

*Province of West Lancashire*



*Freemasonry  
in Wigan*

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## WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

It is a most happy association of friends which provides interest, a discipline of life, many social activities for men and their families and has a long history of Charitable support for the less fortunate members of our society. All this is combined with a fascinating history going back almost three hundred years. To be more specific:

Freemasonry is open to men of good reputation, irrespective of race or creed, provided they believe in a Supreme Being. This belief is an essential qualification for admission and continued membership.

Freemasonry teaches moral lessons and self-knowledge through participation in a progression of allegorical two-part plays, which are learnt by heart and performed within each Lodge.

Freemasonry offers its members an approach to life which seeks to reinforce thoughtfulness for others, kindness in the community, honesty in business, courtesy in society and fairness in all things. Members are urged to regard the interests of the family as paramount but importantly Freemasonry also teaches and practises concern for people, care for the less fortunate and help for those in need.

### SECRECY

Freemasonry is not a secret society. Members are perfectly free to acknowledge their membership and will do so in answer to any reasonable enquiry. There is no secret about the aims and principles of the Order.

The Constitutions and rules are freely available. The local Public Library holds many fully descriptive Masonic books, available on inquiry. The Internet has hundreds of web pages of information from all over the world.

Lodge meetings, like meetings of many other social and professional associations, are private occasions open only to members. Freemasons are encouraged to speak openly about their membership while remembering that they undertake not to use their membership for their own or anyone else's advancement.





## **RELIGION**

Freemasonry is emphatically not a religion.

Freemasonry requires a belief in God and its principles are common to many of the world's great religions. Freemasonry does not try to replace religion or substitute for it. Every candidate is exhorted to practise his religion and to regard its holy book as the unerring standard of truth. Freemasonry does not instruct its members in what their religious beliefs should be, nor does it offer sacraments.

Thus, Freemasonry brings men of different faiths together in a unique way to share a happy and rewarding fellowship with one another.

## **CONDUCT**

On his entry into Freemasonry each candidate states unequivocally that he expects no material gain from his membership. At various stages during the three ceremonies of his admission he is forcefully reminded that attempts to gain preferment or material gain for himself or others is a misuse of membership which will not be tolerated. Abuse of membership can result in penalties varying from temporary suspension to expulsion. Nor may Freemasonry ever be used to protect a fellow Freemason, or anyone else, who has behaved dishonestly or unlawfully.

## **POLITICS**

Freemasonry is wholly unconcerned with political matters. Discussion of politics or religion is expressly forbidden at Lodge meetings. The organising body of Freemasonry refuses to express any opinion, one way or the other, about domestic or foreign State Policy.

## **CHARITY**

From its earliest days, Freemasonry has been involved in charitable activities, and since its inception it has provided support for many widows and orphans of Freemasons as well as others within the community.





All monies raised for charity are drawn from amongst Freemasons, their families and friends, while grants and donations are made to Masonic and non-Masonic charities alike.

Over the past five years alone Freemasonry has raised more than £75m for a wide range of charitable purposes including those involved in medical research, community care, education and work with young people.

### **SOCIALLY**

Freemasonry is fun as well as having its more serious side. It provides a wonderfully happy social life for its members and their families with a wide variety of events run by local Lodges as well as larger events bringing many people together. Very many enduring friendships are made.

Thus, being a Freemason becomes a very comfortable, happy and satisfying experience with great opportunities to become involved, while catering for a wide variety of talents and interests.

Lodges meet monthly, usually for eight or nine months of the year; meetings are followed by a supper and by a banquet once a year following the annual meeting. Membership allows a Mason to visit Lodges in all parts of the country and abroad, provided the Lodge is recognised by our own Grand Lodge, thus providing great opportunities for social contact.

If you have a friend who is a Freemason, ask him to tell you more about it. Alternatively, you can obtain more information from your local Masonic Hall, from our Provincial website at:

**[www.btinternet.com/~wl](http://www.btinternet.com/~wl)**

or from

The Provincial Grand Secretary

The Masonic Hall, 22 Hope Street, Liverpool L1 9BY

Tel: 0151 709 2458 Fax: 0151 709 6864

E-mail: [westlancashire@mason-net.org](mailto:westlancashire@mason-net.org)





## FREEMASONRY IN WIGAN

Freemasonry in Wigan has a long history with its oldest lodge, the Lodge of Antiquity, dating back to 21 June 1786. Freemasonry has long been associated with leading citizens of the town. The Lindsay Lodge, consecrated in 1870, was named after Lord Lindsay, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, who held an estate in the town.

A local builder, Charles Butler Holmes built the Market Hall in Wigan, which stood for one hundred years before the Galleries, a modern shopping complex, replaced it. He later became Mayor of the town and the Holmes Lodge was founded and named after him in 1898. In recent years the Arrowhead Lodge was founded in 1973 with membership being predominantly for those who have been members of uniformed youth organisations. As the township expanded to include smaller towns in the area, so Freemasonry expanded with Lodges now meeting at four centres: Wigan, Pemberton, Bryn and Hindley.

An interesting historical fact in local Freemasonry is that in 1823 several lodges in the north-west broke away from the United Grand Lodge in England and became known as the Grand Lodge in Wigan and it was only in 1913 that the last lodge finally returned its allegiance to London. During this period of Masonic history, the brethren remained intensely loyal to their Sovereign, Queen Victoria, and on the day of her coronation, Thursday 28 June 1838, joined in the civic procession through the town wearing their Masonic regalia and carrying a large banner expressing their support and the words "God save the Queen". This banner is still on display today at Wigan Masonic Hall.





The Wigan Group which now consists of thirty two lodges, has continued in its traditions with an annual church service in Wigan Parish Church when the brethren wear their Masonic regalia. A Masonic Fellowship has been formed which caters for the needs of retired brethren and their wives and also for the widows of deceased brethren. Monthly meetings are held with a variety of speakers attending. Day trips and visits to the theatre are arranged and every Christmas a Carol Service is held, again in Wigan Parish Church.

The brethren of the Group have supported the Wigan Hospice since it first opened and donations towards the daily running costs are made regularly. Many other charitable organisations have received support from individual lodges and by a Group project for the Millennium; in fact the Group raised sufficient funds to purchase four motorised scooters for the shopmobility scheme in the town. The Freemasons of Wigan are proud of their association with the town and are pleased to continue to give their support to so many worthy causes.

If a friend has handed you this leaflet, it is because he enjoys being a Freemason and feels that you deserve the opportunity to know more about it. He cannot properly do much more, though he will readily respond if you express interest. Anyone knowing a Mason can ask him for more information. He will give it willingly.

**Further local information can be obtained  
on 01257 255145 or 01257 464510.**

