



The lodge owes its origin to a meeting held on 25 September 1861 in a solicitor's office in Church Street, St Helens at which the eight lodge founders were present, when it was resolved that a petition be presented to the Grand Lodge of England for a warrant to hold a lodge at the Fleece Inn, St Helens, to be called The St Helens Lodge of Loyalty No 1199 (changed in 1863 to 897).

On 9 December 1861 the first meeting of the St Helens Lodge of Loyalty No 1199 was held at the Fleece Inn. It is not until 7 September 1863 that Grand

Lodge changed the lodge number to 897, a number by which it is still known.

In March 1879 it was recommended that the lodge lease private rooms in a new building to be erected in Church Street at the corner of Hall Street for a period of seven years. The lodge assembled at the new building in December 1879.

A resolution to move the lodge to the Imperial Buildings in Ormskirk Street, St Helens in 1885 was defeated but the lodge did eventually move to the Imperial Buildings in 1898.

Modernisation of the rooms took place in 1912 with the installation of electric lighting.

In 1919 a deposit was made to secure the late Salisbury Hotel in Salisbury Street, St Helens a purchase not completed until 1921 with formation of the Masonic Hall Co Ltd.

The minutes record that in March 1923 the Masonic Hall Building Co Ltd had purchased Wolverhampton House in Church Street, St Helens and Salisbury House is briefly mentioned as having been sold.

Two years later the company being unable to obtain possession of Wolverhampton House, purchased the premises of Messrs Critchley Bros & Co (a former paint store) in Hall Street, St. Helens and the St Helens Masonic Hall Ltd was formed.

The lodge moved to Hall Street in February 1927 after extensive refurbishment and still meets there.

Freemasonry has steadily expanded in St Helens since the lodge was founded, there being eight Freemasons lodges meeting at the St Helens Masonic Hall.

Written by C R Bromilow