

**Newtowncunningham True Blues LOL 1063.**  
**The first 100 years 1911-2011**

Newtowncunningham True Blues LOL1063, in East Donegal celebrate their Centenary this year. The warrant to open the lodge was instituted 100 years ago in June 1911 amid the Third Home Rule Crisis. The founding members joined from the local area and some transferred from lodges such as Carrigans and St. Johnston. The first Worshipful Master was Thomas Sproule. Under his leadership, at the end of the first year, the Lodge had 72 members.



**The First W.M. of LOL1063. Thomas A. Sproule in Ulster Volunteer Uniform.**

The lodge was fortunate to receive the gift of a building for use as an Orange hall on the village main street which had formerly been used as a tannery and a distillery! The same building has served the lodge well right up to last year. Under the dedicated leadership of the current Worshipful Master Bro. Gibson, finishing touches are at present being made to a new orange hall. The new hall has been erected on the same site and is due to open, DV, in October 2011.

In the First World War no fewer than 36 members, exactly fifty percent of the lodge, went off to the war. Seven of them were killed in action. These men, along with those who served are commemorated on a magnificent memorial in the hall dedicated to their memory. A wreath laying ceremony takes place at the lodge's annual Remembrance service in November.

Lodge numbers remained steady at about 50 between the war years. Five members served with the Allied Forces during WW2 but this period marked a watershed in lodge fortunes with numbers declining due to emigration because of economic reasons and later the troubles. Locally there were regular attacks on Protestant churches and private property. By 1990, the year of the Tercentenary of the Battle of the Boyne, effective numbers were down in the mid teens. However, throughout all the bad times, the lodge continued to meet and improve the hall.

By the mid 1990's, the lodge had weathered the storm and membership started to increase. Newtowncunningham LOL 1063 became a very exciting lodge to belong to. New members were attracted by the enthusiasm and energy of the lodge. Meetings were well attended and more improvements were made to the hall. Although Newtown has one of the smaller lodges in the district, there is a healthy membership of 36.

Orange Banners arguably form the most visible and interesting spectacle at parades and are designed to represent the private lodges' identity. Newtowncunningham has had four (or possibly five!) banners in their history. There *may* have been an older banner but the oldest surviving banner is now held in Donegal County Museum. The next surviving banner purchased in 1953, depicts a magnificent Battle of the Boyne scene and on the reverse "The Angel with the Book". In March 2000 another banner was unfurled replacing the tattered and torn 1953 banner. It has "The Open Bible & Crown" as its reverse side. In May 2011 the lodge unfurled a new banner to mark their centenary. This depicts the Lodge's War Memorial on one side and King William on the other and is a magnificent banner that will represent Newtowncunningham at parades for many a year to come.



**Oldest known LOL1063 banner, now in Donegal County Museum.**



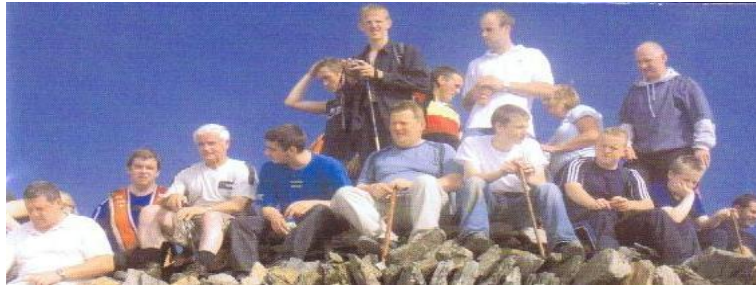
**New Centenary banner unfurled in May 2011.**

Charity is an important part of the work any Orange lodge. Newtowncunningham LOL1063 has supported Donegal Hospice, Meningitis Trust, Cancer Research, Earl Haig Fund, Alzheimer's Ireland, Crumlin Childrens Hospital, Guide Dogs for the Blind, All Saints Church of Ireland Newtown, Moyle National School, Greenbank Hall Rebuilding Fund and Help for Heroes to name but a few. Lodge members take part in the Portrush Raft Race in support of the RNLI. Members also give generously to the various Orange Charities.



**LOL1063 contributed to this record donation to Cancer Research from Grand Lodge of Ireland.**

What else do members get up to with the lodge? There are regular monthly meetings where the general business of running the lodge takes place. The lodge is part of Raphoe District under the auspices of City of Londonderry Grand Orange Lodge and therefore attends Twelfth celebrations in North Londonderry and being a Donegal lodge, Rossnowlagh of course! Apart from private lodge business there are visits to other lodges' meetings, socials, dances and religious services. There also have been trips to Dan Winters cottage, Co. Armagh, the birthplace of Orangism and Schomberg House in Belfast, the Orange HQ. Bushmills Distillery and Glasgow Rangers have also featured in recent times. In 2005, brethren paid a visit to the battlefields of WW1. In 2006, members went on a trip to Canada to celebrate the 317<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne in Toronto! Also in 2006, members and friends set off to climb 3561ft to the top of Mount Snowdon in Wales. There is a trip to historic sites in Dublin planned for later this year.



**On Top of Mt. Snowden, Wales.**

Although Newtowncunningham Orange Lodge has a rich history spanning 100 years, it is not stuck in the past. The lodge is forward thinking and always striving to improve. It offers much to members by way of fraternalism and friendship. Members are urged be good citizens of the State and regular at worship at the various Protestant churches. It promotes a better understanding of our culture and heritage. Members have the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Lodge members have served the local community in various capacities from Newtowncunningham Community Development Initiative (NCDI), Donegal County Council and nationally in the Irish Farmers Association. The hall has been used by every section of the community and the new hall will be available to groups for various activities. Orangemen and Protestants in the Republic of Ireland can take heart from the words of our President Mary Mc Aleese when she said, "you can be British and Irish, Irish and Orange". Indeed it is with optimism that Newtowncunningham True Blues LOL1063 steps out into their next century!!

If you are interested in booking the hall or joining the lodge, then email [info1063@eircom.net](mailto:info1063@eircom.net).