

An Exhibition on

the History

of

English

Freemasonry

at
Freemasons' Hall
Great Queen Street
London WC2B SAZ

This Exhibition tells the story of English Freemasonry and is illustrated with documents, paintings, engravings, photographs, regalia, porcelain, glass and silver. It outlines the development of the Craft in England. The exhibition is in five sections.

Section I

The development of Freemasonry, directly or indirectly, from the craft of the medieval stonemason, the initiation of Elias Ashmole at Warrington in 1646 and the development of Lodges in Chester (c.1670) and Scarborough (1705). The coming together of four London Lodges on 24th June 1717 to form a Grand Lodge, the first in the world, with Anthony Sayer as its first Grand Master.

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Section 11

The development of the Grand Lodge as a regulatory body and the appearance of rivals: the Antients Grand Lodge (1751- 1813); the Grand Lodge of All England (1761-1792) at York; the Grand Lodge South of the River Trent (1778-1788) in London. The development of the Lodge as both a ceremonial and a convivial gathering and the use of regalia. The emergence of the Royal Arch as an additional degree, the rise of rival Grand Chapters and development of separate regalia. The building of the first Freemasons' Hall in 1775-1776 and its use for both Masonic and social gatherings. The founding of central charities to look after daughters (1788) and sons (1798) of indigent or deceased Freemasons.

Section III

The involvement in Freemasonry of six of the sons of King George III, in particular the Prince of Wales (later King George IV) and Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex. The Union of the premier and Antients Grand Lodges, on 27th December 1813, to form the United Grand Lodge of England.

Section IV

The consolidation and standardisation, particularly of ritual and regalia, brought about by the Union. The spread of the Craft abroad with the development of the British Empire. The public face of Freemasonry, demonstrated in public processions, foundation stone layings, attendance at theatres and Masonic Balls and other events. The development of the three great Masonic Charities: the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls; the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys and the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution.

Section V

The activities of Masonic prisoners of war. The building of the present Freemasons' Hall as a Peace Memorial. A gallery of Freemasons who have been eminent in many walks of life. The long connection, from 1737, between the Royal Family and Freemasonry. The reorganisation of the Masonic Charities. The 250th and 275th Anniversaries of Grand Lodge.