

# St Clement Danes Lodge

*No 1351 on the register of the United Grand Lodge of England*

## A Brief History



Freemason's Hall, Great Queen St, London

# St Clement Danes Lodge

## *Foundation & Consecration*

In 1871, a group of Freemasons who lived within the parish of St Clement Danes in the City of Westminster decided to form their own Lodge. They were also parishioners of the Church of St Clement Danes, and under the leadership of Bro. William Hale, they met in January of that year and petitioned Grand Lodge for the necessary permission. The text of the petition is reproduced here:

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11 Clements Inn

January 28, 1871

To,  
The Right Honourable Earl de Grey and Ripon, P.C.  
Most Worshipful Grand Master of England

My Lord,

I have the honour to lay before your Lordship the accompanying petition for a warrant of consecration for a new Lodge, which it is proposed to denominate 'The St Clement Danes Lodge'. The desire of the petitioners is the establishment of a local Lodge - that is to say, a Lodge for the especial accommodation and convenience of many brethren residing in the parish of St Clement Danes. Your Lordship will observe that the petition is signed exclusively by brethren who are inhabitants of the parish, including the Rector (the Rev. R.J Simpson, PGC) and Churchwardens. Many other brethren, also parishioners, have expressed a great desire to become joining members. All the Parochial officers are Masons, and several inhabitants, non Masons, have repeatedly signified their wish to become members of the Craft, but in a Lodge locally situated. It is, therefore, earnestly hoped that the above reasons, together with the strong recommendation of the Mount Moriah Lodge appended to the petition, will be sufficient to justify Your Lordship in favourably receiving this,

our second petition. Also to add that we now have the requisite accommodation within the parish to carry out the duties of Freemasonry.

I have the honour to be, My Lord,  
Your Lordship's very obedient Servant,

Wm Hilton, J.D. 780  
Secretary Pro Tem

P.S. I will further direct the attention of Your Lordship to the circumstance that it is the intention of the petitioners to limit the proposed Lodge to the Parish of St Clement Danes.

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The Church of St Clement Danes, Strand, London

The first meeting of St Clement Danes Lodge was held at the King's Head, 265 Strand, on 4 May 1871, and as it was the consecration meeting, was presided over by Officers from Grand Lodge. The Grand Secretary, the Very Worshipful Bro. John Harey, was assisted by Worshipful Bro. Savage (Provincial Grand Deacon) and Worshipful Bro. F Binkes (Provincial Grand Steward). The Founding Officers and Members of the Lodge are listed below:

Worshipful Master	William Hale
Senior Warden	William Hamilton
Junior Warden	William Hilton
Chaplain	Rev R.J Simpson, PGC
Secretary	William Hilton
Treasurer	Thomas Parker
Members	R.J Dobree W Steward John Child W E Williams John Smith C Wilson James Hodges

### *Notable Events in the History of the Lodge*

#### Queen Victoria's Jubilees

The first Jubilee celebrated by Queen Victoria was her Golden Jubilee in 1887. Fittingly, the Albert Hall was the venue for a grand assembly of Freemasons to express their loyalty and congratulations. St Clement Danes Lodge was represented at this assembly by the Worshipful Master, the Secretary, and three brethren elected by a ballot of the Lodge membership. The cost of the tickets, a guinea each, was defrayed from Lodge funds; all of the proceeds of the event were divided among the then three Masonic charities, and the Prince of Wales Hospital Fund.

Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee was held ten years later, on 4 June 1897. It is noted in the Lodge records that the membership gathered for a group photograph to mark the occasion, but sadly the photograph has long since been lost.

## Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Lodge, 1896

The 25th Anniversary was celebrated with a banquet at Simpson's Divan in the Strand, and non-Masons were also invited to attend. It is recorded that a very pleasant evening was enjoyed by these present, and diners toasted each other from a Loving Cup; which became a tradition at the dinners (known as Festive Boards) which followed regular Lodge meetings.

## Fiftieth Anniversary, 1921

Although the 50th anniversary, on 4 May 1921, was not celebrated with any special meeting or Festive Board, it was however notable for the following presentations:

- ~ To the Lodge by Bro. Underwood, the first Past Master's Jewel, presented to the first Master, W. Bro. W Hale. This jewel was later presented to the Grand Lodge Museum.
- ~ To Bro. G F Miles, Director of Ceremonies for nineteen years, an address wallet and cheque from the Brethren.
- ~ To the Lodge by W. Bro. A Betts, the apron worn by his father, himself, and his son, and also the Past Master's Jewels worn by him and his father.
- ~ To the Lodge by W. Bro. R Haddan, a sterling silver Loving Cup engraved with the names of past Masters, Treasurers, and Secretaries. This Cup was in use by the Lodge until relatively recently, and is now an exhibit at the Museum of Freemasonry at Freemason's Hall:



## The Lodge's Diamond Jubilee, 1931

The sixtieth anniversary of the Lodge was celebrated as the Lodge qualified as a Hall Stone Lodge. This meant that the Lodge had donated at least ten guineas per member to the Masonic Million Memorial Fund for the building of the current Freemason's Hall (then known as the Masonic Peace Memorial; the name was changed at the outbreak of the Second World War). The Lodge was presented with its own Hall Stone Jewel, which to this day is presented to the incoming Master at his installation ceremony; the jewel is to be worn at Masonic occasions during his year of office.

You can read more about the Hall Stone Jewel [here](#).

## 1939-1945

Meetings during the war were a simpler affair than in earlier years; instead of evening meetings followed by a lavish seven or eight course dinner, with musical entertainment, the Lodge met in the afternoon after a light lunch. Members were understandably fewer in number but the Lodge remained in good health through the war and on into the second half of the century.

## Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, 1946

A special meeting was held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Lodge, on 31 May 1946. Lodge records show that the meeting was presided over by the Worshipful Master, W. Bro. C J Williams; the minutes of the Consecration meeting in 1871 were read by the Secretary, W. Bro A E Goldring. This anniversary was marked by the presentation to the Lodge of an alms box in the shape of a bell, made from wood which had been salvaged from the ruins of the St Clement Danes Church after its destruction by enemy bombing in 1941.



The Charity Bell of St Clement Danes Lodge

The Charity Bell is still in use today within the Lodge for collecting cash donations from members and guests, which are then distributed amongst the Master's chosen charities by the Charity Steward. It bears an inscription commemorating three 'Worthy Brethren', namely W.Bro George Miles, W.Bro LL Gwymm Jones, and W.Bro the Rev Pennington-Bickford, who was Rector of St Clement Danes Church.

## Lodge Centenary, 1971

The Lodge celebrated 100 years of Masonry on 4 May 1971, with 41 members and 98 guests in attendance at the meeting; prior to which 16 members of the Lodge attended a service at St Clement Danes Church, and then proceeded on the perambulation of the old Parish Boundary.

The occasion was marked by the presentation of a Banner to the Lodge by W. Bro. N Turner, which is still displayed at every regular Lodge meeting:



125th Anniversary, 1996

The most recent significant anniversary was celebrated not at Freemason's Hall, but at the Central London Masonic Centre in Clerkenwell, owing to the fact that the meeting was held on a Bank Holiday on which the Hall was closed. The meeting was presided over by the then Master, W. Bro Bill Warren; W. Bro Gerry Annells, Peter Thorpe, Duncan Annells, and Steve Burgess are members also at that meeting who are still active in the Lodge today.

The Lodge will celebrate its 150th Anniversary in 2021. If you'd like to learn more about Freemasonry, or to enquire about joining, please contact the Lodge Secretary at [secretary1351@gmail.com](mailto:secretary1351@gmail.com).