

ST HELENS MASONIC HALL LTD



Freemasonry has existed in St Helens for 163 years in the form of Lodge of Loyalty 897.

The Lodge owes its origin to a meeting held on 25th September 1861 in a Solicitor's office in Church Street, St. Helens at which the 8 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 the 9th of December 1861 the first meeting of the St. Helens Lodge of Loyalty No 1199 was held at the Fleece Inn. It is not until 7th 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 7 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. It was joined by Ionic Lodge and after the Great war St Helens and Integrity Lodges were formed to cater for the growing numbers.

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 building first appears on maps of the area in the 1880's as a Temperance Hall.

The Lodges moved to Hall Street in February 1927 after extensive refurbishments. This involved installing the Dome, putting in the sweeping staircase, stained Glass windows and modelling the frontage on Grand lodge in London. All the work was done by members. There being nearly 500 at that time. Catering was done in the cellar with the food being sent up in the Dumb Waiter.

Since that time there have been many improvements including the installation of a lift, new kitchen facilities, practice rooms, eco efficient lighting, refurbishment of the bars and function room and installation of many health and safety systems and procedures and alarm systems. In addition, the hall caters for a wide range of outside functions.

The Board of Directors of St Helens Masonic Hall Ltd consists of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, representatives of lodges and other masonic orders. There are also Associate Directors who have no voting rights but bring experience and expertise to the Board.

St Helens Masonic Club consists of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and committee members. The Club oversees the catering, bars and social functions on behalf of the Board of Directors.

The St Helens Masonic Club Support Group is being set up to involve younger masons in providing fundraising and social ideas.

The building continues to flourish with 5 lodges:

Lodge of Loyalty 897, St Helens Lodge 4121, Lodge of Hospitality 5074, Lodge of St George 6048, Hardshaw Lodge 8722.

Plus, Mersey Valley Lodge of Installed Masters 9057.

6 side degrees:

Prince of Wales Mark Lodge 466, Knights Templar Preceptory 49

Rose Croix Chapter 391, St Helens Conclave 387, Prescote Conclave 375

2 chapters:

Chapter of Loyalty 897, Ionic Chapter 2405

St Helens Masonic Hall Ltd

13th of April 2024