

Freemasonry at the Farnham Masonic Hall



**A Brief introduction.
By Bro. Ian Goolding.**



“In a room full of Masons there is no colour, no creed, nor religion; only masons”.

What is Freemasonry at Farnham all about?

Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest secular fraternal societies. The true origins of Freemasonry are clouded in both history and mystery; historical analysis shows aspects of Masonry date back to thousands of years B.C.

The earliest known use of the Square and Compass symbol was carved on an altar from 3800 BCE. There is evidence that an elementary type of craft association existed as early as the time of King Solomon's Temple, about 1012 BCE. That structure was the architectural masterpiece of its day; and because of the relationship between those early masons and the building of that spiritual edifice, Masonic tradition both Ancient and Modern is rich with references to its construction and glory. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans taught higher education in schools, which resembled lodges, and protected their learning and skills (and indeed at times their actual existence), with secret signs and symbols known only to a few worthy recipients.

In Britain, Freemasonry's direct predecessors are the "Guilds of Operative Stonemasons" that built the great cathedrals of England and Europe during the 10th century. Studies of Lodges of this era reveal a marked similarity to our own constitutions and illustrate the strictness with which the Operative Mason kept the secrets of their trade. These Guild members cared for each other and each other's families, and the Masons enjoyed privileges denied to other trades and Guilds, most notably the freedom to travel from country to country and from place to place as needed. Because of this, they became known as "Free-masons".

As the centuries went on, cathedral building declined, and as a result, so did the numbers of Operative Masons. Stonemasons began accepting individuals outside the profession who were regarded as desirable members, referring to them as "Speculative Masons" who

were taught religious and moral lessons using the tools of Masonry as allegorical symbols, rather than the actual craft of the Stonemasons.

By the 17th century this "Speculative Masonry" had become common practice and the membership of many of the Lodges was now made up largely of men who were neither directly nor indirectly associated with the trade of Masonry. It was in this period that all connection with Operative Masonry was abandoned and Freemasonry became what it is now, a purely symbolic, philosophic, and benevolent institute, which was unified by the forming of the first Grand Lodge in England in 1717 which heralded what we see now as "Modern" Freemasonry.

Today modern Freemasonry can be described as a society of men who are concerned with moral, social, and spiritual values. By using allegorical symbols Masonry instils in its members a moral and ethical approach to life, and seeks to reinforce thoughtfulness for others, kindness in the community, and honesty in business, courtesy in society and fairness in all things. Members are urged to regard and care for the less fortunate and people in need of help. In Freemasonry there is no religious or political structure allowed. All men are equal, be it race, religion or creed. All that is required is a basic belief in a "Supreme Being". That Being is known simply by masons as the "Architect of the Universe".

Modern day freemasonry is built on, teaches and practices these three "grand principles". These are described as:

Brotherly Love; Relief; Truth.

Brotherly Love: meaning that every true Freemason should show tolerance and respect for the opinions of others and behave with kindness and understanding to his fellow creatures.

Relief : meaning that we as Masons are encouraged to practise charity and to care - not only for their own families - but also for the

community as a whole, both by charitable giving and by voluntary efforts as a Lodge, group or by the individual Mason.

Truth: meaning that Freemasons strive for truth, requiring high moral standards and aiming to achieve these standards in their own lives. Freemasons believe that these principles represent a way of achieving higher standards in life.

What's next?

I expect you are wondering how you could personally fit into Farnham Freemasonry, and how you integrate into this historically ancient and prestigious Order? Well the truth is very simple: there are many Lodges meeting at Farnham all on different days of the week. You can pick whatever day suits you; go as far as you want to, go as often as you want to and visit other lodges when you want to.

It's Easy!!! No mystery, No Secret, "JUST GET INVOLVED AND HAVE FUN". It really is that simple.

The Masons at Farnham will warmly welcome you into their Lodge and will extend that welcome for a lifelong and enjoyably supported journey through your Masonry, however far on the personal journey you wish to go. Many Masons you meet will become lifelong friends!

It is down to you! Masonry is fun. Never forget that fact!

If you would like to know more about Freemasonry in general or especially in Farnham then please feel free to enquire in the first instance to the person who gave out this leaflet or email us at;

shoestring@ntlworld.com