



FREEMASONRY IN STAINES

There are over 1000 Freemasons in some 75 lodges and chapters who meet at the Staines Masonic Hall.

We hope this leaflet will give you an insight into what the organisation stands for, the work it does in society today, the sort of people who become Freemasons and what membership of a Masonic lodge involves.

FREEMASONRY

A UNIQUE INSTITUTION WITH GLOBAL MEMBERSHIP

People from all walks of life become Freemasons for a variety of reasons. Some are attracted by the valuable work that the movement performs in raising money for charity. A proportion of these funds is used to assist Freemasons and their dependents in times of need, particularly the sick and the elderly, but the greater part goes to non Masonic charities - local, national and international. Others become Freemasons because of the unique fellowship it provides. Visit a Masonic lodge anywhere in the country - or indeed, the world - and you are greeted as an old friend. Freemasonry is the ultimate leveller, a society where friendship and goodwill are paramount.

A FRATERNITY

Freemasonry is a fraternity of men bound together by oaths of allegiance to our three great principles; Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. In modern day language this means Friendship, Charity and Honesty. Our constitution, regulations and customs are based on the ancient charges of medieval stonemasons' craft guilds. In our ceremonies we use the building of a structure as a symbolism for the building of character in man. The tools of the ancient building trade are also used as symbols to teach us lessons of social and moral virtues.

PERSONAL SATISFACTION NOT PERSONAL GAIN

It has been said that some people become Freemasons for personal benefit. This statement is true, but for the wrong reasons. The personal gain is in experiencing the warmth of an honourable society and being part of an organisation that works hard to help the less fortunate of the world. Freemasonry does ask its members to give as freely as they can to charity. Freemasonry has central funds which allows it to react quickly when help is needed urgently at home and around the world.



MASONIC SYMBOLISM HAS A PURPOSE

But what about the so-called funny handshakes and the aprons? Freemasonry has been in existence for over 300 years and over this time has developed a pattern of rituals. They are no more eccentric and unconventional than ceremonies such as the State Opening of Parliament but, like this event, they perform a valuable function in reminding members of the heritage and standards they are expected to maintain. Once people have become Freemasons and understand the context of the rituals and symbolism, they no longer seem quirky.

WHY THE SECRECY?

If Freemasonry has nothing to hide, why the secrecy? The 'secrets' that are revealed to members as they progress are nothing more sinister than historical modes of recognition which are used only within the ceremonies in our meetings. Similarly, Masonic passwords are simply keys to the doors of the different levels within Freemasonry, just like the code to the changing room at a golf club. Masonic ceremonies are like short morality plays in which members play different parts. Through taking part in these ceremonies, Freemasons come to understand the messages they contain.



ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- Time for 'Modern Man' to relax
- Happiness of lasting friendships
- The Fulfilment of real objectives
- Pride in a job well done
- Achievement of effective teamwork
- Satisfaction of making a real difference in the world
- Fun of social & charitable events
- Well-being of those less fortunate than ourselves
- Development of personal competence and leadership skills

HOW TIME CONSUMING IS IT?

Doesn't all this take up a great deal of one's time? The majority of lodges in Staines meet four times a year. The formal part of the proceedings (the ceremonies) usually start towards the end of the afternoon and are followed in the evening by a dinner and a few traditional toasts and speeches. Additionally, for those moving through the offices there are weekly or fortnightly instruction meetings where members learn more about the principles of Freemasonry and practice the ritual performed in the ceremonies. These, indeed none, are compulsory but as with many things in life, the more you put in, the more you will get out. Freemasons also gain great pleasure in visiting lodges other than their own, making new friends and seeing different traditions followed. While there are numerous opportunities to engage in Masonic pursuits, Freemasonry encourages its members to live well rounded lives and stresses that one's family and personal affairs must always come first.

WIVES AND PARTNERS MATTER TO FREEMASONS

In the interests of domestic harmony, anyone considering becoming a Freemason are strongly recommended to bring their wife/partner into the picture at the earliest possible stage. We are very happy to give a guided tour of Staines Masonic Hall especially to anyone considering membership but also to the general public. Visitors

can see inside the Masonic lodge or chapter rooms where the ceremonies take place and ask any questions they may have.

NOT JUST FOR THE WELL HEELED

Membership subscriptions compare favourably with everyday sports and social clubs. Freemasonry is not a rich man's hobby but an affordable and rewarding pastime for the many.

STAINES MASONIC HALL

The Hall was opened in 1927 and the history of the premises lives on in its character. Its history and age is particularly noted in The Temple and Dining Room with the wood panelling providing the names of the past Masters. It is in an area of Staines which is ripe for redevelopment and one day this will certainly happen and we will move to a new centre. We just don't know when!

BECOMING A FREEMASON

If you are interested in becoming a Freemason then it may be that you know someone who is already a member so you can speak to them about it. Either way you are very welcome to contact us at Staines Masonic Hall and if you don't know someone who is already a member we can arrange to meet you, consider what is best for you and make an introduction.

For more information contact the
Staines Masonic Hall Secretary

Email: info@stainesmh.co.uk