



# **Freemasonry in Athol Lodge No.74 Severn Street Birmingham**

A Guide and Aid for New and Aspiring Members,  
their Proposers and Seconders  
by W.Bro. Les Leek,  
Membership Officer of Athol Lodge No.74



Association  
of Atholl Lodges  
[www.antients.org](http://www.antients.org)



## ***Preface and Acknowledgements***

This booklet was written to improve the questions and information that a person interested in joining a Lodge would require. It was felt that perhaps some brethren with a little more experience could anticipate what they should be explaining to prospective candidates, so they were aware of just what Freemasonry is really all about.

One of the more recent brethren said that although the Lodge had taken great trouble to discover their motives in wanting to join, the emphasis had been on the practical matters, i.e. could they afford the costs of fees and regalia, did they have the proper clothing and the importance of paying annual subscriptions at the proper time !

Not enough, however, was said about the ideals of Freemasonry, where it fits into society, what are the expectations of the Lodge he was about to join, what he had a right to expect from Freemasonry. These and other questions need to be addressed if we are to encourage the right calibre of men into Freemasonry and ensure that we retain them in our Lodges for the good of the craft and to the benefit of society in general.

This booklet, whilst specific to Athol Lodge, will help not only the candidates but also their proposers or seconders who felt they needed some assistance in explaining what they were encouraging their friends to join.

There are a number of excellent publications which have gone a long way to explaining to brethren the degrees through which they have passed and encouraging membership of another avenue for Freemasons known as the Royal Arch. However, not too much appears to have been written in a practical form for those who have not yet made the decision as to whether Freemasonry is what they are looking for. I hope that this booklet will help to fill that gap. There is nothing in these pages that cannot be revealed freely to anyone outside of Freemasonry who is genuinely interested in the Craft.

I must acknowledge the various leaflets published by the Board of General Purposes of the United Grand Lodge of England in recent years, notably 'Freemasonry and Society' which were of help in deciding on the content of this booklet and to John Handley for his assistance in producing this booklet.

Useful links to freemasonry in general, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire, the Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) the Masonic Charitable Foundation and of course Athol Lodge are shown below.

<https://www.ugle.org.uk>

<https://www.warwickshirepgl.org.uk>

<https://mcf.org.uk>

<http://www.athol.org.uk>

<https://www.universitiesscheme.com>

## **INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF ATHOL LODGE**

We are pleased that you have expressed an interest in becoming a Freemason and, in particular a member of Athol Lodge, which was originally founded by members of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards in 1811. Athol Lodge has a proud history in Freemasonry in the city of Birmingham.(See Appendix A)

Our lodge is one of the most prestigious and vibrant Freemasons' lodge in the country with a history which few others can match. The majority of our members live mainly in the midlands area of England, but we have others who currently live and work in London, Leeds, the Home Counties and even France, Germany and China. They come from all walks of life including all trades and businesses, the self-employed, academia, students and the retired members who utilise their invaluable business and life skills to keep Athol Lodge so vibrant and progressive, whilst at the same times retaining our ancient traditions.

Our modern history in recent times from 2018 was being accepted as a member of the United Grand Lodge of England( UGLE).Universities Scheme. Athol Lodge No. 74 is also a member of The Association of Medical, University and Legal Lodges (AMULL) which has worldwide links. The Provincial Grand Master of Warwickshire, and his appointed representative for the Universities Scheme is responsible for University Schemes in the Province of Warwickshire

Athol Lodge is also a member of the Association of Atholl Lodges, a prestigious group of lodges with a proud history tracing its origins to the birth of freemasonry in this country. There are 122 still working Atholl lodges; 107 in England, 5 in the Channel Islands, two each in Wales, Gibraltar, Bermuda and Jamaica, and one each in Barbados and Guyana: Atholl lodges were once described as a necklace of sparkling diamonds stretching around the world; happily many of those diamonds are still in place today, and they have lost none of their lustre.

We, at Athol Lodge believe that with our prestigious history, our vibrancy, transparency, commitment to charity, and our engagement with all sections of society, our lodge will progress with many new members joining us to celebrate the ideals of freemasonry and the camaraderie we enjoy in this country.

Athol Lodge No.74 meets at Severn Street Masonic Hall, which is a Grade 2 listed building in the city centre of Birmingham, next to The Mailbox. We meet eight times a year on the first Wednesday of January, February April, May, October, November and December At the January Lodge Meeting we celebrate the Installation of the new Master of the Lodge and then dine in style in our own dining room, which we call the "Festive Board". At our December meeting our tradition is to hold a short business meeting and then join our partners, families and friends at dinner at our annual "Carols Evening".

Now that our history and aspirations of Athol Lodge No 74 have been explained, there are various steps you must take before you finally decide to join us, but please do understand if you do choose to join, and all preliminary steps outlined later in this booklet have been successfully completed, you will be welcomed into our lodge with open arms. It is very

important that you read this booklet carefully and that you thoroughly understand the nature of Freemasonry, what you can expect from being a Freemason, and what Freemasonry has a right to expect from you.

## ABOUT FREEMASONRY

### What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is among the oldest non-religious fraternal societies in the world. It is a society of men who are concerned with ***moral and spiritual values***.

It encourages men to live better lives, to discipline themselves and to consider their relationships with others. Because it is a basic and essential requirement that every member professes and maintains a belief in a Supreme Being, it has a spiritual element. However, it is ***not a religion***, nor should it ever be regarded as a substitute for any form of religious faith.

In fact, Freemasons are strictly forbidden to discuss matters of religion in the Masonic environment. The Bible (known by Freemasons as The Volume of the Sacred Law) is always open when Lodges meet. Obligations are sworn on or involve the Volume of the Sacred Law or whichever holy book is held sacred by the man concerned.

Freemasons use four important guiding principles in life to help define their path through life.

**Integrity**

**Friendship**

**Respect**

**Charity**

In today's world, filled with uncertainty, these principles ring as true today as they have at any point in the organisation's' history.

One of the oldest social and charitable organisations in the world, Freemasonry's roots lie in the traditions of the medieval stonemasons who built our cathedrals and castles.

Membership is open to people from all backgrounds and the organisation's name is to empower members to be the best they can be - its about building character, supporting members as individuals, and helping them to make a positive contribution to society.

Freemasonry provides a structure for members to come together under these common goals, enabling people to make new friendships, develop themselves, and make valuable contributions to charitable causes.

Freemasons gain from Freemasonry only as much as they are prepared to put into it by way of commitment to the ideals mentioned above. Thereby they experience a friendship which can only be felt from within the organisation and a spiritual and moral uplift which is very real but is hard to explain. You will however make lifelong friends throughout your membership of Freemasonry.

The first of the 'Antient Charges' from the 'Book of Constitutions', shown at the end of this booklet, states admirably what Freemasonry is meant to be.

Please also see the 2020 Guiding Principles of Freemasonry on the UGLE website.

### ***What kind of men are Freemasons?***

Men of all ages, races, colours, religions, politics or financial or social standing. We have members who are part of our Royal family, professions, trades, skills, arts, sciences, businesses, manual occupations - both the employed, self-employed, the retired, and, sadly, in these days, the unemployed.

When admitted a man becomes known as a 'Brother' and remains so for the rest of his Masonic career. It is also pointed out to candidates that in Freemasonry all Brethren are 'on the level'.

Although financial standing is not a bar to becoming a Freemason, it must be appreciated that you should be able to afford the minimum obligations of membership (see 'Finances').

### ***Conditions for Admission***

There are, however, certain preconditions of membership of any Masonic lodge.

- 1     You must believe in a Supreme Being**
- 2     You must be at least 18 years of age.**
- 3     You must not engage in discussion on matters of religion or politics on Masonic occasions**
- 4     You must profess allegiance to the Sovereign of your country and all that the Sovereign represents**
- 5     You must be prepared to take an oath to preserve the private aspects of Freemasonry**
- 6     You must be willing to strictly observe the Laws, Regulations and Constitutions of Freemasonry**
- 7     You must be of good character and be prepared to uphold the Civil and Criminal Laws of any country in which you may reside, either temporarily or permanently**
- 8     You should have the full support of your partner, if any**

## **Society, Family and your Job**

A Freemason's duty to society as a citizen must **always** prevail over any obligation to other Freemasons. Freemasonry will severely censure and probably expel any Freemason who attempts to shield another Freemason who has acted dishonourably or unlawfully.

***Freemasonry must never be allowed to harm a man's family or other connections by taking too much of his time or his money or causing him to act in any other way against their interests.***

If it is ever proved that a Freemason has gained an unfair advantage over another person because of his membership of the Order, then this is a serious matter and a view will be taken. Members must never use any sort of Masonic certificate or evidence of membership to advertise a business or other enterprise nor use any sort of Masonic device or description on stationery etc.

Freemasonry is compatible with any form of occupation whatsoever, but all Freemasons must be careful not to compromise their living and the living of their dependants.

***The principles of Freemasonry should, at all times, strengthen a man in fulfilling his public and private responsibilities.***

## **WHAT HAPPENS ON A LODGE EVENING AT ATHOL LODGE ?**

All of the masonic ceremonies and business of the lodge take place in the lodge room or Temple, and at Athol Lodge, we always have a tradition of reading the minutes of our lodge meetings 100 years ago, which are always very interesting listening and appreciating what our forefathers did at that time.

The formal meeting is always followed by the social part of the evening, the 'after-proceedings' often historically known as the '**festive board**'. This is held in the dining room at our beautiful and ancient buildings.

At the festive board members will enjoy a very convivial dinner, with wine served at the table. Dinner is run on our ancient tradition during which toasts are given to the Queen and various members of the Order. There are a few (hopefully!) short speeches. Be sure to wear your Athol tie and a white handkerchief in your breast pocket which is one of our ancient traditions. The festive board is also a lot of fun where members can enjoy the camaraderie and friendship of their colleagues and visitors alike.

## **STANDARDS AND CONDUCT**

### **Dress**

All members of the Lodge are expected to wear dark lounge suits, white shirts (or with only a subdued colour or pattern) together with the official Warwickshire tie, but in Athol Lodge we wear the official tie of the Association of Atholl Lodges. Shoes and socks should ideally be black. White gloves are worn by all members during the Masonic meeting but not at dinner!

As well as for reasons of equality and uniformity the standard dress has a symbolic significance in Freemasonry.

### **Attendance**

Before every meeting each member of the Lodge receives a printed 'summons' or 'circular', distributed by email, which requests his attendance and advises the date, time and business of the lodge. Members should try and attend on every occasion unless prevented by family, work, business commitments or other unforeseen circumstances.

### **Behaviour**

Although Freemasonry has serious aims and important ideals to convey, most members also join to enjoy the camaraderie, the conversation and simply have some fun. This too is a vitally important part of Freemasonry.

While members are encouraged to enjoy 'good food and good wine, excesses must be avoided at all times. Freemasonry is not just another dining or drinking club.

## **FINANCE**

### **Financial commitments**

You must be fully aware of the financial commitments you are expected to make. It cannot be stressed enough that **at no time should your Masonic financial obligations be detrimental to the welfare of yourself, your family or those who depend upon you.**

### **Lodge finances**

Like any other organisation, lodges and their administrative bodies have operating costs. These costs must be borne out of Initiation and Joining fees as well as annual subscriptions.

All lodges pay a per capita fee for each member to Grand Lodge in London, the Grand Charity and to Provincial Grand Lodge for the purpose of administering Freemasonry and its charitable funds. In addition, the Lodge also has to pay for the costs of its occupancy of the Masonic Hall and any other such as printing etc.

The main item of income in any Lodge is the Annual Subscription from all members.

### **Initial costs**

When you first join Freemasonry at Athol Lodge, you will be required to pay your joining fees which covers the necessary dues and Annual Lodge Subscription plus a further payment of approximately £26.50 (dependent on the chosen dinner menu) for the meal following the meeting. The initiation fees are derived from a standard charge for all UGLE lodges and will be explained to you when you progress your application. Please don't worry about this aspect of your membership, the fees are very reasonable

The only regular commitment in subsequent years will be your annual subscription which is payable in advance at the annual installation or by a monthly Bank Standing Order which most members do and which spreads the cost over a year.

### **Charity**

At most meetings charitable collections are taken and you will be only expected to contribute within your means.

**No Freemason is ever expected to contribute any more than his circumstances in life may allow.**

The charitable funds in Freemasonry are distributed to needy and distressed Freemasons, their families and Dependants and also to a large variety of non-Masonic international, national and local charities such as Air Ambulance, Cancer Research, Scouts etc.

## **WHAT NEXT?**

### **How do I apply to join?**

Once you have considered what Lodge membership entails and the calls on your time and finances and you wish to proceed, then you will meet informally with the Lodge Membership Officer, perhaps also your proposer and one or two other members of the lodge. At this first informal meeting this is your opportunity to ask any questions about freemasonry in general and Athol Lodge in particular.

After this first meeting, and you wish to continue with your application to join us, you will be provided with a **Registration Form** for completion, first by you, and then it is passed to the Lodge Membership Officer. He will then discuss your application with the Lodge Secretary and other senior members of the lodge. No fees are payable until such time as you are admitted to the Lodge.

### **What happens next?**

The Lodge Membership Officer, followed by the Lodge Secretary will scrutinise the Registration form and, if satisfactory, you may be called upon by appointment, to discuss your application at another informal meeting with the Lodge Membership



Officer or another senior member of the lodge and you and they may raise any queries or issues which require clarification.

Thereafter, it is normal practice that you and your partner will be invited to any lodge social functions so that other members of the lodge and their partners can meet you in an informal setting. The last step would be another informal meeting with Past Masters and perhaps other members of the lodge, and, only if you wish, you may bring your partner if any, to be part of these discussions so they are fully aware of the commitments you are entering into.

If you are happy to proceed and those brethren of the lodge that have met you feel that you will fit in with the Lodge then you will be formally proposed at a meeting and every member of the Lodge will be entitled to vote in a **secret ballot** at a Lodge meeting as to whether you should be admitted as a member. If the ballot is satisfactory you will receive a communication from the Lodge Secretary to invite you to attend for your Initiation at a regular meeting of the Lodge. I

### **What will happen at my interviews/meetings?**

You should have read this information thoroughly and be prepared to answer a few basic questions about yourself, your beliefs your motives and intentions. You will also have been sent open source web links (See Page 2) to other areas of interest for aspiring freemasons.

All of the interviews will be informal, and there is absolutely no pressure upon you at any time, but the brethren must, however, be sure that you are a fit and proper person to be admitted. You will also have the opportunity to ask any question or raise any matter at any time which may be something you may not sure about.

### **What happens on the night I become a Freemason?**

You should arrive in plenty of time, properly dressed as indicated above. You do not require your new Masonic apron at this meeting. An Officer of the Lodge will attend to you and (as you might expect!) the Treasurer will come to obtain the Initiation Fee and Annual Subscription.

You will then pass through the ceremony of Initiation under the guidance of Officers of the Lodge. Rest assured that you will not be embarrassed in any way and enjoy this unique experience. Every member of every lodge in the country, including members of the royal family will have been through the entire ceremony, as have all your colleagues at Athol Lodge who will be there to support you.

The Officers of the Lodge normally perform the entire ceremony from memory (and are expected to make a good job of it ! ) so it is probably true to say that they will be even more nervous than you!

After the ceremony, at the Festive Board, there will be a toast to your health and future, and you will be expected to give a very brief reply to this. Speaking in public

is never easy (as many of us will testify) but your Proposer and/or Secunder will give you help with what to say.

***This is a very special night for you - one you will always want to remember, so enjoy it to the full.***

Once you become a Freemason you may be invited by friends within the lodge or from other brethren visiting us, to visit their lodges, a tradition which is an integral part of the camaraderie and fun of freemasonry.

A number of social functions will be organised by the lodge throughout the year where we encourage brethren to invite their family and friends.

In Athol Lodge we may also have fraternal visits to other local lodges, and occasionally further afield.

A Grand Officer recently said, "Freemasonry is a hobby which we pay for, and whilst there are serious moments in our ceremonies and meetings we are also here to have fun in the company of like minded men"

## **LEARNING MORE**

### **More about your application ?**

If you want to know anything further please do not hesitate to ask your Proposer or Secunder, or any member of the Lodge or any Freemason of your acquaintance.

### **Further Masonic studies**

Once you have passed through the three-degree ceremonies of Freemasonry and have become a Master Mason, you may wish to further your Masonic knowledge, such as membership of the Holy Royal Arch which is the next step in your masonic journey.

Subscribe to the UGLE magazine, Freemasonry Today. The new Solomon website from the UGLE will help you in your quest for masonic knowledge and is well worth reading.

***FINALLY.***

Now that you have learnt something of what Freemasonry is all about and its expectations, we hope that you feel you would still like to share our fellowship. However, it is essential that you look carefully and honestly at yourself, your family, your occupation and all your circumstances in life and ask these questions:

- 1     **Do I want to be part of a well-organised society that reaches across the whole world; an Order inspired with high motives assisting all its members to be better men?**
- 2     **Is Freemasonry really what I'm looking for to assist in improving myself as a person, as a citizen and as a 'Brother' to other men ?**
- 3     **Do I want to experience a whole new sphere in my social life and that of my family – a social life which can bring much fun, enjoyment and satisfaction.**
- 4     **Can I make a commitment to the time, the finances and the principals involved without harming my family or connections?**
- 5     **Do I, and my dependants, see Freemasonry as being part of our lives for the foreseeable future ?**

If you are sure you **can** answer 'YES' to all the questions, ask your Proposer and / or Seconder to progress matters for you and we look forward to seeing you in the Lodge in due time.

**Remember, as a Freemason, you will never be alone, and if you are unsure about anything during your journey through Freemasonry just ask.**

**The Charges of a  
FREE-MASON  
Etc., Etc.**

**1. Concerning GOD and RELIGION**

A MASON is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine. He, of all men, should best understand that God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh at the outward appearance, but God looketh to the heart.

A mason is, therefore, particularly bound never to act against the dictates of his conscience. Let a man's religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believes in the glorious architect of heaven and earth, and practise the sacred duties of morality. Masons unite with the virtuous of every persuasion in the firm and pleasing bond of fraternal love; they are taught to view the errors of mankind with compassion, and to strive, by the purity of their own conduct, to demonstrate the superior excellence of the faith they may profess. Thus, masonry is the centre of union between good men and true, and the happy means of conciliating friendship amongst those who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.

## APPENDIX A

### THE HISTORY OF ATHOL LODGE NO.74 AND OUR LODGE ROOMS

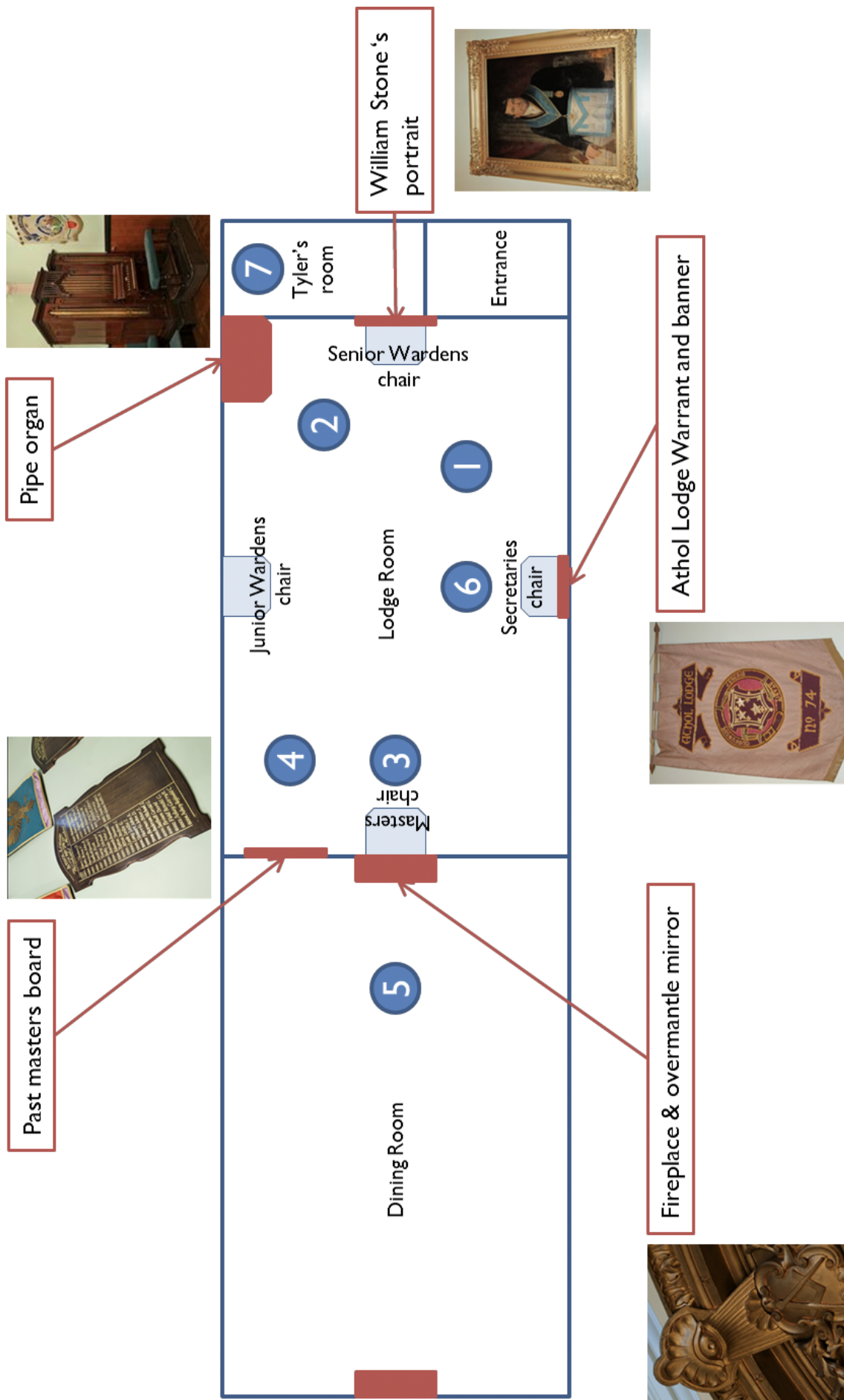


## One of Birmingham's hidden gems

**Severn Street Masonic Hall 60 Severn Street Birmingham  
B1 1QG**

**Shown below is the history of Athol Lodge No. 74 together with an explanation of the lodge room and some of its treasures and artefacts**

**By courtesy of W.Bro. Mike Betts, one of our Senior Past Masters**





# 1

Welcome to the Severn Street Masonic Hall.

Severn Street Masonic Hall is a Grade 2 listed building. It is a very important part of the architectural heritage of the city of Birmingham.

Severn Street was originally in an area called the Froggery. A poorly drained, marshy area that had been part of Birmingham from Medieval times. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century it was a poor, slum area populated by thieves, crooks and prostitutes living in tenement blocks.

The peaky blinders were also based nearby in Small Heath in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century – there was an infamous murder of a policeman by the peaky blinders in front of the Mailbox.

In 1809 the small Hebrew community built a synagogue here at Severn Street. Originally it consisted of the entrance rooms and this room only. In 1813 it was badly damaged in anti-Semitic riots. It was rebuilt in 1827 by Richard Tutin and continued to be used as a Synagogue until 1857 when the Singers Hill Synagogue was built around the corner.

This building was then sold to the members of “Athol Lodge” and opened as a Masonic Hall in 1858. It is the first and oldest Masonic Meeting Place in Birmingham in the Masonic Province of Warwickshire.

After the founding of the Jewish “Lodge of Israel” in 1874 the two Lodges shared the building.

In 1891 the frontage to Severn Street was redesigned, remodelled and added to by Essex and Nicol Architects from Birmingham and remains little altered today.



# 2

Here is the original pipe organ installed in the synagogue.

It is believed that Felix Mendelssohn played this organ. He visited England 10 times with at least 2 visits to Birmingham. He stayed with Joseph Moore, a rich benefactor, at the Crescent, Birmingham – now the site of Centenary Square.

In 1808 Moore had founded the Birmingham Oratorio Choral Society who performed musical festivals every 3 years.

In order to provide the town with a building sufficiently large to do justice to the festivals, Moore successfully campaigned for the building of the Town Hall (1832-4). A public subscription was raised to pay for an organ in the town hall. At the festival of 1834 both hall and organ were used for the first time.

To enhance the fame of the festivals Moore went to Berlin, and persuaded Felix Mendelssohn to compose 'St. Paul,' which was performed at the festival of 1837, and then 'Elijah' performed in 1846. However, Mendelssohn found the organ in the town hall difficult to play.

As a member of the Jewish faith and, it is believed, a Freemason, Mendelssohn would have visited the synagogue. It is believed he used this organ to rehearse for the concerts.



### 3

Queen Victoria.

The carved oak Worshipful Master's Chair which proudly sits in the Lodge Room bears two inscription plates. The first reads "Presented to Athol Lodge No 88 by Bro John Vaughan PM AD 1863".

Beneath it on a silver plate is the second: "This Chair was lent to the Birmingham and Midland Counties Agricultural Exhibition Society for the use of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales KG, Most Worshipful Grand Master, on the occasion of his visit to the Exhibition held at Bingley Hall on November 28, 1885".

Athol Lodge has its very own "King's Chair" which was sat upon by Edward VII when he was still Prince of Wales. He later ascended to the throne in 1901 after the death of his mother

3

The Worshipful Master's Chair is one of a suite of three carved oak chairs with the Junior and Senior Wardens Chairs both bearing inscribed plates which read "Presented to ATHOL LODGE No 74 by Bro Archer, Rawlings and Stableford in 1875".

Behind the masters chair are the original fluted Greek Doric columns with pilaster responds to either side of the Worshipful Masters chair. These previously housed the synagogue's Holy Ark which contained the religious scrolls – the Torah.



In 1811 the Army was brought in to quell the disturbances caused by the “Hunger Riots” in Birmingham. The 7th Dragoon Guards were stationed at the Barracks in Great Brook Street by St

Paul’s Church.

Freemasons in the regiment were members of a Military Lodge which had been formed in 1758. During their stay in Birmingham the members of this Lodge initiated at least six Birmingham citizens into Freemasonry. They were joined by three others in applying to form a new Lodge; this was approved on 16th July 1811.

The first meeting of the Lodge took place on 24th July 1811.

A masonic lodge is led by the Worshipful Master and is supported by a Senior and Junior Warden. Three of the original members were appointed to lead the Lodge - John Thomas as Worshipful Master, John Nelson as Senior Warden and Samuel Hudson as Junior Warden.

All of the Masters of Athol Lodge are listed here. Craft Masonry's calendar commences with the creation of the world and uses the term Anno Lucius (A.L.) - "In the year of Light." As the Earth was believed in conventional theology to have begun in 4000 BC . Therefore, the year 2015 becomes 6015.

The first meeting place of Athol Lodge was The Swan public house, Great Brook Street. In the following year it moved to The Cup, Stafford Street and later met in a number of other taverns.

On 29th November 1858 Athol Lodge bought the Severn Street Synagogue and opened it as it's Masonic Hall and permanent meeting place.

The Dining Room and ante- rooms were added by Henry Nadan between 1871 and 1874 and

## 5

built by local Birmingham builder called Moffat.

Stars of David adorn the ceiling cornices. There are five-sided Masonic stars on the two ornate fireplaces (five sided to refer to the five points of fellowship). And there are magnificent gilt over mantle mirrors.

These allow the whole interior to refer to the two original functions – Synagogue and Masonic Hall.

The current version of freemasonry was formed in 1717 in London based on ancient stonemasons guilds. Freemasonry is not a secret society, but it is a society with secrets.

Currently 36 Lodges meet at Severn Street (18 Craft Lodges, 5 Royal Arch Chapters, 6 Mark Master Lodges, 2 Royal Ark Mariners Lodges, 1 Royal and Select Masters, 1 Order of The Secret Monitor, 2 Rose Croix Chapters And 1 Lodge of Instruction).

After every meeting Masons use this Dining Room to hold a meal or “festive board”. The banners around the room are the emblems of each of the lodges that meet in Severn Street

## 6

– this one is Athol Lodge’s banner.

The hall is laid out according to masonic tradition with the masters chair in the east, the senior wardens chair in the west and the junior wardens chair in the south. The black and white chequerboard floor, common to all Masonic Halls, represents the duality of light and darkness and the joys and sorrows of life.



Masons believe in a supreme being – the Grand Architect of the Universe. The G hanging from the ceiling refers to this being. The ceiling is also decorated to imitate the night sky.

The first Lodge to meet at Severn Street was named ‘Athol’ after the Grand Master John Murray, 4th Duke of Atholl (1755–1830) who had signed the Warrant to form the Lodge – the original is above the secretaries chair.

The first initiate was William Stone who later became Worshipful Master of the Lodge six times between 1825 and 1844. His portrait, presented in 1839, hangs over there behind the Senior Wardens chair in the Lodge Room.

The Hall is used for many purposes including weddings, parties, business meetings, as a venue for training courses – even to host Spooky Nights which includes a ghost walk around the centre of Birmingham.

This is the Tyler’s room. The Tyler sits in the reception area outside the door of the lodge.

## 7

When a meeting is in session the Tyler sits armed with a drawn sword to keep out non-masons.

The lodge members change in this room prior to each meeting. In here we have the Lodges museum.

Masons have certain items they wear as part of their meetings – the most well-known is the apron. This relates to the original stonemasons who wore them when working.

They also have jewels that they wear. They are issued for many different reasons – for example one was issued when Athol Lodge celebrated it's bi-centenary in 2011.



# Severn Street Masonic Hall



One of Birmingham's hidden gems



Severn Street Masonic Hall  
60 Severn Street  
Birmingham  
BI IQG