



PROVINCE OF YORKSHIRE, WEST RIDING



AN INTRODUCTION TO

FREEMASONRY

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WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

Freemasonry means different things to each of those who join. For some, it's about making new friends and acquaintances, for others it's about being able to help worthy causes, contributing to family and society, but for most, it is an enjoyable hobby.

Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest and largest non-religious, non-political and charitable organisations. It teaches self-knowledge through participation in a progression of ceremonies.

Members are encouraged to speak openly about Freemasonry. It is a society of men concerned with integrity, loyalty, truthfulness, honesty, giving respect to each other and spiritual values.

Members are urged to regard the interests of the family as paramount and, importantly, Freemasonry also teaches concern for people and promotes care for the less fortunate and help for those in need.

DID YOU KNOW ...

As well as supporting Freemasons, their families and dependants our own Charitable Foundation, which is one of the largest UK charities, contributes millions to international disaster relief, the Hospice movement, medical research and many local charities; including support for disadvantaged young people and the elderly.



THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEMASONRY

LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

Every true Freemason will show tolerance and respect for the opinions of others and behave with kindness and understanding to his fellow creatures.

CARING

Freemasons are taught to practise charity and to care, not only for their own, but also for the community as a whole, both by charitable giving and by voluntary efforts and work as individuals.

HIGH STANDARDS

Freemasons strive for truth and honesty, and aim to achieve high standards in their own lives.

CHARITY

From its earliest days, Freemasonry concerned itself with the care of orphans, the sick and the aged.

This work continues today: financial and practical help is given to international, national and local charities to help those less fortunate and individuals or groups who are in need.

All monies raised by Freemasons and their family is freely given and not by calling on the general public to subscribe to any such appeals.

BELIEF

Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion.

Religion is not a topic of conversation at our meetings. One of Freemasonry's essential membership qualifications, however, is that members have a belief in their own deity. Each member is expected to follow his own faith.

SOCIETY

Freemasonry demands from its members a respect for the law of the country in which he works and lives. Its principles do not in any way conflict with its members' duties as citizens or of those owed to their families but should strengthen them in fulfilling their public and private responsibilities.



FREEMASONRY WORLDWIDE

Freemasonry is practised under many different independent Grand Lodges throughout the world, with standards similar to those set by the United Grand Lodge of England.

Grand Lodges that do not meet these standards, e.g. that do not require a belief in one's own God, or that allow or encourage their members to participate in political matters, are not recognised by United Grand Lodge as being regular, and contact with them is forbidden.



Oliver Hardy (right) (1892-1957) member of
Solomon Lodge No. 20 in Jacksonville, Florida USA

IS FREEMASONRY A SECRET SOCIETY?

No! We are however a society that has some secrets which are primarily concerned with our traditional modes of recognition. All members are free, and even encouraged, to acknowledge their membership and will always do so in response to enquiries for respectable reasons. There is also no secret about any of our aims and principles. We do, however, like many other societies, regard some of our internal affairs as private matters.

WHY DO WE WEAR REGALIA IN LODGES?

Wearing regalia is historical and symbolic and has its roots in the use of aprons by ancient operative stone masons.

There are different 'aprons' depending on which level of Freemasonry the wearer is, which, like a uniform, serve to indicate to members where they rank in the organisation.

INVOLVING OUR PARTNERS

We take care to ensure that our partners understand the meaning of what we do. Partners are very welcome at many social functions and even some meetings.

Many wives and partners form friendly groups and often help organise our social events such as dinners, dances and less formal occasions.

There are Lodges restricted to women, although the two organisations are entirely separate.





WHAT MAKES FREEMASONRY SO SPECIAL TO A MEMBER?

Ask any member. Enjoyment is the cornerstone. To a member, there is no substitute for the experience of our ceremonies. That and our charitable work, helping all kinds of people, make being a member feel very special. Freemasonry is fun and highly enjoyable.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON CAN BECOME A FREEMASON?

The essential qualifications are that he is usually 18 years of age or older, of good character with a belief in their own deity.

He is expected to be compassionate and of a kind and charitable disposition.

WHAT DOES A FREEMASONS MEETING ENTAIL?

Most lodges meet formally ten or twelve times a year, but many have less formal weekly meetings for those who can attend. Our ceremonies are in the form of illustrative stories which symbolically reinforce our principles.

WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED OF ME?

Members do as much as they wish.

The administration, ceremonial, accounting, fundraising and general running of the lodge is carried out voluntarily by its members.



FRIENDS

Social events are a big part of what we do. When you surround yourself with friends and people you like spending time with, fun usually ensues.

BBQs, ladies' evenings, summer balls, live music events, Halloween, Christmas parties and weekends away are just some of the things that lodges plan for their social calendar. Charity dinners, beer & curry nights as well as breakfast clubs and other networking events, for new and old members alike, give us many platforms on which to socialise, not only in one's own lodge but across the whole of our Province. There is NEVER a dull moment in Freemasonry, and always something to do.

Yes, we work hard raising funds for charity and in making a difference in our communities, but we have fun and enjoy ourselves doing it.

IS IT EXPENSIVE TO BE A FREEMASON?

Lodges charge an annual subscription which varies depending on the lodge, but which is typically between £150 and £250. A significant proportion of this goes to charity.

The cost of meals at the monthly meeting is around £15 but may be more or less depending on the location and occasion. However, members do not have to stay for a meal.





IS THERE ANY PERSONAL GAIN FROM BEING A MEMBER?

From a financial point of view, no, and in fact, any member who seeks to gain financially from his membership of Freemasonry can find himself expelled. However, what a Freemason gains in enhancing his respectability in life and increasing his self-esteem by becoming a better man are immeasurable.

SPECIALIST AND UNIVERSITY LODGES

Many lodges cater for members with specific interests, for example; rugby, golf, scuba diving, field sports etc. One such expanding national initiative is the Universities Scheme which was set up to support membership from both University students and staff, and where a student can join from the age of 18. Within Yorkshire, West Riding there are University Lodges in Sheffield, Leeds and Huddersfield.

For more information regarding the Universities scheme contact universitiesscheme@yorkshirewestridingfreemasons.org.uk

IS FREEMASONRY FOR ME?

As with all societies and clubs, there is no 'one size fits all' and Freemasonry is no different. It is not for everyone. If you are of good reputation with a belief in your own deity, Freemasonry could be for you.

If you consider charity as being goodwill to all, believe in helping anyone in need of support and assistance; If you behave towards others as you would have them behave towards you; If you think that friendship, charity, integrity, respect, self-discipline, patience and discretion are your virtues; If you believe in tolerance and deem it necessary to let each man think for himself and express his own opinions without worrying about being wrong; If you would like to join an organisation with a great heritage that exists all over the world and share an identity with some of the greatest men of both the present and the past; If you are looking to create a special bond and life-long friendships with like-minded men of all walks of life; If you are a good man and are looking to make yourself better than ...

YES, Freemasonry is for you.



Masonic Province of

Yorkshire
West Riding

Since 1817

CONTACT US

If you would like more information about Freemasonry and lodges in your area, visit our website at - www.yorkshirewestridingfreemasons.org.uk

Or contact the Provincial Office

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PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF YORKSHIRE WEST RIDING

THANK YOU!

for taking the time to read this short introduction to Freemasonry.
Visit our website for more information and news plus details on lodges
in your area.



WWW.YORKSHIREWESTRIDINGFREEMASONS.ORG.UK

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