eventually received a reply from London which informed them that a Richard Webster of lodge No. 243 in Barnard Castle was to officiate at the forming of 'Swan Lodge' on 31st July 1764. At that meeting Thomas Swainson was appointed Master of the lodge, he in turn appointed his officers and the lodge by-laws were formulated, a joining fee of One Pound One Shilling was set, fines were also set 'for swearing, sixpence', 'tuppence' for being late for a meeting and for not attending 3 meetings the penalty was exclusion.

During 250 years, the lodge has met at 12 different public houses in the town and also at number 12 Kent Street, Albert Buildings, and 111 years at Blackhall Croft, adjacent to Saint Georges Hall, 5 years at Windermere and since 1996 at its current home at the Masonic Hall, Station Road in Kendal.

Union Lodge has over the years been responsible for sponsoring 10 new lodges, Underley Lodge in Kirkby Lonsdale was formed in 1865, Whitwell Lodge in Millom in 1872, Windermere Lodge in 1887, Ambleside Lodge in 1888, Eversley Lodge, Kendal in 1921, Trinity Lodge in 1948, Westmorland Lodge of Installed Masters in 1951 Brigantes Lodge, Kendal and Lakeland Lodge who meet in London both in 2001 and Kendalian Lodge in 2002; a very busy and successful lodge who's survival for 250 years in the town of Kendal is a huge achievement and shows the commitment and dedication of the lodge's members in Kendal over the years.

The meeting at the Brewery Arts Centre was attended by roughly 200 brethren from across this and other Provinces, special guest of honour was RW Bro George Pipon Francis, Past Senior Grand Warden, The RW Provincial Grand Master Bro Norman James Thompson, the Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Warwickshire, RW Bro David Macey and other distinguished brethren.

The brethren of Union Lodge entered the Brewery Theatre in procession and proceeded to open the lodge, The Provincial Grand Master and the officers of Provincial Grand Lodge then entered in procession, the gavel of the lodge was offered by the Worshipful Master to RW Bro Thompson who returned the gavel but hoped he would be offered it later as he had some business to carry out. The representative of United Grand Lodge RW Bro Francis then entered the lodge with an escort of Grand Officers.

The WM Bro C.P. Newhouse asked that the minutes of the consecration meeting held on the 31st July 1764 be read by the Provincial Secretary, W Bro W Douthwaite, who also read in great detail the lodge Warrant and all present stood in respect while the names of the Founders of Union Lodge were read.

W Bro Richard Parker PJGD gave a lecture on the history of Union Lodge 129 which included details of the preparations to consecrate the lodge, its by-laws including the fines for various breaches of those by-laws by the brethren and the contribution Union Lodge has made to local Freemasonry by the sponsorship of 10 daughter lodges.

The lodge is also the proud custodians of a set of 1772 tracing cloths which have been authenticated by Grand Lodge Library and museum as being the oldest in existence.

Bro Newhouse then invited the RW Provincial Grand Master to take the lodge gavel, which he was pleased to accept, he spoke of the dedication of Union Lodge brethren over the years and his own experience as a young mason making his first ever visit to a lodge, Union Lodge in fact and the pleasure he had felt in his frequent visits over many subsequent years.

Before retiring from the chair, the Provincial Grand Master instructed the Deputy Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies to present W Bro David Poole OBE and W Bro Bill Kerr to him, The Provincial Grand Master thanked W Bros Poole and Kerr for all their hard work in planning and executing today's celebratory meeting and to the applause of the assembled brethren appointed them both to the rank of Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden with immediate effect.

The WM was invited to return to his rightful place and the meeting was closed just after 3 pm, the Union Lodge brethren and their guests were then bussed to the Castle Green Hotel for the celebration banquet.

All present enjoyed an excellent meal at The Castle Green Hotel, RW Bro George Pipon Francis congratulated Union Lodge for achieving their 250th year in existence and the Worshipful Master and brethren for the way they had



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Gratefully received from the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP from the House of Commons, attached...

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conducted the day's celebrations, and he presented the lodge with a gift from The United Grand Lodge of England to mark the occasion.

VW Bro Keith Young PGSwdB, Deputy Provincial Grand Master proposed the toast to Union Lodge No. 129, his mother lodge, he thanked W Bros Poole and Kerr who had been the driving force behind today's celebrations for their dedication in bringing the day to fruition. VW Bro Young also informed the brethren that today had been subsidised by a legacy left to the lodge by W Bro Raymond Poole, he had left the lodge a sum of money to be used for the benefit of the lodge, and he felt sure that benefit had been achieved in an excellent day of celebration for Union Lodge.



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ENGLAND, FREEMASONS' HALL,  
GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON,  
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