

Power sockets for laptop computers are available and a staffed service for photocopying and photography is provided. Both are done at the discretion of the Librarian and are subject to copyright and conservation restrictions. For details of current charges please contact the Library and Museum on 020 7395 9257.

The third and present Freemasons' Hall on Great Queen Street, London



Library staff are always pleased to help visitors with historical enquiries or to respond to telephone or written enquiries and can advise about how to use Library and Archive resources. However staff cannot undertake extensive research on individual enquiries.

Freemasons' Hall is located on the edge of Covent Garden where

there are many cafes and restaurants. There are public car parks nearby.

LIBRARY

The Library is open for reference use. It contains a comprehensive collection of printed books and manuscripts on Freemasonry in England and Wales as well as material on Freemasonry elsewhere in the world and on subjects associated with Freemasonry or with mystical and esoteric traditions. The Library catalogue is available online at www.freemasonry.london.museum

MUSEUM

A changing series of exhibitions portray the history of Freemasonry in England and specific aspects of Masonic life. The permanent collections include pottery and porcelain, glassware, silver, furniture and clocks, Masonic jewels and regalia, prints, photographs and ephemera. A part of the Museum catalogue is available online at www.freemasonry.london.museum

TOURS OF FREEMASONS' HALL

The Library and Museum is located in Freemasons' Hall. Guided tours of the building are generally available (free of charge) Monday to Friday. There are no tours on certain ceremonial occasions and visitors are advised to telephone before making a special journey. On Saturdays guided tours must be pre-booked (and a booking fee is payable). Please telephone for details.

THE SHOP AT FREEMASONS' HALL

The shop stocks books, postcards, gifts and souvenirs about the history of freemasonry, the collections and Freemasons' Hall. Enquiries can be made on 020 7395 9329. Purchases can be made online at www.letchworthshop.co.uk

OPENING TIMES

The Library and Museum is open from 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday except public holidays and the Christmas and New Year period.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

If you would like to support the Library and Museum by joining the Friends Group please write to the Director at the address below.

Address

Freemasons' Hall
60 Great Queen Street
London WC2B 5AZ

Telephone

020 7395 9257

Fax

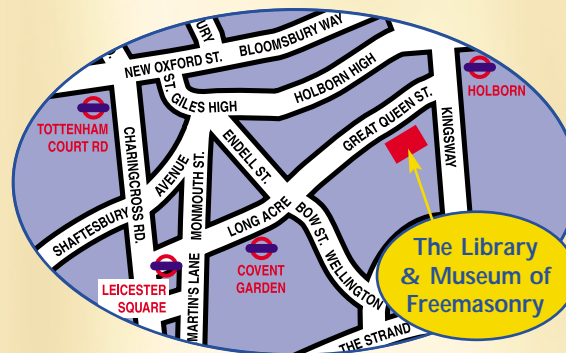
020 7404 7418

www.freemasonry.london.museum

Email

libmus@ugle.org.uk

The text of this leaflet is also available on the website or in large print format from the Library and Museum.



The illustrations on the front page of this leaflet are (clockwise from the right): A meeting probably of the Patriotic Fund in Freemasons' Hall, circa 1810, a 1774 Title Deed, Proposals for the Freemasons' Tontine, circa 1775 and a page from a Hall Committee minute book of 1776.

The Library and Museum of Freemasonry is a registered charity no. 1058497

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THE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY

EXPLORING MASONIC RECORDS: FREEMASONS' HALL AND TAVERN



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund



Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest secular fraternal societies - a society concerned with moral and spiritual values. Members are taught the rules of Freemasonry by a series of ritual dramas that follow ancient forms and use stonemasons customs and tools symbolically.

The Library and Museum of Freemasonry houses one of the finest collections of Masonic material in the world. It is open to the public, Monday to Friday, free of charge.

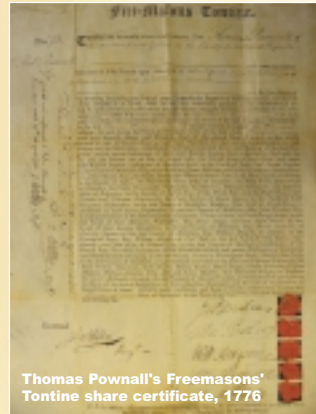
ARCHIVES

The Library and Museum is the repository for the archives of United Grand Lodge of England, the governing body of English freemasonry, and Supreme Grand Chapter. The United Grand Lodge was formed by a union of two rival Grand Lodges (the Moderns, formed in 1717, and the Antients, formed in 1751) in 1813.

THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONS' HALL AND TAVERN

For many years the Moderns Grand Lodge held their meetings in various halls, taverns and inns but by 1768 it became apparent that it would be of great benefit to the members to have a hall of their own.

A 'Hall Committee' was appointed in 1773 in order to consider and purchase premises. Two houses were eventually bought at No. 61 Great Queen Street. Although some rooms in the houses were adapted for the use of the Freemasons the 'Front House' was let to John Brooks and the 'Back House' to Brother Luke Reilly, this became the first Freemasons' Tavern and



1775 Freemasons Tontine one hundred shares costing £50 each were available. Subscribers to the scheme nominated a person, often a child, and they received a

Coffee House. In 1779, Mr Brooks vacated the 'Front House' and Luke Reilly took over the tenancy of both houses, extending the size of the Tavern. It was the garden to the rear of the two houses that was the proposed site for the Hall.

Freemasons' Hall was partly financed using a tontine system. In the

dividend payment throughout the lifetime of that person. The total amount of dividend remained the same so that individual dividend payments increased as the amount was divided amongst fewer and fewer survivors.

The architect and mason, Thomas Sandby (bap. 1723 - 1798), designed the first Hall and the foundation stone was laid on 1st May 1775. The completed building was finally dedicated on 23rd May 1776. The Hall was used by both Masonic and non-Masonic groups and organisations for various meetings including balls, concerts, readings and dinners. The building underwent further alterations and extensions in the early nineteenth century, most notably by Sir John Soane, but by the middle of the century the construction was deemed unsatisfactory. It was increasingly advocated that comprehensive rebuilding was necessary and that a portion of the building should be devoted solely to Masonic purposes with the Tavern area clearly distinguishable from it.

After an open competition the design of the architect Frederick Pepys Cockerell (1833-1878) was chosen and he was appointed to oversee the building works, which began in 1864. The new Freemasons' Hall now adjoined the Freemasons' Tavern and had its own frontage on Great Queen Street.



The building was later extended westwards but the whole building was demolished in the early twentieth century to enable the building of what became the third and present Freemasons' Hall.

HALL AND TAVERN ARCHIVES

Much of the history of the building and rebuilding of the first and second Freemasons' Halls is recorded in the archives available for consultation at the Library and Museum of Freemasonry. The papers have been catalogued under the reference GBR 1991 FMH.

They primarily date from 1768 to 1870 and include minute books of the various committees involved with the building and rebuilding; papers and correspondence relating to the building, rebuilding, maintenance and use of the first and second Halls; volumes and papers relating to the Freemasons' Tontine; plans of the Freemasons' Halls and Taverns and title deeds and documents concerning the site.

Correspondence	Ref: GBR 1991 FMH HC
Deeds	Ref: GBR 1991 FMH D
Freemasons' Tontine - papers and volumes	Ref: GBR 1991 FMH TON
Minute Books	Ref: GBR 1991 FMH MINS
Plans	Ref: GBR 1991 FMH P

The catalogue for these records is available on line at the fully searchable Access to Archives website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a

The catalogue, along with additional records, is also available to search at www.freemasonry.london.museum



VISITING THE LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Admission to the Library and Museum is free of charge. It is located on the first floor of Freemasons' Hall where there are also toilet facilities (including those for wheelchair users). There are lifts available which are suitable for most wheelchairs.

Please note that users are required to complete a Reader Registration Form and to provide proof of identity and address when they first use the Library or Archives. This can be completed on the occasion of a first visit.

To view archive material it is advisable to telephone in advance of any visit on 020 7395 9257 so that staff can have material available for you.