

## Brontë Lodge of Mark Masons No.535

The Mark Master Masons degree in its present form dates back to the late 18th century and like Masonry in general has its origins in the days of the operative mason whose mark identified him and was registered as "sufficient tryall of his skill and worthyness in his vocation and craft."

Held by some to have an early association with the Royal Arch Degree it is in fact a separate Degree operating under its own Grand Lodge constituted in 1856.

The Brontë Lodge was consecrated on the 17th March 1900 by the Provincial Grand Master.

Of the ten Founder members, nine were from Three Graces and one was from Fearnley Lodge at Halifax.

The first meeting was held in the following month at the "Private Rooms" in Lodge Street.

The much admired Lodge Banner depicts a Past Master's jewel and the old Haworth Parish Church (demolished in 1879).

In its first year the Lodge admitted eight Brethren into membership and over the years there has been a steady influx of members. In the Chapter relating to the period 1900-1930 reference is made to the proposal to erect and move to new premises at Ebor Lane Top, a move welcomed by Brontë Lodge.

An early highlight in the Lodge calendar was in 1913 when the Lodge was host to Provincial Grand Lodge in the new Masonic Hall. Lunch was served to some 87 Brethren and wives and thereafter they enjoyed an outing in wagonettes travelling around Haworth and Stanbury to view the sights.

Later the Provincial meeting commenced at 5 p.m. and at 6.04 p.m. the Brethren and Wives caught the train to Keighley where a "very substantial" dinner was served at the Queens Hotel. Some might say a worthy precedent for all Provincial meetings!

Like many Masonic minutes only routine matters were recorded by the Lodge which in effect are of interest only to the Brethren of Brontë Lodge. Suffice it to say the Lodge is well supported and benefits from a regular intake of new members. The Lodge which meets six times a year on the Monday after the full moon is highly regarded in the Province and is described as "a Triple Keystone Lodge" which title refers to donations made to Grand Lodge to help finance the refurbishment of the Headquarter premises obtained in 1979 in St. James Street, London, and the furnishings therein.

The Brethren believe the Mark Degree to be "The Friendly Degree" and the Lodge upholds that reputation in its practice of Mark Masonry, in the social activities for the benefits of Brethren, their wives and friends and in its support for charitable objectives both local and national.

The Brethren now look forward with keen anticipation to the centenary celebrations in March 2000.

Compiled by W.Bro. D. Moore, P.P.G.J.W