invasion, Freemasonry in the U.K. adopted an attitude of privacy. This continued for many years after the war, Freemasonry failed to defend itself when the press speculated about what went on behind closed doors. Consequently, many myths have developed about Freemasonry and these often appear in popular fiction and on the internet. Although there is now much more openness there *is* still a certain amount of secrecy that exists but this is for the sake of anyone wishing to join. Just as it would be unkind to tell a friend how a movie or football match ended before they had watched it, we avoid telling people about our ceremonies so that we don't spoil the experience for new members. It's as simple as that.

Do you have to be wealthy to be a Freemason?

You have to commit to the annual subscriptions (an average of £2-£3 per week), and you will be expected to contribute to charity (perhaps equivalent to a cup of coffee a week). In any event, it is never more than you can afford.

How does someone join?

Simply ask the person who gave you this leaflet or for more information about Women's Freemasonry or find a Lodge near you, please contact:

The Grand Secretary E-mail: info@hfaf.org

or visit our website: www.hfaf.org

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For more information email:

info@hfaf.org

Website:
www.hfaf.org

Facebook:
The Honourable Fraternity
of Ancient Freemasons
and
HFAF Uni Scheme

Twitter:
@_HFAF_
and
@hfaf_uni

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Freemasonry for Women

Friendship

Inspiration

Empowerment

The Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons

The HFAF

The Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons is a Masonic organisation for women. It was established over a hundred years ago in 1913. You may perhaps have imagined that only men could belong to a Masonic lodge but we take our Freemasonry every bit as seriously as the men.

What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is one of the oldest and largest, non-religious, non-political, fraternal and charitable organisation in the world. Many people think it's a secret society. If it is then, it's the worst kept secret in the world because the internet will allow anyone to find out as much about Freemasonry as they want to know. Some people think Freemasonry is a religion - not so. Freemasonry embraces all religions and its diverse membership bears witness to this fact. It is the spiritual values held by its members that are important to Freemasonry.

Freemasonry is based on three great principles, Brotherly love, Relief and Truth. To practise 'Brotherly love', we must maintain harmony and mutual respect between individuals, no matter what their station in life. 'Relief' is about giving to those who society has failed or who have been victims of disaster, not just financially but personally. 'Truth', the need to recognise the divine quality which underpins all life.

What qualifications do you need?

We require our candidates to be at least 18 years old, of good character and law abiding citizens. During our ceremonies we make references to God so a belief in a Supreme being is essential. However, Freemasonry does not dictate what religion a person should be or how they practice their beliefs.

If you like making new friends, helping others and believe that integrity is an important virtue in life then you may find that Freemasonry is right for you. All Freemasons possess these traits as well as a concern for each other and the common good. Peace and harmony is also important to Freemasons, for this reason discussions concerning religion or politics are discouraged.

How can Freemasonry help me?

Becoming a Freemason can offer you friendship, inspiration and empowerment. It can help to make you a better public speaker, administrator and organiser. The moral and ethical approach to life that it encourages can also motivate you to become a better person. Freemasonry has a well-known saying, that it does not make bad people good but it does make good people better. What Freemasonry can't do for you is offer a fast track to business success. There are no special favours given to members.

How does Freemasonry help others?

Freemasonry is one of the biggest contributors to national and local charities. Freemasons have, and are continually donating significant amounts to various charities and good causes. Freemasons are encouraged to become involved in their communities.

What happens when you join?

There are three stages to becoming a fully-fledged Freemason: they are Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason. These three stages are generally accepted as being developed from the stonemasons' medieval trade guilds that were active when castles, churches and cathedrals were being built hundreds of years ago. The nature of our ceremonies may be best described in terms of a series of small plays based on allegory and symbolism. These allegories are based around certain characters from the bible and the building of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. The stonemason's working tools are used to illustrate the principles of morality to new members and encourage them to improve themselves both mentally and spiritually. As already explained, these are NOT religious ceremonies and Freemasonry is not a religion. Each candidate has to take an Obligation to Freemasonry which they will swear on the Sacred book relevant to their own religion.

Why should women join?

There are many reasons why women have become Freemasons and each new member will have her own motives and expectations. These motives can include a wish to make new friends, gain self-knowledge or improve self-confidence. The caring and supportive atmosphere found within a lodge can help people to increasing their self-confidence. Women may also be attracted to Freemasonry because it provides an environment where harmony and Brotherly love can exist between people from many different backgrounds and cultures.

Why all the secrecy?

Because of widespread persecution of Freemasons in Europe by Hitler and his allies and the fear of