

Some of your questions answered

What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is the UK's largest secular, fraternal, charitable and philanthropic organisation. It teaches moral lessons and self-knowledge through participation in a progression of allegorical two-part plays.

What is a Lodge?

A Lodge is, in effect, the modern version of what used to be a group of working stonemasons. These days, rather than stonemasons, a Lodge can be viewed as a social team whose common objective is to promote and share in the experience of pursuing the precepts and values of Freemasonry.

What about those handshakes?

Just as the medieval stonemasons were given signs and tokens to show their level of expertise which, in an age before certificates and plastic cards, had to be secret to protect their professional status, so Freemasons are still given purely symbolical modes of recognition to show their level of achievement in the Craft. These are never used outside the Lodge.

Is it true that Freemasons only look after each other?

No, very far from it. From its earliest days, Freemasonry has been involved in charitable activities. Since its inception, Freemasonry has provided support not only for widows and orphans of Freemasons but also for many others within the community as well as local, national and international charities. For further insight, have a look at www.grandcharity.org



Middlesex Freemasons

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The Grand Charity

www.grandcharity.org

Middlesex Freemasons

All about Freemasons

Our History



www.pglm.org.uk



Origins



There is much debate about the origins of Freemasonry, but it is generally accepted to be connected with the Stone Masons who built the great medieval cathedrals and castles.

Historians believe that, before the main building was commenced, the Stone Masons would build a "Lodge" to provide themselves with accommodation. The term "Lodge" is still in use today - a group of Masons will belong to a Lodge or Lodges.

Elias Ashmole



The first recorded "making" of an English Freemason is Elias Ashmole, at Warrington on 16th October 1646.

Organised Freemasonry was established in 1717 when four London Lodges came together to form the world's first Grand Lodge. In 1751, however, another group of Masons formed a rival Grand Lodge, claiming that the original Grand Lodge had departed from the "ancient landmarks".

The two rival Grand Lodges came together in 1813 to form the United Grand Lodge of England, which remains the official body of English Freemasonry to this day.

Lodges outside London were grouped into Provinces, based on the old Counties, each headed by a Provincial Grand Master.

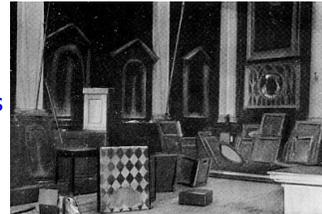
Although political boundaries have since changed a number of times, Freemasonry has largely retained the original County boundaries

United Grand Lodge

From the four Lodges which formed Grand Lodge in 1717, Freemasonry under the United Grand Lodge of England has grown to an organisation of approaching 350,000 members grouped in nearly 7,500 lodges. It's membership has included men of rank and those who have become distinguished in many fields of human endeavour but the membership has always been a microcosm of the society in which it currently exists, reflecting the social, religious and ethnic composition of our diverse society.

Growth continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, but Freemasonry suffered under the rise of fascism and communism, particularly in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union where Masons were banned, imprisoned and murdered.

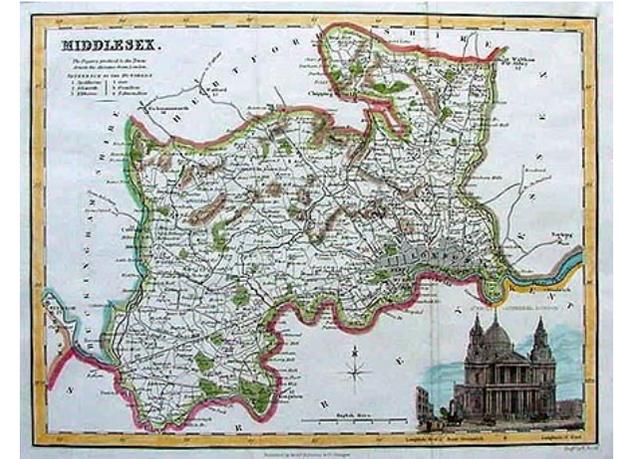
[The Masonic Temple in Jersey, after it was ransacked by Hitler's troops](#)



After the Second world war Freemasonry became excessively private, not dealing with the media or correcting factual errors. As a result the mythology.

Today, with a policy of openness, Freemasonry is again very much part of the community. Each of the 47 Provinces (counties), and London Masonry, has its own information officer dealing with the media, and there is a Communications Department at Grand Lodge. The UGLE (United Grand Lodge of England) and many Provinces have their own web sites.

Middlesex



The original County of Middlesex covered all of modern London except the City of London and had borders with the other 'home counties'.

Although Lodges already existed in the County of Middlesex, the founding of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Middlesex came into being on the 22nd January 1870, but excluded central London, which was governed directly by Grand Lodge until October 2003.

The Province of Middlesex has been honoured to have Royal Patronage, with Prince Michael of Kent being the current Provincial Grand Master. Today the Province is a large and vibrant organisation with over 5,000 members meeting at centres in Staines, Twickenham, Harrow, Uxbridge and Southgate, reflecting and engaging with the local communities of which it forms part.

For more information see: www.pglm.org.uk