

Are you  
**thinking**  
of *becoming* a  
**Freemason?**

United  
Grand Lodge  
*of* England



## Introduction

- There are over 330,000 Freemasons in England and Wales.
- There are nearly six million Freemasons worldwide.
- There are nearly 8,000 Lodges spread throughout England and Wales.

*Pictured: the ceiling of Grand Lodge*

## What is Freemasonry?

- Masonry consists of a body of men brought together for the sake of mutual intellectual, social and moral improvement.
- Masonry recognises no distinction of religion and emphasises the duties of citizenship. Religious or political discussion is not permitted in Lodge meetings.
- Masonry offers no monetary advantages.
- Masonry supports a wide range of charities, both Masonic and non-Masonic.



## Why become a Freemason?

People have their own reasons why they enjoy Freemasonry. The following is a sample of some of the reasons given:

**Achievement** – progressing through the various offices in the Lodge to become Worshipful Master.

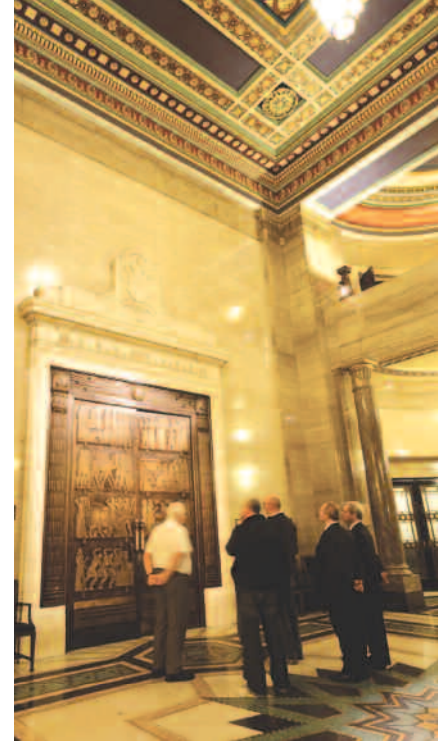
**Brotherhood** – making new friends and acquaintances from all walks of life, every background and age group.

**Charity** – being able to contribute to deserving causes, both Masonic and non-Masonic.

**Education** – learning from peers and mentors by practising ritual and making short speeches.

**Knowledge** – finding out about the history and mysteries of Freemasonry.

**Self improvement** – making a contribution to your family and society.



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## Famous Freemasons through the ages



### Kings

- George VI
- Edward VII
- Edward VIII

### Presidents & Prime Ministers

- Sir Winston Churchill
- George Washington

### Key Historic Figures

- Arthur Wellesley (1st Duke of Wellington)
- Henri Dunant (founder of the Red Cross)
- Dr Barnardo

### Businessmen

- Andre Citroen
- Henry Ford

### Musicians

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- Sir William S. Gilbert & Sir Arthur Sullivan
- Nat 'King' Cole
- Edward 'Duke' Ellington

### Sportsmen

- Clive Lloyd
- Arnold Palmer
- Jack Dempsey
- 'Sugar Ray' Robinson

### Scientists

- Sir Alexander Fleming
- Joseph Lister
- Edward Jenner (smallpox vaccination)

### Writers

- Rudyard Kipling
- Robert Burns
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

### Explorers

- Sir Ernest Shackleton
- Captain Robert Falcon Scott (Scott of the Antarctic)
- Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin (Astronaut)

### Actors and Entertainers

- John Wayne
- William Cody ('Buffalo Bill')
- Harry Houdini
- Peter Sellers
- Clark Gable



## A short history of Freemasonry in Britain

The origins of Freemasonry are subject to scholarly debate. *Organised Freemasonry*, as we know it today, began with the founding of the first Grand Lodge on 24 June 1717 at the *Goose and Gridiron Ale House* in St Paul's Churchyard.

It was formed by the agreement of four London Lodges, the oldest of which was thought to have existed in 1691. Evidence of the movement's existence prior to 1691 is sparse, so the true origins remain a mystery.

Freemasonry neither originated nor existed in King Solomon's time. Many historians have tried to prove Freemasonry descended from the mysteries of classical Greece or Rome or was derived from the religion of the Egyptian pyramid builders.

Other theories include that Freemasonry:

- sprang from bands of travelling stonemasons acting by Papal authority.
- evolved from a band of Knights Templar who escaped to Scotland after the order was persecuted in Europe.

- derived from the shadowy and mysterious Rosicrucian Brotherhood which may or have existed in Europe in the early 1600s.

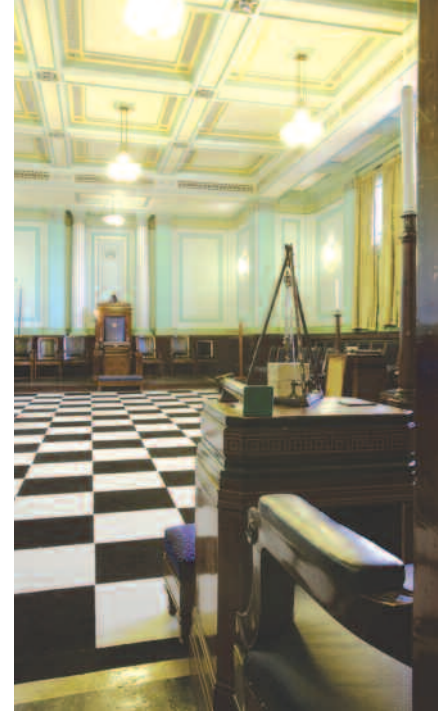
The honest answers to the questions when, where and why did Freemasonry originate, are that we simply do not know.

### The stonemason theory

That said, there is general agreement amongst historians and researchers that Freemasonry developed, either directly or indirectly, from the medieval stonemasons – otherwise known as *Operative Masons* – who built the great cathedrals and castles.

Those who favour the theory say there were three stages to the evolution of Freemasonry:

- the stonemasons gathered in huts or *Lodges* to rest and eat.
- these Lodges gradually became meetings for stonemasons to regulate their craft.
- eventually, and in common with other trades, they developed primitive initiation ceremonies for new apprentices.



*There is general agreement amongst historians and researchers that Freemasonry developed, either directly or indirectly, from the medieval stonemasons*

*Those who support the indirect link believe the originators of Freemasonry were men who wished to promote tolerance and build a better world in which men of differing opinions could peacefully co-exist and work together for the betterment of mankind*



As stonemasons were accustomed to travelling all over the country and as there were no trade union cards or certificates of apprenticeship, they began to adopt a private word which they could use when arriving at a new site to prove they were properly skilled and had been a member of a hut or Lodge.

It was, after all, easier to communicate a secret word to prove who you were and that you were entitled to your wages, than it was to spend hours carving a block of stone to demonstrate your skills.

It is known that in the early 1600s these operative Lodges began to admit non-stonemasons. They were *Accepted* or *Gentlemen Masons*. Why and what form the ceremony took is unknown.

As the 1600s drew to a close, more gentlemen joined the Lodges, gradually taking them over and turning them into Lodges of *free and accepted*, or *speculative Masons*. The Lodges no longer had any connection with the stonemasons' craft.

This theory is based on information from Scotland where there is ample evidence of Scottish operative Lodges – geographically defined units with the backing of statute law to control what was termed *The Mason Trade*.

There is also plenty of evidence that these Lodges began to admit gentlemen as accepted Masons.

There is no evidence, so far, that these accepted members were other than honorary masons, or that they in any way altered the nature of the operative Lodges.

Furthermore, no evidence has come to light, after a hundred years, for a similar development in England.

Medieval building records have references to stonemason's Lodges, but after 1400, apart from Masons' guilds in some towns, there is no evidence for operative Lodges.

*...It was easier to communicate a secret word to prove who you were*

## Building a better society theory

It is in England that the first evidence of a Lodge completely made up of non-operative Masons is found. Elias Ashmole, the antiquary and founder of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, records in his diary for 1646 that he was made a Free Mason in a Lodge held for that purpose at his father-in-law's house in Warrington. He records who was present at the meeting: all have been researched and found to have no connection with operative Masonry.

English evidence through the 1600s points to Freemasonry existing separately from any actual or supposed organisation of operative stonemasons.

This lack of evidence for the existence of operative Lodges but evidence for Lodges of *accepted masons* has led to the theory of an indirect link between operative stonemasonry and Freemasonry. Those who support the indirect link theorise that Freemasonry was brought into existence by a group of men in the late 1500s or early 1600s.

This was a period of great religious and political turmoil and intolerance. Men were unable to meet together without differences of political and religious opinion leading to arguments. Families were split by opposing views and the English Civil War of 1642 to 1646 was the ultimate outcome.

Those who support the indirect link believe the originators of Freemasonry were men who wished to promote tolerance and build a better world in which men of differing opinions could peacefully co-exist and work together for the betterment of mankind.

In the custom of their times, they used allegory and symbolism to pass on their ideas and principles.

As their central idea was the building of a better society, they borrowed their forms and symbols from the operative builders' craft and took their central allegory from *The Bible*. Stonemasons' tools provided them with the multiplicity of emblems to illustrate the principles they were putting forward.





The Grand Charity offices

### A charitable framework theory

A more recent theory places the origins of Freemasonry within a charitable framework. In the 1600s there was no welfare state, so anyone falling ill or becoming disabled had to rely on friends and the Poor Law for support. In those days many trades had what have become known as *box clubs*.

These grew out of the convivial gatherings of members of a particular trade during meetings of which all present would put money into a communal box, knowing that if they fell on hard times they could apply for relief from the box.

From surviving evidence these box clubs are known to have begun to admit members not belonging to their trade and to have had many traits of early Masonic Lodges. They met in taverns, had simple initiation ceremonies and passwords and practiced charity on a local scale. It is possible that Freemasonry had its origins in just such a box club for operative Masons.

Whatever the origins, after 1717 and the establishment of the *Premier Grand Lodge* (as it was known), Freemasonry grew in popularity, spreading across much of the world (expanding as the British Empire grew), attracting many famous and notable personalities.

When *Grand Lodge* was formed in 1717, Anthony Sayer was elected as the first *Grand Master*. Initially, the Grand Lodge was an annual feast at which the Grand Master and Wardens were elected. But in 1721 other meetings began to be held and Grand Lodge began to be a regulatory body. In 1723, as the membership grew, Grand Lodge produced a *Book of Constitutions* which outlined the rules and regulations governing Freemasonry.

### Expansion

By 1730 Grand Lodge had more than 100 Lodges under its jurisdiction, including one in Spain and another in India. It had begun to operate a central charity fund and had attracted a wide spectrum of society into its Lodges.



Some London Lodges disagreed with these Constitutions and in 1751, a rival Grand Lodge was formed by disaffected Masons. Its founders claimed that the original Grand Lodge had departed from the established customs of the Craft and they intended practising Freemasonry “according to the Old Institutions”.

Confusingly, they called themselves the *Grand Lodge of the Ancients* and dubbed their senior rival the *Moderns*. It included many London Lodges and was known as the *Ancients* or *Atholl Grand Lodge*, after the third Duke of Atholl who became its first Grand Master.

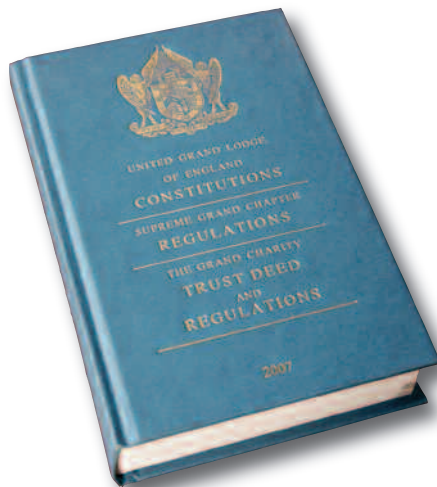
### United Freemasonry

The two rivals existed side by side, neither regarding the other as regular or each other’s members as regularly-made Masons. Attempts at a union of the two rivals began in the late 1790s but it was not until the Duke of Sussex became the Grand Master of the Moderns and his brother the Duke of Kent became Grand Master of the Ancients that progress was made.

Eventually, the Union of the two rival Grand Lodges took place on 27 December 1813, under the Grand Mastership of HRH Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, the sixth son of King George III.

### The Book of Constitutions

The *Book of Constitutions* has been reprinted and gone through many editions since its initial publication, but the fundamental rules laid down in 1723 still apply today.



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## The structure of the United Grand Lodge of England

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) is the ruling and governing body of Freemasonry in this country. It is based at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London.

For administrative purpose, Lodges around the country are grouped under either the Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London or Provincial Grand Lodges (all other areas), depending upon their geographical location.

UGLE is governed by The Grand Master, *The Most Worshipful His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent*. A number of senior executive officers and selected senior Brethren assist him.

Because the Grand Master is a member of the Royal Family, there is also a Pro Grand Master appointed to act on his behalf when the Grand Master needs to attend to his Royal duties.

The Grand Master is also assisted by a Deputy Grand Master and an Assistant Grand Master. Grand Lodge meets four times a year at what are known as *Quarterly Communications*.

### Lodges Abroad

Many countries abroad have Freemasons' Lodges which are governed by a defined Grand Lodge – e.g. the *Grand Lodge of Sweden*, the *Grand Lodge of Hungary*, etc. Some of these overseas Grand Lodges have descended directly from UGLE.

The Constitutions, Rules and Regulations of such Grand Lodges are recognised as *regular* and English Freemasons are permitted to join in the meetings.

*Because the Grand Master is a member of the Royal Family, a Pro Grand Master is appointed to act on his behalf when the Grand Master needs to attend to his Royal duties, and is also assisted by a Deputy and an Assistant Grand Master*

## Officers of the Lodge

In most Lodges there are eleven non-progressive officers and seven progressive officers.

Lodge officers are recognisable by the *jewels* suspended from their Lodge collars (these are illustrated below) and from the positions they occupy in a Lodge.

## The Progressive Officers

Usually, each year a Brother would progress through these offices on a path from Steward, via the Deacons and Wardens, to the highest honour within a Lodge – the Worshipful Master.

However, each office is subject to the choice of the Master for the year.

### Steward

This is the first office held in the Lodge. The Stewards' main function is to assist at the dinner following the Lodge meeting (*the Festive Board*).



## Inner Guard

The Inner Guard sits just inside the door of the Lodge. He is responsible for checking that all those who enter the Lodge are qualified to do so.



## Junior and Senior Deacons

The Deacons accompany the candidate during the ceremonies of the Three Degrees in the Lodge. The collar jewel for both Deacons is identical.



They carry a wand as a badge of their office.

## Junior and Senior Wardens

The Senior Warden sits opposite the Master at the West end of the Lodge and is usually the next Master. The Junior Warden sits in the South of the Lodge and will normally progress to Senior Warden. It is the role of the Junior Warden to ensure that no unqualified person enters the Lodge. Although their roles are different, they work together by assisting the Master in running the Lodge.



## The Master (Worshipful Master)

The Master is elected by the Lodge members every year and is then *installed* in to his office. He is usually Master for one year. He is in charge of the Lodge during his tenure of office and acts as its chairman.



He also normally conducts the ceremonies in the Lodge. Being elected and installed as Master is the highest honour a Lodge can bestow on any of its members.

## The Non-Progressive Officers

These offices are usually occupied by members who are Past Masters of the Lodge and tend to be occupied by the same person for a number of years, to provide continuity and experience.

They are also appointed by the Master annually, except the Treasurer and Tyler, who are elected. The Immediate Past Master is normally the preceding year's WM. Some Lodges formally appoint a Mentor to look after new members.



### Immediate Past Master (IPM)



Although not actually an office (as the position is his by right), the IPM is normally the previous Master and acts as a guide and support to the Master when needed. He sits on the immediate left of the Worshipful Master.

### Chaplain



All meetings begin and end with prayer and it is the role of the Lodge Chaplain to lead the members in this part of the meeting.

### Treasurer



The Treasurer is responsible for Lodge finances. He produces annual accounts, which are audited before being approved by the Lodge. Subscriptions are decided in Lodge on the Treasurer's recommendation.

### Secretary



The Secretary has responsibility for the smooth administration of the Lodge. He is the main conduit for communication from Grand Lodge

and his Provincial Grand Lodge (if the Lodge is out of London) or from the Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London.

He is also responsible for organising and distributing the summons notifying the members of the agenda for the next meeting.

### Director of Ceremonies – DC



The role of the DC is to organise and oversee the ceremonies held in the Lodge and to ensure all other officers concerned in any ritual are aware of their roles. This is usually achieved by meticulous rehearsals. It is also part of his responsibilities to see that the ceremonies are conducted with dignity and decorum.

### Almoner



The Almoner is the Lodge welfare officer. He maintains contact with the widows of members and with those who are ill or indisposed. He is also trained to assist those who are in financial need. He therefore has a knowledge of the variety of resources that exist in time of need.

### Charity Steward

The role of the Charity Steward is to organise the charity collections in the Lodge and to suggest to the Lodge to which charities (Masonic or non-Masonic) the members may wish to subscribe.



### Organist

The Organist's role is to provide the music for the meetings and ceremonies. Most Lodges do not have a member with the necessary skills to play the organ and so rely on professional Masonic organists.

### Assistant Director of Ceremonies – ADC

The role of the ADC is to assist and to understudy the Director of Ceremonies in his office.



### Assistant Secretary

The role of the Assistant Secretary is to help and understudy the Secretary. In some Lodges he has responsibility for the dining arrangements.

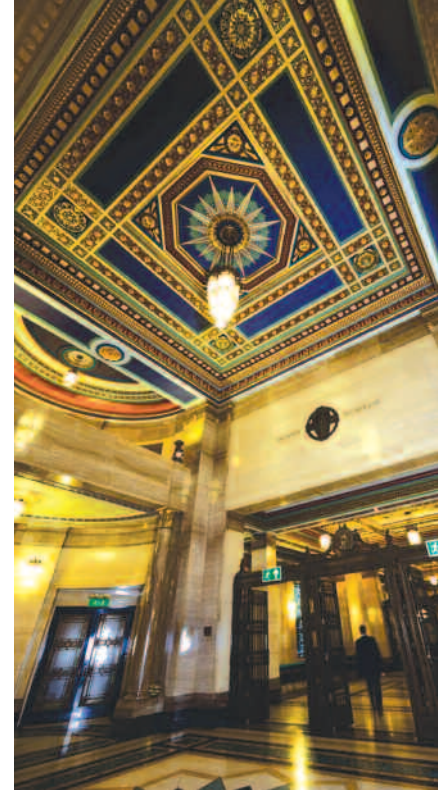


### Tyler

The Tyler guards the outside of the door to the entrance of the Lodge. It is usually undertaken by an experienced member of the Lodge and is an elected office. He has responsibility for preparing the candidates prior to their entering the Lodge.



Above: a collar with a jewel attached – in this instance the Almoner's



*The three Great Principles upon which Freemasonry is based are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth*

*UGLE is governed by  
The Grand Master,  
The Most Worshipful  
His Royal Highness  
the Duke of Kent*



## Regalia

### Dress code

The dress code in most lodges is similar:

- a dark lounge suit.
- an appropriate tie.
- white shirt.
- white gloves.
- black shoes.

### Aprons

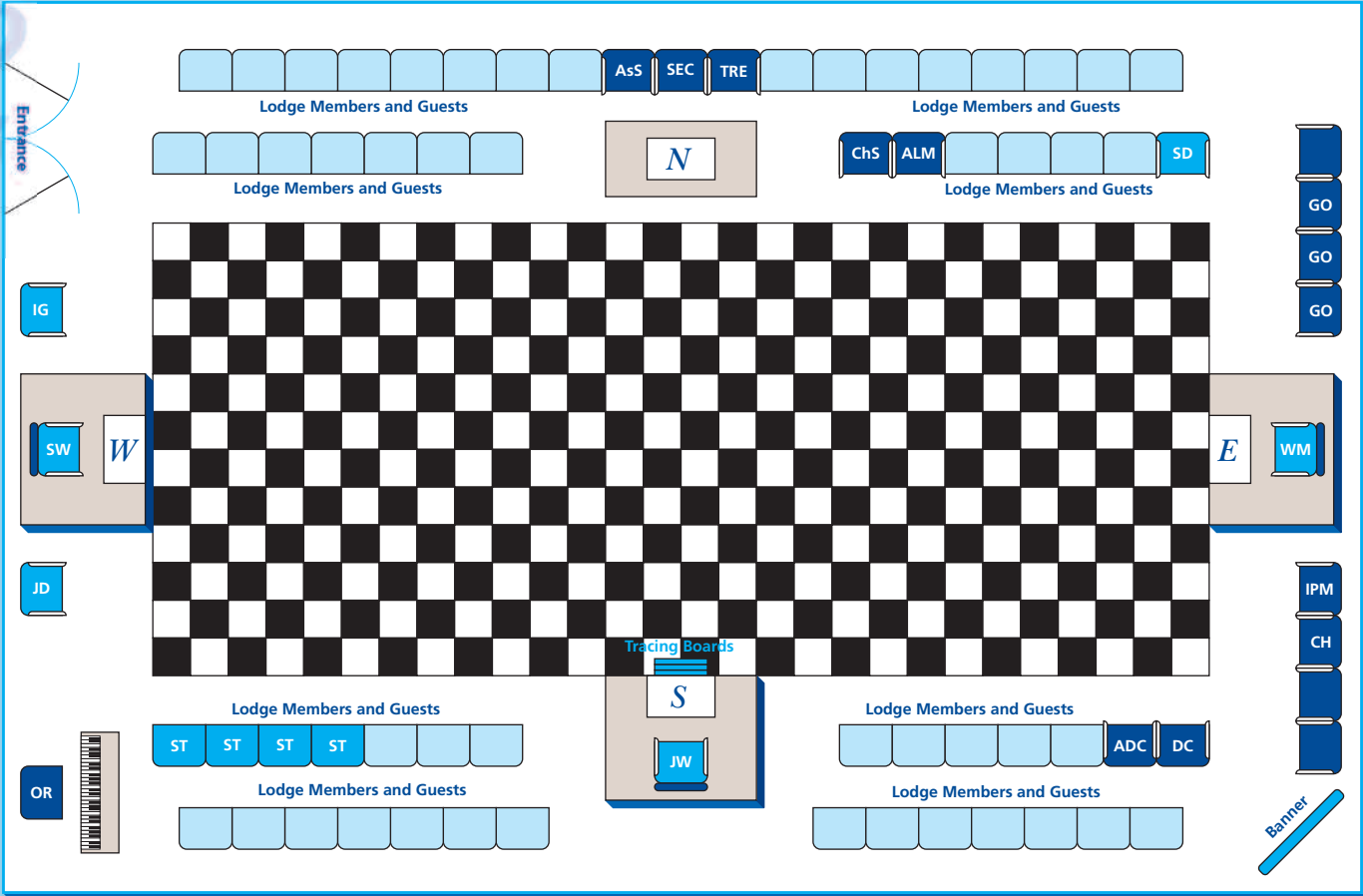
The aprons of Three Degrees in Freemasonry and London Grand Rank are shown below and are attached round the waist of the wearer.




## The Lodge room

All Lodges are arranged in a similar manner:  
see diagram opposite for details.

<i>Key</i>	<i>Position in Lodge</i>
<b>WM</b>	Worshipful Master
<b>IPM</b>	Immediate Past Master
<b>GO</b>	Grand Officer
<b>SW</b>	Senior Warden
<b>JW</b>	Junior Warden
<b>CH</b>	Chaplain
<b>TRE</b>	Treasurer
<b>SEC</b>	Secretary
<b>DC</b>	Director of Ceremonies
<b>ALM</b>	Almoner
<b>ChS</b>	Charity Steward
<b>AsS</b>	Assistant Secretary
<b>SD</b>	Senior Deacon
<b>JD</b>	Junior Deacon
<b>ADC</b>	Assistant Director of Ceremonies
<b>IG</b>	Inner Guard
<b>OR</b>	Organis
<b>ST</b>	Steward
<b>TY</b>	Tyler





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of *becoming* a  
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**For more information**

please visit the  
United Grand Lodge of England website  
at [www.ugle.org.uk](http://www.ugle.org.uk) or contact:  
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London WC2B 5AZ  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7831 9811

*Pictured: the opening of Grand Lodge*  
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