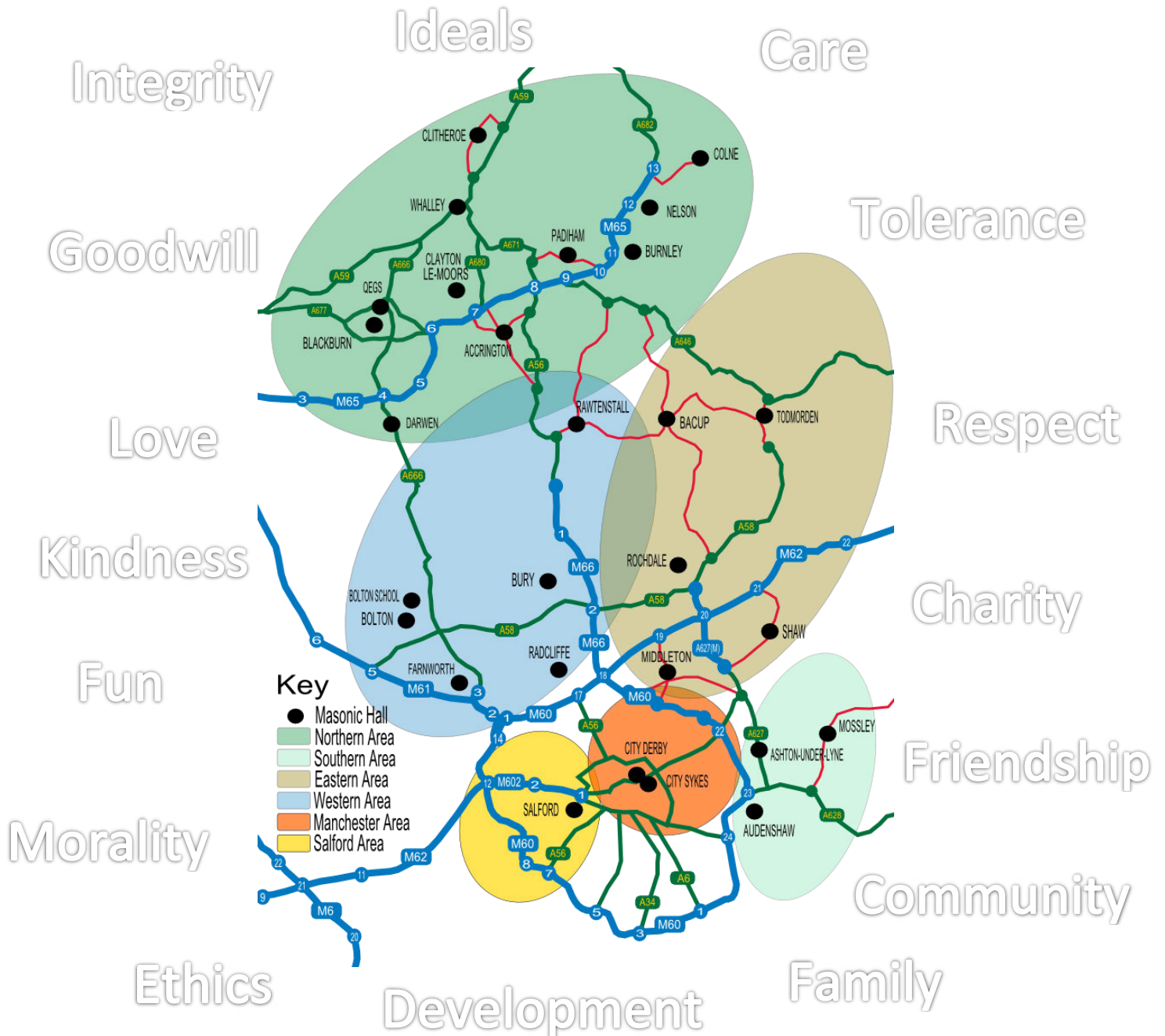




Province of East Lancashire Information Handbook



Welcome to Freemasonry in East Lancashire

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Welcome

Welcome to Freemasonry in the Province of East Lancashire. Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest fraternal societies.

There are over 250,000 Freemasons in England and Wales and around six million Freemasons worldwide.

In England and Wales there are over 7000 Lodges and in this Province, East Lancashire, we have more the 250 Lodges.

This booklet is intended to offer you a brief introduction to Freemasonry, and help answer some of the questions you may have. You will also find useful information on our website at www.pglel.co.uk



Sir David Trippier, *RD, JP, DL*
Provincial Grand Master

Freemasonry, like so many other forces for good, forms an important part of the fabric of our society. Together we strive to take pleasure from our masonic associations and extended family, become better people, actively and financially support charitable and other good causes and learn to find meaning and stability in an often turbulent and difficult world.

The social side of Freemasonry is generally dignified, enjoyable and attended by good company. We have strict codes of decorum and dress, and share gentlemanly company, whether we be dining with our members after Lodge or entertaining our family and friends during a fund raising evening or celebratory function.

Our membership consists of men of quality, who are seeking something additional in life. Masonic teachings give us a code for living that complement our pre-existing valuing systems, and encourage us to become more virtuous; better husbands, fathers, friends and colleagues.

What is Freemasonry?

There are probably as many interpretations as there are Freemasons and, our members will all be able to say what it is exactly that Freemasonry means to them. The formal story is that:

- 1 **Freemasonry consists of a body of men banded together for the purpose of mutual intellectual, social and moral improvement and pledged to preserve our traditions. Its members endeavour to cultivate and exhibit love and charity to one another and the world at large and, as individuals, search for the truth in their being.**
- 2 **The essential condition for membership is a belief in a Supreme Being.**
- 3 **Masonry recognises no distinction of religion and emphasises the duties of loyalty and citizenship. It does not permit any of its members to discuss religious or political questions in Lodge (to avoid discord), but encourages membership from all recognised religions, bringing men together in harmony. We actually encourage our members to pursue their own religions and we believe that there is nothing incompatible between Freemasonry and any religion.**
- 4 **It offers no financial advantages binding one Mason to deal with another, or to support him in any way in the ordinary business relations of life.**
- 5 **We support a wide variety of Masonic and non-Masonic charities and good causes but Masonry is not in any financial sense a mutual-benefit society. Masonic Charities are solely for the less fortunate.**
- 6 **Masonry teaches that a man's first duty is to God and his family. People should not therefore join if the associated fees and charitable contributions will be to the detriment of their loved ones. Each Mason should be sure:**
 - **He desires the intellectual and moral improvement of himself and others;**
 - **He is willing to devote time, means and efforts in the promotion of brotherly love, relief and truth;**
 - **He seeks no commercial, social or pecuniary advantages; and,**
 - **He is able to afford the necessary expenditure without detriment to himself or his dependants.**

As our members progress on their Masonic journeys they begin to understand the advantages of membership and the additional meaning it brings to their lives. They joined because someone they knew, admired or loved – a friend or family member – was a Mason, who wanted to share with them what they enjoyed.

In East Lancashire we want Freemasonry to be fun, dignified and stimulating. This may be achieved through a quest for knowledge, giving back to society, gaining new friends from all backgrounds and age groups, self-improvement or achievement. There is nothing quite like Freemasonry elsewhere in life!

Here are some quotes from our brethren that they attribute to Freemasonry:

“We enjoy distinctive meetings not available in other organisations followed by dinner amongst friends”

“Freemasonry has well managed fund raising and giving activities”

“Our meetings are mentally stimulating, sometimes challenging, always enjoyable”

“The history of Freemasonry and its links with society generally are fascinating”

“We are reminded to consider our moral outlook and character – this system for living has made me a much better father, family member, colleague and Mason”

“I have developed increased confidence, especially with public speaking and on a social level”

“We meet with like minded people from differing backgrounds on equal terms”

“We share journeys of personal development together”

“My wife enjoys Freemasonry too and is very active on our Lodge social and ladies committee”

We encourage Masons to speak openly about their membership and their enjoyment of Freemasonry. In time you our members are encouraged to introduce their own friends to our Order. We also have many members who happened upon Freemasonry on the internet or through other sources, believed it to be good, and actively sought membership themselves.

After joining new members are called Entered Apprentices and have become a member of “The Craft” – a term used to describe the three degrees of Freemasonry. An Entered Apprentice their next step will to progress through the remaining two degrees – Fellow Craft and Master Mason. It is senseless just going through the motions without understanding and each Lodge has a Mentor, who with the Proposer and others helps them grasp the meaning of each ceremony, takes them to see other ceremonies and meet members in different Lodges.

When they eventually become a Master Mason they can then take a much fuller part in their own, ‘Mother’, Lodge, or any other Lodges they may join. They will also start to move through the seven progressive offices of the Lodge, resulting in becoming the Worshipful Master for the year.

Each Officer of the Lodge has a role to play in each ceremony that is performed, although taking office is an individual’s choice. There is more about Offices later. If one decides to hold office, they will be expected to learn their part in the ritual and play a role in the team that carry out the various ceremonies. This is memorised from the Ritual Book given when they become a Master Mason. The Ritual Books are freely available in libraries and from the internet. The Lodge Mentor and his team give support when required, to learn and understand the ritual.

On becoming a member we are presented with the [Book of Constitutions](#). This is a useful reference for further information about Freemasonry and can be downloaded from the website of the United Grand Lodge of England at <http://www.ugle.org.uk/>.

The first part is about the Craft. The latter part is about the Holy Royal Arch or ‘Chapter’. One can join Chapter 4 weeks after becoming a Master Mason. More will be said about the Royal Arch later in this guide.



Book of
Constitutions

Our Meetings

The meetings are in two parts – The Lodge meeting and the Festive or Social Board.

Most Lodges meet between 6 and 8 times per year between September/October and April/May. They are usually on the same day of the month with a rehearsal or practice night one week before.



A Lodge Meeting celebrating 50 Years of Membership

Before each meeting members receive a summons which includes an agenda for the next meeting.

As in any association there is a certain amount of administration: minutes of the last meeting, discussion and voting on financial matters, news and correspondence, proposing and balloting for new members.



The Festive Board after the meeting

Part of the meeting will include collecting alms, when we are expected to donate a small amount to Charity. Then there are ceremonies, lectures or special items which form the core of the formal Lodge Meeting.

The Festive Board is the dinner following the meeting which is the best opportunity to meet fellow and visiting members. This is followed by a standard list of toasts. The Festive Board is usually over by 10pm when some members may choose to carry on socialising before returning home.

Our Structure

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE)

UGLE is the ruling and governing body of Freemasonry in this country. It is based at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London. For administrative purposes Lodges around the country are grouped under either the Metropolitan Grand Lodge or Provincial Grand Lodges, depending upon their geographical location.

UGLE is governed by The Grand Master, who is The Most Worshipful His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent. A number of senior executive officers and selected senior brethren assist him. Because the Grand Master is a member of the Royal Family, there is also a Pro Grand Master appointed to act on his behalf when the Grand Master needs to attend Royal duties. The Grand Master is also assisted by a Deputy Grand Master and an Assistant Grand Master. These people are often referred to as the Rulers and in turn are assisted by many other ranked officers.

Grand Lodge meets four times a year at what are known as "Quarterly Communications". Those eligible to attend include Grand Officers, and the Masters, Past Masters and Wardens of private Lodges.

Lodges Abroad

Many countries throughout the world have Freemasons' Lodges which are governed by a defined Grand Lodge (e.g. the Grand Lodge of Sweden, the Grand Lodge of Hungary, etc). Some of these foreign Grand Lodges have descended directly from UGLE. The Constitutions, Rules and Regulations of such Grand Lodges are recognised as 'regular' and English Freemasons are permitted to join in the meetings, even though some things may be slightly different to those used in Lodges at home. Some Grand Lodges, on the other hand, have Constitutions, Rules and Regulations that are not acceptable to the UGLE (i.e. they are 'irregular') and we are not permitted to participate in the affairs of their associated private Lodges.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire

Outside London, which has its own distinct organisation, the remainder of England and Wales is divided into 47 Masonic Provinces. Arising from the success of Freemasonry in the North West of England, Lancashire has been split into two Provinces – East Lancashire and West Lancashire [which are amongst the largest Provinces within Freemasonry] - our immediate neighbours being the Provincial Grand Lodges of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire West Riding and Cumberland and Westmorland.

Since 1864, our Headquarters have been in Manchester, first in Cooper Street and, since 1929, at Freemasons' Hall, Bridge Street, Manchester. It includes a library and a museum, both of which have interesting collections.

The Provincial Grand Master for East Lancashire is Right Worshipful Brother Sir David Trippier. He, like the Grand Master, is supported by a number of senior Provincial Grand Officers, including a Deputy and six Assistant Provincial Grand Masters, as well as Officers in similar positions to those you will find in an individual Lodge.

A number of Brethren in our Lodges will hold what is called Provincial Grand Rank. They wear an apron and collar of a dark blue colour. Each year, the RW Provincial Grand Master makes appointments on the recommendation of his APGM's, at an Investiture which takes place at a Provincial Grand Lodge meeting. One of the usual qualifications for appointment is that a Brother has served as the Worshipful Master of his Lodge. The time span between his Mastership of his Lodge and his appointment as a Provincial Grand Officer is at the discretion of the RW Provincial Grand Master who will consider a brother's contribution to Freemasonry in general and his own Lodge in particular, but it is usually about 7 years.

Because of the size of East Lancashire, the Province is split geographically into an Area (each Area looked after by an Assistant Provincial Grand Master) and then District structure, which was established to assist the administration. Each Lodge has a District Representative to serve as a link between the Lodge, the District and the Province. The Lodge Representative makes regular reports during the masonic season and is a conduit for two way communication between the Lodge and the District.

The District has a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman, a Secretary, a District Charity Steward, a Communications Officer, a District Mentor, a Membership Officer, a Recruitment Officers and a Royal Arch Officer. The District Committee comprises representatives from each of the Lodges in the District, together with Representatives of Royal Arch Chapters. The District Officers are responsible to, and are supported by, the Assistant Provincial Grand Master in the Craft and the Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals in the Royal Arch.

The District provides for two-way communication between the Lodges and Chapters and Provincial Grand Lodge through its Chairman and his colleagues. We are encouraged at all times to seek the advice of the District Representative in our Lodges should there be any matters concerning us regarding the organisation of the Province itself or the Hall where we meet.

The Lodge and its Officers

Within a Lodge there are lots of Masons with separate jobs to do, guiding us, asking questions, or teaching us about the Craft. There are others who look after the administration, ceremonial and finances of the Lodge. In fact, to conduct a meeting and ceremony a Lodge ideally requires 12 non-progressive officers and 7 progressive officers. They are listed in a Summons that convenes the meeting.

Progressive officers

Usually each year a Brother would progress through these offices on a path from Steward to the highest honour within a Lodge – the Worshipful Master, although each office is subject to the choice of the Master for the year.

- 1 Steward
- 2 Inner Guard
- 3 Junior Deacon
- 4 Senior Deacon
- 5 Junior Warden
- 6 Senior Warden
- 7 Worshipful Master (WM)

Non-progressive officers

The non-progressive officers are:

- 1 Immediate Past Master (IPM)
- 2 Chaplain
- 3 Treasurer
- 4 Secretary
- 5 Director of Ceremonies (DC)
- 6 Mentor
- 7 Almoner
- 8 Charity Steward
- 9 Assistant Secretary
- 10 Assistant Director of Ceremonies (ADC)
- 11 Organist
- 12 Tyler

These offices are usually occupied by members who are past Masters of the Lodge and tend to be occupied by the same person for a number of years, to provide continuity and experience. They are also appointed by the Master annually, except the Treasurer and Tyler, who are elected. The IPM is the preceding year's WM. Ideally most Officers will stay in Office for a period and then make way for newer Past Masters to share the work of the Lodge.

Lodge officers are recognisable by the jewels suspended from their Lodge collars. Where they sit in Lodge also helps indicate their role. There is a useful plan of a Lodge room later in this Guide.

Progressive Officers

STEWARDS



This is likely to be the first office one has in the Lodge. The Stewards' main function is an integral part of a successful Festive Board (dinner) after Lodge, as in many Lodges the Stewards will be responsible for arranging the evening, serving drinks, conducting a raffle etc. It is a very good way to meet the members.

INNER GUARD



The Inner Guard sits just inside the door of the Lodge. He admits accredited brethren into the Lodge, advises when there is a Candidate or Member wishing to enter the Lodge and checks that everything is in order before entrance is allowed.

JUNIOR AND SENIOR DEACONS



The Deacons look after and guide the Candidates during ceremonies. Their duties are carried out with care and dignity. The enjoyment and understanding of a new member can be greatly enhanced by the sympathetic attitude of the Deacons and by the efficiency of their working. They have one of the most interesting and delightful roles, which involves both learning ritual and floor-work. They also carry a wand as a badge of office.

JUNIOR AND SENIOR WARDENS



The Wardens have different but complementary roles in the Lodge and assist the Master to open and close the Lodge and conduct the rituals. In the normal course of events this year's Junior Warden will be next year's Senior Warden, and the Senior Warden will be next year's Master. The Senior Warden sits opposite the Master in the West of the Lodge. The Junior Warden is entrusted with ensuring that no unqualified person enters the Lodge. The Junior Warden sits in the South.

WORSHIPFUL MASTER



The Worshipful Master is elected each year by the brethren of the Lodge, and is then 'Installed' into the Chair by his predecessor. He usually occupies the Office for one year, although this can be extended to two. He is in charge of the Lodge for his year, acts as its Chairman and normally conducts most of the ceremonies – although he can share the work if desired. The Master sits in the East of the Lodge and must have served as Senior or Junior Warden for a year before being appointed. On becoming Master for the first time a Mason is then referred to as a Worshipful Brother.

Non-progressive Officers

IMMEDIATE PAST MASTER (IPM)



After his year as Master of the Lodge a Mason Becomes the Immediate Past Master (IPM). Strictly the IPM is not an Officer of the Lodge, but his position is an important one, as it is his responsibility to sit beside the Master; both in the Lodge Room and the Festive Board, and give him support and guidance when required.

CHAPLAIN



Whilst the discussion of religion (and politics) is not permitted within our meetings, each one opens and closes with prayer. Many Lodges that have no members of the clergy amongst their number appoint one of their senior Masons to the office.

TREASURER



As you would imagine the Treasurer is responsible for the finances of the Lodge. Annually he produces a financial summary report which is audited by the elected Lodge Auditors. It is the responsibility of each member to pay his subscriptions, together with any dining charges, promptly. The Treasurer settles any debts incurred by the Lodge, such as the Lodge rent for the building where meetings are held, the various levies imposed by Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodge and dining expenditure. The Treasurer requires sound judgement, for ultimately, it is on his recommendation that the level of subscriptions for the members is set.

SECRETARY



The Secretary has hands-on daily administration of all matters connected with the smooth running of the Lodge. He is effectively the conduit between Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodge and the Lodge. He receives the mail addressed to the Lodge and submits returns detailing the membership, ceremonies conducted and matters associated with the day-to-day affairs of the Lodge. Normally a Secretary holds the post for a number of years, providing continuity and experience for successive Masters. It is the Secretary's duty to organise the summons and distribute them. An experienced Secretary will advise on any problems or queries. He will also have a Year book for the Province and Grand Lodge containing important contact details. There may be an Assistant Secretary to support the Secretary.

DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES (DC)



The DC should have a love of ritual; as his title implies, his function is to direct the ceremonial aspects of our meetings. As in public life when ceremonial is required, such as State Funeral or Royal Wedding, the important events call for meticulous planning, rehearsal and organising for the requirements of the occasion. The DC's role is to make certain that ceremonies are efficiently conducted with dignity and decorum and that all concerned are aware in advance of what they have to do. The Assistant DC helps the DC and acts as his understudy.

ALMONER



The Almoner is effectively the Lodge Welfare Officer, as it is he who maintains contact with the brethren who through age or infirmity are unable to attend meetings, with Lodge widows and with the members suffering from illness. He should have knowledge of the variety of resources that exist in time of need. The Almoner would organise petitions for assistance in cases of extreme need, and generally be on the lookout for signs of distress or loneliness among the members of the Lodge or their dependants.

CHARITY STEWARD



The Charity Steward is responsible for co-ordinating the Lodge's charitable affairs in the most efficient way. He should have knowledge of the various methods of making donations and will be happy to give help and advice to the members on these matters. A part of the Charity Steward's role is to encourage members to donate charitably within their means to support masonic and non-masonic good causes. He should be well versed on our 4 National Charities, the Provincial Charity and local good cause / charitable matters.

ORGANIST



Many Lodges have within their membership a brother adequately skilled to play the organ at meetings, some rely on professional organists. Having an organist adds to the overall decorum of the meeting.

TYLER



The Tyler guards the outside of the door to the Lodge. This is an elected office. It is often carried out by a senior and experienced member of the fraternity, as he is the officer who prepares the new member for the ceremonies, and should make sure that he understands the specific items in which he has been instructed. The Tyler is not necessarily a member of the Lodge.

Lodge Items

The Lodge room contains particular items, or furniture. They have a variety of uses – some are symbolic, and some practical. These are present in virtually every Lodge.

CARPET OR MOSAIC PAVEMENT

In most Lodge Rooms there is a black and white squared carpet or chequered floor. This denotes our chequered existence, happiness and sorrow.

CHAIRS AND PEDESTALS

There are chairs or benches for all those attending our meetings around the squared carpet but three of these chairs will be behind pedestals or small tables. In many cases the chair and the pedestal will be marked with the jewel of the occupant. The chair and pedestal in the East is for the Worshipful Master. Opposite him in the West is the Senior Warden and in the South the Junior Warden. On the Master's pedestal will be placed the Bible, called "The Volume of the Sacred Law".

THE WARRANT

The Warrant of the Lodge is granted to the Lodge by the Most Worshipful Grand Master at its Consecration. This Warrant must be in the Lodge Room when a Lodge is opened. It will always be displayed at the making of a new member and when a new Master is installed. In some Lodges, it may be on display throughout the ceremony.

VOLUME OF THE SACRED LAW (VSL)

In the English Constitution, the VSL is the Holy Bible. The VSL is always open when a Lodge is conducting business or one of its ceremonies. The Square and Compasses will be placed upon the VSL. If a Sacred Volume is required for Brethren of a faith other than Christian, then the Volume will be placed in front of or beside the Bible, but never on top.

THE 'MOVEABLE JEWELS'

These are the Square, the Level and the Plumb-Rule, which are the Jewels of the Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden respectively. The 'Jewels' and the other 'tools' used in Masonic ceremonies are referred to in documents from the early 1700s.

ROUGH AND SMOOTH ASHLARS



Rough Ashlar

These are the 'Immovable Jewels'. They represent two different stages in Freemasonry and understanding. The rough ashlar is thought of as the stone on which an apprentice can learn the art of stonemasonry. The smooth ashlar is used by the more experienced stonemason to hone and perfect his skills.

THE COLUMNS OF THE JW AND SW

Each Warden has a column on his pedestal. These will usually show the designs of the Doric order for the Senior Warden, denoting strength, and the Corinthian order for the Junior Warden, denoting beauty. Usually the Columns are surmounted by a celestial or terrestrial globe which point out Masonry universal. The Wardens will also position their Columns to show if the Lodge is 'opened' or 'closed'.

THE WORKING TOOLS

The Working Tools of each degree are fully explained in the ritual. The appropriate sets of tools are displayed in the Lodge for each degree.

TRACING BOARDS



The Tracing Boards have always been a feature of Freemasonry. These three boards illustrate the story of each degree, the details being explained during the ceremony.

LODGE BANNERS

Many Lodges have a Banner, though it is not a necessity. Some Banners date back to the consecration of the Lodge, some are more recent. They often depict the origin, or some particular characteristics of the Lodge.

THE BALLOT BOX

The Ballot Box is used for voting for new members, and can be of a variety of designs. Some have a 'yes' and 'no' drawer; (members place a ballot ball in the relevant drawer) and others one drawer. The correct procedure for balloting may differ between Lodges. A certain number of black balls or balls in the 'no' drawer, as per Lodge By-Laws, will exclude a potential member, hence the term 'black-balled'. Deacons hand out the appropriate number of balls needed.

WANDS OF OFFICE

The Director of Ceremonies and his Assistant, and the Senior and Junior Deacons each have a Wand of Office. The DC and his Assistant will always carry their wands when moving about the Lodge. The Deacons, depending on the ritual, may carry theirs.

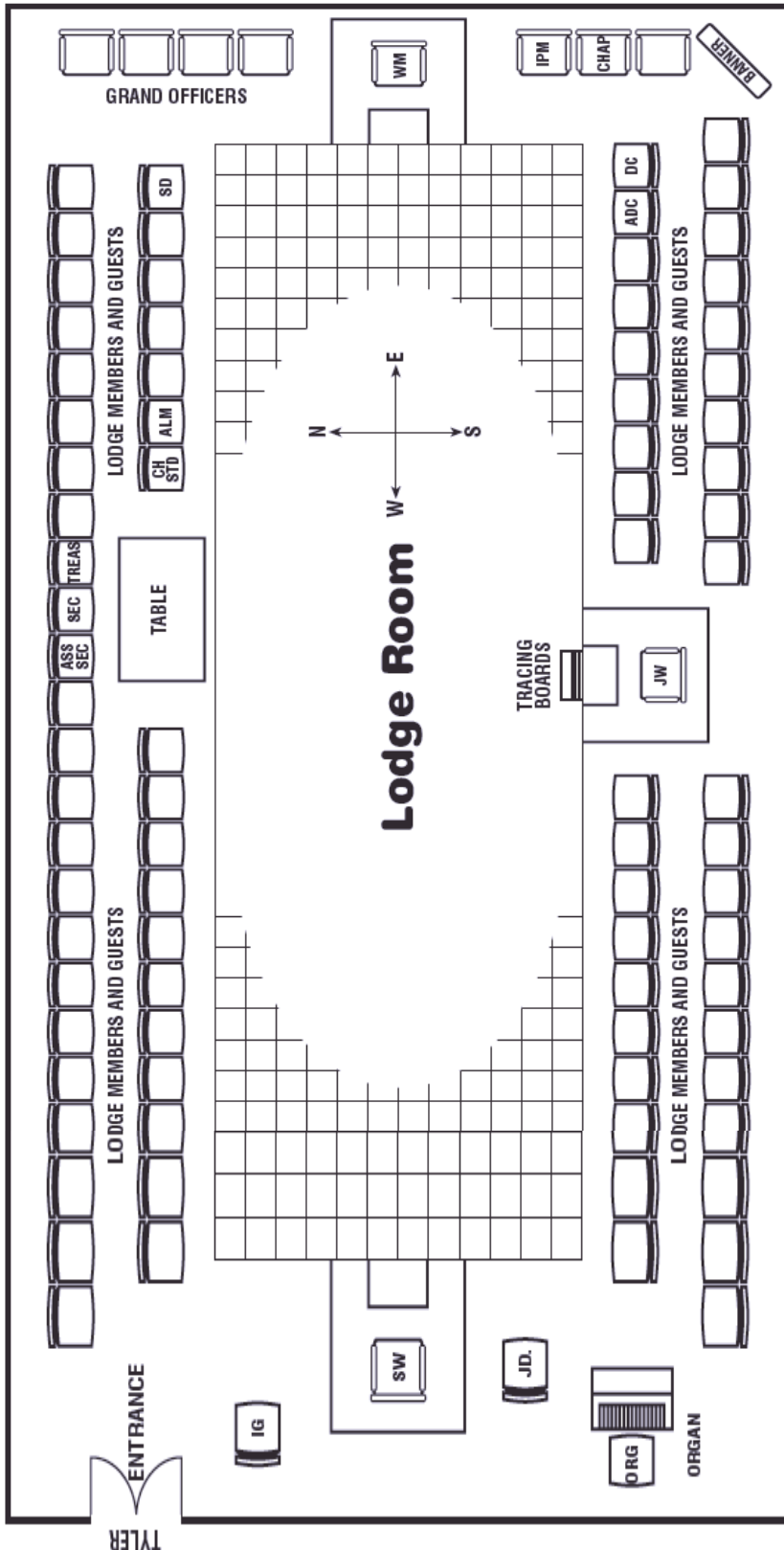
THE GAVELS



The Worshipful Master, and the Senior and Junior Wardens each have a Gavel. A Gavel is used by the Master to gain the members' attention when he is about to speak. The Master will sound his Gavel, followed by the Senior Warden and the Junior Warden. The same procedure is followed at the Festive Board when the Master is about to propose a toast or take wine.

The Lodge Room

The Lodge Room Plan on the following page shows a typical layout. This is where a Lodge holds its regular meetings. They vary in different places as some premises are purpose built, whilst others are converted or even shared with other functions.



Key	
WM	Worshipful Master
IPM	Immediate Past Master
SW	Senior Warden
JW	Junior Warden
CHAP	Chaplain
SEC	Secretary
DC	Director of Ceremonies
IG	Inner Guard
ALM	Almoner
CStwd	Charity Steward
ASS SEC	Assistant Secretary
SD	Senior Deacon
JD	Junior Deacon
ADC	Assistant DC
ORG	Organist

Regalia

Dress Code

The dress code in most Lodges is similar: a dark lounge suit or Morning Dress (a black jacket and waistcoat with striped trousers), appropriate tie, white shirt, white gloves, black shoes and socks. An appropriate tie is either plain black, the Grand Lodge Craft tie or in East Lancashire, the East Lancashire Craft Tie.

Wearing an apron

The apron should be worn with the top above the midriff. The apron is full of symbolism. It is possible that the string that ties an apron when one first joins is allowed to hang down at the front. These ends of string are the ancestors of the ornamental fringe seen on 18th Century Masons' aprons, and of the "tassels" on the aprons worn by all members once they have become Master Masons. On the two tassels (representing the two pillars) are seven individual strands that hang at the bottom, these too have a significance. There are a number of Masonic papers on the symbolism of regalia should you be interested in finding out more. Initially aprons are provided by the Tyler, however, when one becomes a Master Mason one is expected to purchase their own. They are available from a variety of Masonic regalia suppliers. In some Lodges a dinner suit with black bow tie is worn at the Installation Meeting.

Aprons and Collars

Some members wear dark blue aprons and collars and occasionally someone may be wearing a red one. These all have different significance. The only regalia, badges and other ornaments permitted in the Lodge are those attributable to the Craft itself and when one becomes a member of a Chapter, the appropriate 'Royal Arch' jewel.

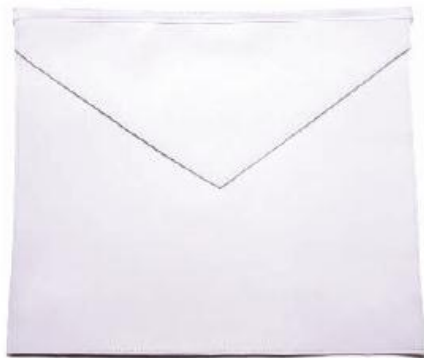
A little earlier, in the section on Masonic Structure, the various ranks were briefly outlined. Members of the Craft who have been honoured by The Grand Master with Grand Rank, or honoured by the Provincial Grand Master with Provincial Grand Rank are entitled to wear two types of apron dependent on the occasion or personal choice, that of Dress or Undress Regalia. The collar badges of the various ranks vary, dependent on rank. These are explained in the Book of Constitutions. Occasionally one will see members wearing red aprons. These are either Grand Stewards, Provincial Grand Stewards or Metropolitan Grand Stewards.

Jewels

Many of the brethren in the Lodge wear medals, or breast jewels as we call them. These jewels fall into various categories, including:

- Royal Arch Jewels
- Past Masters' jewels
- Centenary Jewels
- Founders' Jewels
- Charity Jewels

There are a number of designs, but The Grand Master must approve all jewels before they can be worn. The Book of Constitutions outlines the various rules regarding jewels and contains some illustrations. Jewels also refer to the pendants on the collars which the Lodge Officers and others wear, and these can be called collar jewels to avoid confusion.



Entered Apprentice (EA) – first degree apron



Fellow Craft (FC) – second degree apron



Master Mason (MM) – third degree apron



Worshipful Master (WM) apron

Customs and Protocols

Customs vary enormously from ritual to ritual and Lodge to Lodge, but these are in general use throughout Craft Masonry.

Salutes and Signs

Salutes and signs are used throughout Lodge meetings and change depending on what degree is being worked. Each degree has a different sign or signs.

Whenever a Brother speaks to the Worshipful Master or to the Wardens in the Lodge Room (nowhere else), a salute is given. The salute is the sign of the degree in which the Lodge is working at the time.

“So mote it be”

This phrase is used now in Craft Masonry instead of the Hebrew word “Amen”. If an organist is present the words are sung at the end of hymns and prayers. Freemasonry was originally a Christian organisation but this hasn’t been the case for hundreds of years. Men of any religion who profess a belief in a Supreme Being are eligible to join. The literal meaning of the phrase is “May it be so!”, or “So be it!”

The Court Bow

Brethren do not salute one another, but by way of acknowledgement, perhaps as thanks for a courtesy, the Court Bow is given. This consists of standing upright, and simply bowing the head slightly – no more.

Squaring the Lodge

The custom in a Lodge for moving about the Lodge Room in “open” Lodge depends entirely on which ritual the Lodge uses. Some rituals demand punctilious clockwise “squaring” at all times; others allow more freedom of movement. “Stepping-off with the left foot” is standard practice.

‘Worshipful Brethren’

At a Lodge meeting, when addressing or referring to a Brother by name, the format is “Brother (name)” or “Worshipful Brother...”. Whether first names or surnames are used will depend on how formal the proceedings are at the time.

When addressing or referring to Brethren by their Office, the correct form is “Worshipful Master”, “Brother Secretary”, “Brother Treasurer”, “Brother Immediate Past Master”, etc., even if the Officer happens to be a Worshipful Brother by rank.

As in any formal meeting, all remarks are addressed to the Chairman who in our case is the Worshipful Master.

Standing for the National Anthem

The correct posture when singing the National Anthem is to be standing upright, feet together with a straight back and hands at the sides.

Apologies

If we have to miss a Lodge meeting, we send apologies to the Secretary in advance. He will need to have accurate numbers of those attending, particularly for the dining arrangements. He will record apologies in the Minutes.

If one happens to be in Office, then the DC will need to know well in advance to organise a replacement.

About Family Participation

At interview we were all asked if our wives or partners supported our application. That is an important question, as it is hoped that one’s wife or partner will support, approve and encourage participation and the time and costs involved in belonging to our fraternity. Most individual Lodges hold a number of social functions at which one’s wife, partner and family are encouraged to attend. Ladies Festivals and a range of events promoted and advertised by Provincial Grand Lodge are good examples. In fact, nowadays, ladies form an integral part of our Freemasonry and in many Districts have their own Committees which arrange Charity Fund raising events. Many of the events we hold, outside of the Lodge Room, involve our Ladies, families and other non-Masonic guests.

The Festive Board

One of the delights of Masonry is the Festive Board and the camaraderie and relaxed atmosphere in which it is conducted.

During dinner it is customary in many Lodges for the Master to take wine with specific brethren. Wine taking is of a personal and mutual nature, all concerned stand and drink. There is a difference between the wine taking during the dinner and the formal toasting after dinner.

Toasts

Generally experienced members of the Lodge propose most toasts but occasionally newer masons will be called upon for a Toast to give them some experience.

No-one expects a new member or even a more experienced Mason to be the best after dinner speaker – simply to do their best. When the Master sounds his gavel during the Festive Board it is expected that the Brethren should be immediately silent, out of respect to the Master.



Our Ritual



Ritual is important. It is something that has been passed down through the centuries from Mason to Mason, and makes our fraternity unique.

What's the purpose of ritual?

The purpose of ritual is to remind the member of certain ethical and moral precepts, awakening in him respect and tolerance for another's ideas and beliefs. It is for this reason that members are required to avoid discussion of religious and political issues when inside the Lodge, as these are topics which easily divide men. Ritual has been employed by nearly all cultures known to mankind as a process to assist in self-realisation and as such is a rite of passage, which if fully understood and experienced will lead to an improved state. The ritual of Freemasonry promotes self knowledge, tolerance and philanthropy, as echoed in its three great principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. It also extols the cardinal virtues as defined by Cicero, namely: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice and, interestingly, Cicero classed the art of memory as one of the virtues that made up Prudence.

Self discovery

It is suggested that we should joining Freemasonry not only as the beginning of our Masonic career or way of life, but also as a porchway to discovering about oneself and our relationship with our fellow man. When we start to learn the ritual it is equally as important to focus upon the meaning of the words as it is to commit them to memory.

Learning ritual

For some new Masons learning the ritual may be the first memorising they have done since leaving school.

Masonic Symbolism

Masons soon learn the phrase that *Masonry is a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols*, and indeed Freemasonry does rely heavily on symbolism.

A universal language

Symbols are sometimes described as a universal language because they present the message in a way that is understood by all and does not depend on words that are different in various languages. The word “symbol” is defined as a thing that represents something else by association. In Freemasonry it might be defined as a material object that represents a basic moral truth or lesson. Symbolism is part of everyday life. The printed word is basically a symbol: road signs; mathematical symbols; the striped barber’s shop pole etc.

Learn through symbolism

The ritualistic ceremonies of the three Degrees are the foundation our fraternity. In the ceremonies are contained all the philosophy and lessons of Freemasonry. Many of the symbols are called to our attention as we progress through the ceremonies, but there is so much more to the ceremony that does not meet the eye at the time, and one of the many interests to Freemasonry is the discovery of different meanings and a greater understanding of the symbolism contained within the ceremony. Hence there will be many members of the Lodge who have seen the same ceremony literally hundreds of times (although of course the officers each time will probably be different, and certainly the candidate will be different) but the fact that one may have seen the same thing many times doesn’t detract from the enjoyment as there is so much to Freemasonry, and one can still be learning new aspects of it having been a member for many years.

Visiting

One of the joys of Freemasonry is visiting other Lodges. Ordinarily we will be invited by a Brother who knows we are a Member of the Craft. If we anticipate visiting a Lodge where we are not known, we take our Grand Lodge Certificate with us.

Visiting is encouraged

We are advised to visit a Lodge and see someone else being Initiated as soon as possible; so that we may gain a greater understanding of what happened to us and why. Much of the enjoyment that Freemasonry offers comes from visiting. It is by getting out and about, that we appreciate the true fraternity of our Craft.

Differing ritual or 'workings'

As a visitor it is usual that one sits and watches. There are a number of forms of ritual or 'workings' as it is called, such as Emulation, Universal, Bristol, West End, Taylors and so on, with slight differences to each.

The visitors' speech

There is a possibility, that as a Visitor, we could be called upon to respond to the toast to the visitors. This may seem daunting at first but with time it becomes much easier and enjoyable. One thing often said about Freemasonry is that it helps our self-confidence and encourages us to become better public speakers.

Charity

As we learned at our Initiation, charity has been a significant part of Freemasonry since its earliest days, although unlike other fundraising organisations such as Round Table and Lions, most of the money we raise comes out of our own pockets. So whilst every brother is expected to contribute, it's important that no one should over-commit himself to charitable giving. Masons are part of a much larger Provincial, National, and International family. As with all good families, welfare is important, and we strive to help our Brethren and their families who are ill, or in distressed circumstances. When Freemasons or their dependents fall upon hard times, financial assistance may be available from their Lodge, Provincial Benevolent Fund or one of the four main national Masonic Charities.

Collecting of Alms

The Deacons circulate an alms bag or plate at each meeting. Masons put an amount of their own choosing in the bag. We are on occasion, e.g. at Provincial Grand Lodge, be asked to put it in an envelope so tax can be reclaimed, which can add a significant amount to the Lodge's giving. Many Lodges will also hold a raffle after the Festive Board or arrange Fund Raising Social Events. How the proceeds of the Alms collection are applied is a matter for individual Lodges.

Lodge commitments

Annually the Lodge has to pay an amount of money to our governing body, The United Grand Lodge of England, in respect of each of its members. Additionally a payment is made on behalf of each member to The Grand Charity. The Lodge collects this money by way of annual subscription, in addition to the amount collected through the alms bag, and other charity giving methods.

Making a difference

Together we can make a difference – a big difference: Freemasonry is the largest contributor to charitable causes after the National Lottery. In the past five years it is estimated the Freemasons under UGLE have donated approximately £75m to charity. In the last 30 years the Freemasons Grand Charity has given well over £100M to good causes including supporting every hospice in the country and giving large donations for disaster relief, medical research and many other charities.

The four main Masonic charities are:

[The Freemasons Grand Charity](#)

Provides annuities and makes grants to deserving individual masons and their dependents and donations to Masonic and non-Masonic charities.

[The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution](#)

Cares for the welfare of retired Freemasons and their dependents, including providing residential care. The RMBI is an organisation offering degrees of care, support and assistance appropriate to individual needs and committed to ensuring the individuals' right to dignity, respect, choice and control over their own lives. The RMBI runs residential and nursing homes for Masons and their dependents. There are 18 RMBI homes throughout the country.

[The Masonic Samaritan Fund](#)

Provides financial support for medical treatment for needy, sick and infirm Freemasons, their wives, children and dependents. The Fund assists applicants in financial need if the treatment they require is not available on the NHS without undue delay or hardship. Once an application has been accepted the interests of the patient are paramount and the required treatment is obtained at whatever hospital, private or otherwise, most appropriate and near to where the patient lives. The MSF is the newest of the Masonic charities.

[The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys](#)

Exists to relieve poverty and to advance education. Those eligible for assistance are the children (including adopted children and stepchildren of the family) of Freemasons who are members of Lodges governed by the United Grand Lodge of England.

Further information about the Masonic charities is available at:

<http://www.grandcharity.org/>

<http://www.nmsf.org/>

<http://www.rmbi.org.uk/>

<http://www.rmtgb.org/>

East Lancashire Masonic Charity



The East Lancashire Masonic Charity is here to care for and to afford charitable assistance to needy Freemasons or their widows or to any of their dependent relatives, and to reach out to others, in the communities in which we live, who are deserving of our charitable support.

Support for those less fortunate than ourselves has been a feature of our Masonic activity throughout the history of this Province. In the eighteenth century,

charity was disbursed by individual Lodges on behalf of their members. In 1815, Grand Lodge ordained that a Province could establish a Local fund for charitable and other Masonic purposes, and then, in 1853, a meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge in Blackburn established a Fund of Benevolence. Eventually a Committee was formed to promote the interests of charity. This Committee included one representative from each Lodge in the Province. This was the origin of the Lodge Charity representative, now known as the Charity Steward.

In 1876, "The East Lancashire Systematic and Educational Masonic Benevolent Fund" was established to administer the increasing work of helping needy Masons and their families in the Province.

In 1904, the Institution was incorporated and registered under the Charities Act, and became "The East Lancashire Masonic Benevolent Institution (Incorporated)". The Constitution of ELMBI has stood the test of time. It has served this Province for over a century. During that time, through the work of Lodge/Chapter Almoners and the Committee of Benevolence, it has been able to improve the quality of life of thousands of its beneficiaries with its charitable care and support. But that would not have happened without the generous donations of the Brethren of the Province, facilitated by Lodge/Chapter Charity Stewards.

- The ELMC is a charity constituted as a company limited by guarantee (No. 79735)
- The membership comprises the Board of Directors, the members of the Benevolence Committee, one representative of each of the Lodges and Chapters in East Lancashire and 'individual' non-voting members who qualify as a member by virtue of their annual donation to the charity.
- The principal object of the Charity is the relief of poverty by the provision of help and assistance to, predominantly but not exclusively, East Lancashire masons and their dependants, including assistance with the education of their children and the and the provision of accommodation for elderly freemasons or their widows or other dependants.
- The work of carrying out the charity's objectives is delegated to separate committees and sub-committees dealing with various aspects of this work.
- The Charity also owns the East Lancashire Masonic Hall Company Limited as a subsidiary company—this in turn generates its income from the function rooms and catering at Freemasons' Hall, Bridge Street, Manchester (which is owned by the ELMC).
- The Charity is responsible, on behalf of beneficiaries, for the co-ordination of grant petitions to the three national Masonic charities, the Grand Charity, the Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys and the New Masonic Samaritan Fund. It also assists with applications to the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution care homes.
- The Charity also owns and runs the Hewlett-Court care home, on which more will be said about later.

The Benevolence Committee

The committee of Benevolence is mainly made up from the Deputy District Chairman of the Province. It cares for widows, brethren, married couples, spinsters, young people and widows of closed Lodges when they are in need of assistance as identified by the Lodge Almoner.

The committee meets monthly to consider petitions submitted to it, primarily from Lodge and Chapter Almoners. After detailed consideration the committee will issue cash grants to beneficiaries, where it is considered additional income is required to relieve poverty. Immediate relief may be granted in emergencies but, in general, there is time to submit additional petitions to the Grand Charity for assistance and to ensure the potential beneficiary is receiving appropriate support from the state.

Much of the day-to-day work behind the scenes is performed by the ELMC Welfare Officer, Mrs Julie Ward. Tremendous communication is carried out between the ELMC, the Almoners and the major Masonic Charities.

The Comforts Fund Committee is a sub-committee of the committee of benevolence. Its main function is to support the day to day work of the Committee of Benevolence, by way of cash payments at Birthday and Xmas and organising social functions during the course of the year.

Additionally the Comforts Fund can be used to make one-off purchases for beneficiaries who are in need of a particular item of equipment or furniture to assist with their day to day quality of life, each request considered on its merits.

In addition to grants, full beneficiaries receive a Christmas card and a cash gift, a birthday card with a cash gift , an invitation to a Spring Party, an invitation to an Annual Holiday, an invitation to an Autumn Outing and monies towards telephone costs.

Part beneficiaries are not entitled to income supplementation but are closely monitored and receive some of the benefits that Full beneficiaries receive.

The Young People's Committee provides social functions for the young or those registered with the Masonic Trust for Boys and Girls. The East Lancashire youngsters range from 3 to 21 years of age. There are well attended and successful events arranged for these children. Birthday and Christmas gifts are also given, sometimes partly in the form of book vouchers to promote education.

There are two Educational Funds. These are not means tested and do not necessarily have to have a Masonic connection.

Hewlett Court is a residential home for East Lancashire Masons and their wives, widows, unmarried daughters and unmarried sisters - and those with Masonic connections [at the discretion of the Management Committee] - who are ambulant, in reasonable health and over pensionable age. It is not a Convalescent Home or a Nursing Home, and consequently reports are obtained from each applicants own Medical Practitioner. There is currently a waiting list of about 10 persons waiting for a place. In recent times Hewlett Court has undergone refurbishment and expansion. Visitors are welcome, contact the Secretary on 01204 886552.

Many Masons will know someone who may benefit from these varying forms of assistance.

In addition to the above the ELMC does vital work in supporting local community good causes and charities. For more information on the work of the ELMC please visit:

<http://www.elmc.co.uk/>

Many of the Districts in East Lancashire run annual giving events where collective donations are given to a range of good causes during an evening to which the local Public, Mayor and Press have been invited. Many of the charities supported have Freemasons actively involved in supporting the work of the Charity. The ELMC will often provide additional funding to bolster the Districts efforts in such circumstances and ideally wherever Freemasons themselves are actively involved.

Museum and Library

There is a fantastic and highly recommended library and museum available to visit at Manchester. The Museum at Freemasons' Hall, came about at the instigation of the then Earl of Derby in 1913 when he announced the proposal to build a new Masonic Hall in Manchester to be the headquarters of the Province and which was to have a dedicated Museum and Library. In the event the Hall was not completed until 1929 when the Library and Museum became part of the new building. In 2007, it was decided that the Library would be better served by transferring the books to the John Rylands Library in Deansgate where they will be available for researchers during opening hours.

The Museum has now spread into the Library room and displays some splendid Masonic artefacts.

The Museum and Library are situated on the 2nd floor at Freemasons' Hall, Bridge Street, Manchester, M3 3BT, and if you would like further information contact either Ivan Eastwood or Ivan Goldberg at the Provincial Office on 0161 832 6256.

Beyond the Craft



Sir David Tripper
Most Excellent Grand Superintendent



The Holy Royal Arch

You will hear the term “Chapter” used. This refers to the Holy Royal Arch. Although there are numerous other Masonic Orders none of them form part of Pure Ancient Masonry. The Craft teaches one about man’s relationship with man, whereas the Holy Royal Arch additionally teaches about man’s relationship with his God. It is only by combining the two that one can ever become a complete mason. For this reason it is likely to be more beneficial to join the Holy Royal Arch before considering other Masonic Orders. One is eligible to join (called Exaltation) a Royal Arch Chapter four weeks after the date of becoming a Master Mason.

The Provincial Grand Master, Sir David Trippier, is also the head of the Holy Royal Arch in East Lancashire; as such he is known as the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent. Most Chapters in East Lancashire meet four times a year. The fees for admission and the annual subscriptions are lower than those of a Craft Lodge.

Other Masonic Orders

There are other Masonic Orders that one can join when one has progressed to a Master Mason. That said, it is common practice to join The Holy Royal Arch first. Many Masons prefer to understand the Craft further before committing themselves to other memberships. Ultimately the choice is theirs.

Hymns

Opening Ode

Hail, eternal! By whose aid
All created things were made;
Heav'n and earth,Thy vast design;
Hear us, architect divine

May our work, begun in thee,
Ever blest with order be:
And may we, when labours cease,
Part in harmony and peace

By Thy glorious Majesty
By the trust we place in Thee-
By the badge and mystic sign-
Hear us, Architect Divine

So mote it be.

National Anthem

God save our gracious Queen.
Long live our noble Queen.
God save the Queen.
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us.
God save the Queen

Closing Ode or Hymn

Now the evening shadows closing,
Warn from toil to peaceful rest,
Mystic arts and rites reposing,
Sacred in each faithful breast.

God of light! Whose love unceasing
Doth to all thy works extend,
Crown our order with thy blessing,
Build; sustain us to the end.

Humbly now we bow before thee,
Grateful for Thy aid divine;
Everlasting power and glory,
Mighty Architect! be Thine.

So mote it be.

Origins of Freemasonry

The origins of Freemasonry are subject to scholarly debate. Organised Freemasonry as we know it today began with the founding of the first Grand Lodge on 24 June 1717 at the Goose and Gridiron Ale House in St Paul's Churchyard. It was formed by the agreement of four London Lodges, the oldest of which was thought to have existed in 1691.

Evidence of the movement's existence prior to 1691 is sparse, so the true origins remain a mystery. Freemasonry neither originated nor existed in King Solomon's time. Many historians have tried to prove freemasonry descended from the mysteries of classical Greece or Rome or was derived from the religion of the Egyptian pyramid builders. Other theories include:

Freemasonry sprang from bands of travelling stonemasons acting by Papal authority; it evolved from a band of Knights Templar who escaped to Scotland after the order was persecuted in Europe; Freemasonry derived from the shadowy and mysterious Rosicrucian Brotherhood which may or may not have existed in Europe in the early 1600s. The honest answers to the questions when, where and why did freemasonry originate, are that we simply do not know.

The stonemason theory

That said, there is general agreement amongst historians and researchers that freemasonry developed, either directly or indirectly, from the medieval stonemasons (otherwise known as operative masons) who built the great cathedrals and castles. Those who favour the theory say there were three stages to the evolution of freemasonry. The stonemasons gathered in huts or Lodges to rest and eat. These huts or Lodges gradually became a grouping together of stonemasons to regulate their craft. Eventually, and in common with other trades, they developed primitive initiation ceremonies for new apprentices. As stonemasons were accustomed to travelling all over the country and as there were no trade union cards or certificates of apprenticeship, they began to adopt a private word which they could use when arriving at a new site to prove they were properly skilled and had been a member of a hut or Lodge. It was, after all, easier to communicate a secret word to prove who you were and that you were entitled to your wages, than it was to spend hours carving a block of stone to demonstrate your skills. We know that in the early 1600s these operative Lodges began to admit non-stonemasons. They were "accepted" or "gentlemen" masons. Why and what form the ceremony took is unknown. As the 1600s drew to a close more gentlemen joined the Lodges, gradually taking them over and turning them into Lodges of free and accepted or speculative masons, no longer having any connection with the stonemasons' craft. This theory is based on evidence from Scotland where there is ample evidence of Scottish operative Lodges, geographically defined units with the backing of statute law

to control what was termed “the mason trade”. There is also plenty of evidence that these Lodges began to admit gentlemen as accepted masons, but no evidence so far that these accepted members were other than honorary masons, or that they in any way altered the nature of the operative Lodges. Furthermore no evidence has come to light, after a hundred years, for a similar development in England. Medieval building records have references to stonemason’s Lodges but after 1400, apart from masons’ guilds in some towns, there is no evidence for operative Lodges.

Building a better society theory

Yet it is in England that the first evidence of a Lodge completely made up of non-operative masons is found. Elias Ashmole, the Antiquary and Founder of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, records in his diary for 1646 that he was made a Free Mason in a Lodge held for that purpose at his father-in-law’s house in Warrington. He records who was present, all of whom have been researched and have been found to have no connection with operative masonry. English evidence through the 1600s points to freemasonry existing separately from any actual or supposed organisation of operative stonemasons. This lack of evidence for the existence of operative Lodges but evidence for Lodges of “accepted” masons has led to the theory of an indirect link between operative stonemasonry and Freemasonry. Those who support the indirect link theorise that freemasonry was brought into existence by a group of men in the late 1500s or early 1600s. This was a period of great religious and political turmoil and intolerance. Men were unable to meet together without differences of political and religious opinion leading to arguments. Families were split by opposing views and the English Civil War of 1642 to 1646 was the ultimate outcome. Those who support the indirect link believe the originators of Freemasonry were men who wished to promote tolerance and build a better world in which men of differing opinions could peacefully co-exist and work together for the betterment of mankind. In the custom of their times they used allegory and symbolism to pass on their ideas. As their central idea was the building of a better society they borrowed their forms and symbols from the operative builders’ craft and took their central allegory from the Bible, the common source book known to all, in which the only building described in any detail is King Solomon’s Temple. Stonemasons’ tools provided them with the multiplicity of emblems to illustrate the principles they were putting forward.

A charitable framework theory

A more recent theory about our origins places freemasonry within a charitable framework. In the 1600s there was no welfare state, so anyone falling ill or becoming disabled had to rely on friends and the Poor Law for support. In those days many trades had what have become known as “box clubs”. These grew out of the convivial gatherings of members of a particular trade during meetings of which all present would put money into a communal box, knowing that if they fell on hard times they could apply for relief from the box. From surviving evidence these box clubs are known to have begun to admit members not belonging to their trade and to have had many characteristics of early masonic Lodges. They met in taverns, had simple initiation ceremonies and passwords and practiced charity on a local scale. It is possible that freemasonry had its origins in just such a box club for operative masons.

Whatever our origins, after 1717 and the establishment of the Premier Grand Lodge, as it is known, Freemasonry grew in popularity, spreading across much of the world, attracting many famous and notable personalities.

Some Famous Freemasons

KINGS	George VI, Edward VII, Edward VIII
PRESIDENTS & PRIME MINISTERS	George Washington, Winston Churchill
WRITERS	Rudyard Kipling, Robert Burns, Leo Tolstoy
MUSICIANS	Mozart, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Gilbert & Sullivan
SPORTSMEN	Clive Lloyd, Arnold Palmer, Jack Dempsey
SCIENTISTS	Sir Alexander Fleming, Joseph Lister, Edward Jenner
EXPLORERS	Capt. Robert Scott, Buzz Aldrin, Sir Ernest Shackleton
BUSINESSMEN	Andre Citroen, Henry Ford
ACTORS AND ENTERTAINERS	Clark Gable, John Wayne, Peter Sellers, Harry Houdini
KEY HISTORIC FIGURES	William Booth, Henri Dunant, Dr Barnado, Martin L King

The Aga Khan and the current King of Jordan are also Freemasons

Useful Websites

Province of East Lancashire	http://www.pglel.co.uk
Sheffield Masonic Research	http://www.shef.ac.uk/~crf
The Cornerstone Society	http://www.cornerstonesociety.com/
The amazing Pietre Stones page!	http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/
Canonbury Masonic Research site	http://www.canonbury.ac.uk
UGLE's outstanding Museum site	http://freemasonry.london.museum/
United Grand Lodge of England	http://www.ugle.org.uk/

Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire

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Information on Membership

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