



# History of the Hall

1868 - 1999

A wander through the colourful past  
of one of Belfast's favourite buildings  
ARTHUR SQUARE MASONIC HALL





The following account of the hall is based on the book “History of the Masonic Hall, Arthur Square, Belfast” written and compiled by V.W. Bro. S. Leighton 18° K.C.T, P.P.S.G.W. Antrim and printed by W. & G. Baird, Ltd., in 1927. After 1927 this account is taken from contemporary minutes of the “House Committee.”

Prior to the building of Arthur Square Hall, Masonic Lodges in central Belfast used to meet in several places including:

- Donegall Place Buildings - 10 Lodges  
(at the rear of Anderson McAuley’s, now Fountain Street)
- The Ulster Hall - 1 Lodge
- 28 Divis Street (later Christian Brothers Primary School) - 1 Lodge
- 15 Donegall Place and 47 Donegall Place - 3 Lodges  
(near the Ulster Bank building) and Provincial Grand Lodge

In 1863 it was agreed that it would be of benefit to all to have a building where all Lodges could meet under one roof. After a great deal of effort a place was found, and on 28th June 1868 the foundation stone of the present hall was laid with full Masonic ceremonial. This event attracted much public interest and certain streets were closed to traffic so that a formal procession could walk from Ulster Hall to Arthur Square. Balconies were constructed so that ladies could have a good view. About 10,000 people watched the proceedings, and Masonic visitors attended from Londonderry, Ballymena, Antrim, Larne, Cargycreevy, Lisburn, Ligoniel, Straid, Glenarm and elsewhere.

The stone laying was performed by R.W. Bro. Sir Charles Lanyon P.D.G.M. of Belfast and North Down. Within the cavity were deposited various current coins of the realm, a roll containing the names of the Grand Master and other Provincial Grand Officers, another roll giving the names of Directors of the Company set up to own the hall, newspapers, and several other items of interest.



The building was completed in 1870, and several meetings were held of the House Committee and of the Directors of the new Masonic Hall Company Ltd. so that accommodation could be allocated to the various Lodges, and appropriate rents set. Fourteen Lodges were housed, comprising 600 members and rent of five shillings (25p) per member agreed. Contributions were also required for fitting out a reading room, kitchen, caretakers apartments etc.

The Hall Limited Company had been formed proposing 5000 shares of £1 each and it was registered in Dublin under the provisions of the Companies Act 1862. The expectation was that the new hall would cost £8000. Financially the Limited Company was not a success because not all shares were sold, and it was necessary to arrange a mortgage with the Belfast and Provincial Building and Investment Company Ltd., but some years later the Building Society went into liquidation and as a result the hall had to be sold.

Meantime, many changes were suggested, including several proposals that a new address be found. Several Lodges did move to other places and eventually the first floor rooms were let as offices. This uneasy period continued until 1888 when the Limited Company was wound up, and as both the Building Society, and the Hall Company had ceased to exist, the building was put on the market.

The R.C. Bishop of the diocese, one Dr. Dorien, had offered £3200 for the building, but the hall secretary Bro. Thomas Nesbitt reported that "a gentleman" had made an offer of £3250. Bro. Nesbitt informed the House Committee that immediate action must be taken if the hall was to be purchased by the Lodges.



Before this could be announced, the sale to the “gentleman” was actually agreed and completed. Very fortunately this “gentleman” was prepared to wait while the Freemasons were considering the practicalities, and it later emerged that he had purchased the building intending to sell it to the Masonic Order at the same price as he paid. This was confirmed by the solicitor, Mr. Charles Black, who, after the “gentleman” died, was free to say that the “gentleman” was Bro. Sir James Haslett, M.P. for Belfast who had made his bid in order to prevent the hall from falling into other hands.

To find an amount of £3250 proved difficult, but 23 Lodges contributed £1250, the Trustees borrowed £1750 on mortgage at 4.5%, and C & J Black advanced £250 at 5%. Thus, after the precarious existence of the period from 1868 when the building commenced, until 1888 when Trustees were appointed and bought the building it finally became the property of the occupying Lodges. The first House Committee was made up of 23 representatives of the 23 Lodges which had contributed to the purchase scheme. Every year since 1888, the House Committee has been formed by 23 representatives of the Lodges occupying Arthur Square Hall. This is embodied in the Trust Deed and can not be altered.

Raising the money mentioned, £3250, became known as the “Purchase Scheme” and the Lodges which contributed were 22, 31, 51, 54, 88, 92, 97, 98, 103, 106, 111, 118, 195, 239, 257, 259, 272, 314, 372, 609, 659, 663 and 665 i.e. 23 in all. These Lodges discussed the clause in the Trust Deed giving the Trustees veto power over all transactions of the House Committee. This was passed unanimously and was confirmed in the Trust Deed.



By 1892 it was clear that the considerable efforts made by the House Committee had resulted in great success, to such an extent that all the subscribing Lodges had their subscriptions refunded. In due course every penny which had been advanced by the 23 Lodges was repaid. The hall became the absolute property of the occupying Lodges and had not cost anyone any money, except subscriptions to the original Masonic Hall Co. Ltd. in 1868/1870.

In 1897 electric light was installed and gradually replaced gas. Other items of interest were:

In 1911, construction of modern lavatories and improvement of the caretakers flat.

In 1913, a lift was installed at a cost of £650.

In 1918 there was a serious fire which started in the attics. This was contained to the upper floors by the Fire Brigade, but great damage was done by water to the ceilings underneath. Fortunately this damage was covered by insurance and our claim was settled amicably. Following the fire, certain improvements and redecorations were put in hand and were much admired.

A proposal was received in 1878 from the new "Donegall Masonic Club" to rent three rooms and this was agreed at a rent of £35 per year.

Normal maintenance of the building continued over some years although the installation of a fire proof staircase, considered in 1913, was put back because of the cost. However, the central heating system, low pressure hot water, was installed in 1914 at a cost of £286. By 1916 it was reported that every room in the building had been renovated, and in 1919 the Trustees gave personal guarantees for a bank overdraft so that shops which



had become vacant, could be greatly improved, although at considerable expense, so as to attract better class tenants. This aim was achieved, and proved satisfactory in every way.

Quite a number of Brethren worked extremely hard to keep the finances in order, perhaps none more than V.W. Bro. Thomas Nesbitt who had done magnificent work from the laying of the foundation stone in 1868 until 1917 when he was called to the Great Lodge above. In his memory there is placed in the entrance hall a slab of coloured marble with a suitably inscribed brass plate showing his great work.

Another very much admired Trustee was V.W. Bro W.J. Stokes who had been associated with the hall from the early days and in 1922 completed 34 years as a Trustee. Because of failing health he felt he had to resign, and with much reluctance his resignation was accepted with expressions of great admiration for his tremendous contribution. He died in 1926 and his name is perpetuated in having the Stokes Room named in his memory, and a tablet was placed in the hallway opposite to the one honouring his old friend Bro. Thomas Nesbitt.

The "twenties", especially from 1923 onwards saw a steady influx of members and the building eventually proved incapable of housing all the new Lodges seeking accommodation. Eventually the Provincial Grand Lodge moved out and secured offices and Lodge rooms at 16 May Street where a Masonic library and museum were also established.

The above is a summary of V.W. Bro. Leighton's book, taking the story up to 1927. It is especially interesting that he recorded the information that in 1868 there were 500 members of the order in Belfast, and in 1927 the total was about 20,000.



Finally, and the most important, he reports that the Belfast Masonic Charity Fund was started in 1862, Belfast Masonic Widows Fund started in 1873 and the Orphans Welfare Committee in 1916. A total of £185,000 had been received up to 1927 and distributed for the relief of suffering and distress within the Masonic Provinces of Antrim and Down. This is equivalent to about £15 million in 1999.

And so we pass on to the features revealed in the minutes of the House Committee from 1927 to 1999, so far as these are available. There is a gap from 1927 to the start of the Second World War 1939.

The Committee's attention was drawn in June 1940 to the need to take precautions in the event of air raids by Germany, and a long discussion took place in July 1940 when it was agreed that a "Redhill" unit with stirrup pumps should be placed on each floor, with a bucket of sand. Air raids in Great Britain showed that our precautions were utterly inadequate, and in January 1941 it was decided that two Fire Watchers be employed at a wage of £8.10.0 per week. The amount of equipment was substantially increased and improved. Emergency lighting was installed to come into use if the main supplies should be cut off. Extra supplies of sand were installed in boxes in the roof space for emergency use, and lengths of hose attached to the water supply in various places.

As part of these precautions, the Portraits in the Banqueting Hall were taken out of their frames and stored in the Belfast Banking Company for safe keeping.

In May 1941 it was recorded that there had been no damage to the hall in the two German air raids in April and May. Of course it was not then known that there would be no more air raids on Belfast for the remainder of the war.



The war finished in 1945, and shortly thereafter it was reported by many Lodges that they needed more space in the hall. The Donegall Club also intimated that they would like to have more room, and their needs were urgent. Much discussion took place in efforts to resolve these problems. Lodges with smaller attendances were asked to switch accommodation with those of large numbers. The Donegall Club asked to be allowed to extend into the room occupied by the Lodge of Instruction, known as the Board Room, but the Trustees could not agree to give extra space to the Club to the disadvantage of the Lodge of Instruction. Complaints regarding space increased with attendances, and in 1948 it was again minuted that the matters seemed impossible to resolve, within the present building.

Also, in April 1948, it was recorded that the Committee secretary, Bro C.V. Smylie, who had been appointed Assistant Secretary in 1928 and Secretary in 1938, had that day missed the meeting due to illness. This was the first meeting he had missed for 20 years. It is very pleasing to read that he resumed his task in due course and continued to serve until 1960 - a truly remarkable period of service carried out with meticulous care. The way in which his minutes were compiled and cross-referenced are a text book example of how this important duty should be done.

In 1947 the question of the wooden staircase was again raised. It was thought to be a major hazard in the event of fire and it had been hoped on many occasions to replace it with a non-combustible one. It was now agreed to have such a staircase installed, but it seemed likely that a further delay would take place due to the need to obtain licences for materials, and the process of attracting estimates for the work. However these matters were put in hand.



A suggestion was made in October 1947 that a fund should be started to provide a home for aged Masons. The Brother raising this was asked to go into the matter in more detail and to report back. There is no further record of the matter being taken any further.

In the same year an estimate of £452.10.0 was accepted for the painting of the outside of the building. The result was much admired. Converting this to 1999 values it appears that the equivalent in 1999 would be almost £100,000.

Messrs. Thornton Ashton & Co. were asked to value the building in 1948 and gave their opinion as £66,804. Messrs. John Nicholl & Co. valued the contents at £11,331. The equivalent figure for the value of the building in 1999 is about £2,500,00 and our insurance cover is £2,700,000 (1999)

A circular from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim was received in 1949 stressing that the singing of Party songs offended against P. G. L. Rule 32 and must be stopped. All Lodges were circularised accordingly.

It was reported in the financial returns for 1949 that there was an excess of income over expenditure of £31.4.9. The following year there were large items of essential expenditure: on the lift; on repairs to Lodge room furniture; painting of landings, and caretakers apartments. The result was that the figures for 1950 showed a deficit of £754 and bank overdraft of £526. The following year the deficit was £630 and overdraft £993. Rents for 1951 were increased so that 66 Lodges each paid £25 p.a., 44 Royal Arch Chapters £10 p.a., 6 Preceptories £10 p.a., 2 Councils of Knight Masons £8 p.a. and the Donegall Club £75. In 1952 there was an excess of income over expenditure of £726.



There is probably no item which reveals the change in the value of money than the report in 1952 which says that the Caterer could not continue to provide lunches consisting of soup, steak and kidney pie, 2 vegetables and potatoes, biscuits and cheese, tea and butter for a charge of 2/9<sup>d</sup> (now 14p), but he said he would have to charge 3/= (15p) !

It was necessary to replace the heating boilers in 1953.

During 1953 the Littlewoods organisation made an approach to the Hall Committee with several schemes for the purchase of the building and this produced a great deal of speculation about the possible sale of the hall, the building of a new hall, and reserved accommodation in a new building including our site. This speculation continued for many years with constant inaccuracies. Littlewoods had a large shop front in Ann Street connecting with a second shop front in William Street South. By acquiring our corner site it would give them a most important location in central Belfast. The matter was discussed at length, and it was resolved to seek the opinion of the solicitors, C & J Black who in turn placed it in the hands of a leading Counsel, Bro. H. A. McVeigh Q.C who kindly donated this service to the hall without a fee. The Question was whether, and how, the Trust Deed would stand in the event of a decision to sell the building at some stage.

Many discussions took place with opinions swinging between accepting an arrangement to sell the building with a guarantee of tenancy for Masonic purposes on all floors above street level, to the sale of the complete building. One view expressed at that time was that any funds coming to us might be handed over to Provincial Grand Lodge to enable them to complete the building in Rosemary Street.



At the end of 1954 an offer of £75,000 was received for the purchase of the entire property with vacant possession of all parts and a completion date of December 1959. In considering this proposition it became clear that it would have cost us £75,000 merely to purchase a suitable site, and then to add the cost of any necessary piling, so that the total cost of a new building was likely to be in the region of £250,000. It was presumed that Littlewoods were unlikely to increase their offer from £75,000 to £250,00, but it was decided to write to them with these figures and wait for their reaction.

Nothing happened for some time, but in October 1955 Littlewoods again submitted plans which enclosed an outline of new upper floors for our use. This was referred to our architect Bro. Val Smyth. At the same time we were advised that Littlewoods had purchased all the property adjoining us right along to include the Empire Theatre at the corner of Telfair Street. Our Architect drew up plans for 4 Lodge Rooms, 1 Royal Arch Chapter room, 4 refreshment rooms, accommodation for a Club, kitchens and Caretakers flat. It was agreed that this plan was excellent and should be submitted to Littlewoods, stating that these were our minimum requirements.

It was confirmed that, although the proposals were interesting, nothing would be done without the full consent of all the Lodges in the building. Furthermore, should Littlewoods agree to our views on price, and if the Lodges were to accept, we would expect Littlewoods to provide, for all Lodges, suitable premises for the period of demolition and reconstruction - probably 2 years or more. By October 1956 the Committee came to the conclusion that Littlewoods were not serious because the matter seemed to be unduly delayed. It was agreed that the secretary should write to Littlewoods and say that if they wished to complete



the deal they would have to purchase the whole property, demolish it, and rebuild with proper accommodation for the Masonic Order. In mid - 1957 one of several examples of "credit squeeze" took place and it emerged that Littlewoods were not able to proceed with the negotiations, because of the current financial restrictions.

A more personal matter was recorded in 1956 when it was mentioned that Bro. David Noble, who had taken over the duties of Lift Man from his father two years earlier was now suffering from ill health and had retired. In his place W. Bro. James Brown (526) was appointed at wages of £5 per week less the usual stamps. His duties were from 11am to 1pm and 7pm to 10.30pm. His one day off was Sunday !

The Littlewoods saga was again raised in 1957 and it was recorded that no decision could be, or would be made until the Brethren using the hall had been given the opportunity to state their views. By 1958 nothing further had transpired and it was agreed that we would be no worse off if nothing further was heard from Littlewoods. The matter had then been running for five years. It was now resolved that our best course was to wait and allow Littlewoods to make the next move, bearing in mind that no hard and fast offer had been made during the many meetings and much correspondence over this matter. Nothing concrete had emerged which was remotely acceptable to us. However, to carry the story a stage further, we read that in 1959 Littlewoods submitted plans for 4 Lodge rooms, 1 Chapter room, Committee rooms and Refreshment Rooms and Caretakers Apartments. These plans were greeted with enthusiasm and it was agreed to put them to a meeting of all Lodges. The plans were similar to our architects submission in 1955.



Before the Trustees could make a discission we were asked to consider the letting of the shops to Littlewoods. At a general meeting it was agreed, again, that we should adopt an "all or nothing" stance: Littlewoods would have to buy the whole building, but we would not have it taken over piecemeal.

In June 1957 Lodge 103 occupied the Stokes Room and had an average attendance of 48. They asked to be moved to the Leighton Room. Lodge 509 occupied that room and in true Masonic spirit agreed to the exchange. Oddly, this exactly reversed the position which had obtained 10 years earlier when the same change was made in the opposite direction. At this time there were 68 Lodges sitting in the hall.

Bro. Alastair Gray was appointed as Caretaker/Caterer in 1958 at which time it was customary for lunches to be served in the hall. He served with distinction until 1973 when he retired from the position of Steward and continued as Caretaker.

Over some years, anxieties had been expressed for the security of the building, and the minutes include examples of members leaving the premises at all kinds of times during the afternoon, and in the evening, sometimes without even closing the front door. Discussion of this matter continued into 1958 and it was pointed out that the Caretaker had commence his duties at 8am and regularly had to remain on duty until midnight. It was essential that he should be allowed free time during the day and it was therefore resolved that the hall would be closed from 1pm to 6pm to give the Caretaker a rest time. A number of suggestions were made to cater for this position, including the provision of keys to the members of the Donegall Club but it was felt that none of the ideas put forward would guarantee the security of the building, and the closing of the premises in the afternoon was confirmed.



The members of the Donegall Club most strenuously objected to this rule and let their views be known. There followed one of the saddest episodes in the history of the building. There seemed to be no other way to enforce the “afternoon closed” rule than to give the Donegall Club “Notice to Quit” and this was done in October 1958, effective from 30th June 1959.

R. W. Provincial Grand Master asked to be allowed to attend a meeting of the Trustees, and this was agreed, provided he attended as P. G. M. and not in any way as a deputation from the Donegall Club. P. G. M. reported that he had discussed this sad situation with the Grand Master and it was hoped that it could be solved amicably. His great concern was that it should be settled in Masonic fashion and that court proceedings would be avoided. He realised the difficulty which the Trustees and their servants had, especially when the Club had refused to carry out the general instructions regarding the working of the hall, and the late hours at which their members left the hall in the evenings. Despite continued promises they had failed to co-operate. The Trustees assured the P. G. M. that this matter was not new, and had given them great concern over many years.

The secretary reported in due course that he had received a Summons to attend Court re: the “Notice to Quit” and Mr. Louis Taylor, Solicitor to the Trust, having been called in to the meeting stated that in his opinion the Club did not have a good case and he advised the Trustees to accept the summons and fight the case.

Later the same year, the Trustees were asked by the Donegall Club to sign an application for renewal of the Club licence. After very much discussion it was resolved that, whilst the impending legal matters were in process, the Trustees should defer the signing of the application. Further consideration was given to this matter



a little time later, and the Trustees then decided to sign the application, bearing in mind that the Club were to continue as tenants until June 1959 when their current lease would expire. The Club's Solicitor and their Secretary were admitted to the meeting on 11th December 1958 and it was explained to them that the Trustees had signed the application so as to keep the licencing position in order. However it was pointed out that the Club had incurred the great displeasure of the Trustees because of the continued antagonistic attitude of the Club and their ill-advised instructions to proceed with the legal process. The Trustees hoped better sense would prevail and that the Club might be induced to withdraw their case. The Trustees would defend their case to the last ditch and would not withdraw the Notice to Quit whilst these legal proceedings were threatened.

The case was duly heard on 6th April 1959 before the Recorder, and lawyers argued the point at issue which was whether the Club was a "business" and thus entitled to protection under the Business Tenancies Act, or alternatively whether the Club was merely a Social Club falling outside the Act. The Recorder reserved his decision until a later date.

At a House Committee meeting on 15th April 1959, one Brother said that this episode was the most distasteful thing that had happened in the history of the hall and that the Donegall Club had incurred the displeasure of all Masons for the action they had taken against the Trustees: the Club had acted for many years in an arrogant manner and their tenancy for the past number of years had not been a happy one. He was sure that every member of the House Committee agreed with the Trustees in the action they had taken in giving the Notice to Quit. A resolution reflecting these sentiments was put to the House Committee and passed unanimously.



Later it emerged that the Recorder had found in favour of the Donegall Club and at a House Committee meeting on 4th September 1959 Bro. T.H. Houston of C. & J. Black, Solicitors, outlined the procedure regarding an appeal against the Recorder's decision. At that time, however, the Trustees decided not to reopen the matter in view of the plea by the Provincial Grand Master. Furthermore, it appeared that Littlewoods were almost on the point of making a positive offer for the building, and if this happened, the problem of the Club would automatically solve itself.

A meeting took place in January 1960 between the Trustees and Bro. Thomas McDonald, Chairman of the Club. All outstanding matters were ventilated and all were reminded of the good feelings which had existed prior to the differences here mentioned. It was agreed that should any Club member feel he should have the use of the premises during the afternoon a key would be made available to him. It was then said that the Club would show a greater spirit of co-operation in carrying out the rules and regulations of the hall, and as all were now agreed, it was felt that the whole matter should be allowed to drop.

There were no reports of special interest for several years but in 1966 a scheme for the redevelopment of the whole site was put to the Planning Committee at the City Hall, and when amended this received formal Planning Consent. The next year the matter was taken a stage further by asking all Lodges to say whether they would prefer to have the hall rebuilt on the existing site, or move elsewhere. Lodges were advised that these Planning processes are necessarily very slow and in any event nothing could happen until the shop tenancies expired in 1969.

By 1970 the City was experiencing terrorist bombing and it transpired that many developers and financiers in London were not keen



to invest in Belfast at that time. Enquiries were made again at the end of that year but it was confirmed that the financial position remained the same.

Further security arrangements were made for the protection of the building in view of the containing unrest in the City at 1971.

Perhaps at this point it will be of interest to give a very brief outline of the hall finances. For example:-

	Income from all sources	Total Expenditure	Surplus + OR (Deficit)
1956	£ 4,853	£ 4,633	+£220
1976	£ 13,796	£ 14,540	-£744
1986	£ 72,425	£ 59,880	+£12,545
1996	£ 116,882	£ 114,309	+£2,573

Insurance cover on the building in 1956 was £100,000. An accumulated deficit of £5000 appeared in 1976 due to continued essential expenditure over 20 years. Lodge rents were increased and this produced a surplus for 1979 and again for 1980, and in 1980 the shop rents were increased by 311%. In 1990 these were again increased, by 83% and in 1995 by a further 13%. Despite considerable expenditure in prospect, the financial state of the hall started to improve steadily from about 1985. It had been agreed in 1979 that a levy of £2 per member should be paid by every Lodge so as to eliminate the deficit accumulated over many years. These amounts were slow in coming in but all had been received by early 1981. For 1983 the rents became £145 per Lodge plus £1.50 per member. This was in anticipation of considerable expenditure on the lift. Rents became £160 plus £2 per member for 1984: and for 1985 £175 plus £2.25 per member.



Only routine matters and security considerations were reported in the minutes in the 1970 to 1985 period. Constant concern about terrorist incidents had direct effects: some members felt unwilling to travel to the centre of the city in the evening; the bus services were reduced and became unreliable due to traffic diversions; car drivers were impressed by the anti-drinks propaganda and reduced their evening journeys; parking became a problem; thefts of vehicles increased. Almost every Lodge had its support reduced as a result, and in addition, families did not like the risk of being separated, and all entertainment, hobbies and other interests were confined to near-home areas.

A direct illustration of the increase of crime happened in 1988 when the Hall Steward, Leslie Gray and his wife were the subjects of a brutal personal attack by two men who broke into their apartments from an adjoining roof. Fortunately they both recovered from the ordeal, and the House Committee quickly agreed to make them a grant towards a holiday which, it was hoped, would help them to overcome the trauma. The alarm system was extended to provide a panic button in the flat, and physical security was improved.

It was in 1988 that the P.G.M. launched the proposal to sell the Rosemary Street and Arthur Square buildings and with the proceeds, to build a new Masonic centre on the outskirts of the city, possibly somewhere in the Glengormley area. The Hall Committee unanimously supported the Trustees of Arthur Square that they were not interested in selling their building.

A circular was sent out to all Lodges pointing out that it is unlawful to sell, or make available for purchase, alcoholic drinks in unlicensed premises. Cash bars must not be operated by Lodges, and devices such as selling tickets which could be exchanged for drinks



was equally illegal, and making it absolutely clear, it was also illegal to allow members to obtain drinks on an account basis for settlement later. The position about the Donegall Club was made clear also i.e. that the Club is licensed only to allow drinks to be consumed on the premises which the Club itself occupies. It is illegal for drinks bought in the Club to be brought out and consumed elsewhere in the building.

The question of insurance for Lodges was considered on a number of occasions and eventually a quotation was received in 1982 giving Lodges cover for their regalia and cash-in-transit at a cost of £15 per Lodge. Discussion ranged over the way in which the total premium should be divided amongst larger and smaller Lodges. Some Lodges decided that they did not want to be included, and it appeared that Provincial Grand Lodge were giving attention to the same matter. It was resolved to allow the matter to drop and leave each Lodge to attend to its own needs for cover.

The Brookville Masonic Hall on the Antrim Road was seriously damaged by terrorists in 1983 and it was reported that the Lodges housed there might require space in Arthur Square, perhaps permanently. It was readily agreed that space should be found if requested. Near the end of that year, two Lodges from Brookville were given tenancies in Arthur Square. This made 62 Lodges in all.

Several comments were made over the years about those Lodges which did not support the Caterers, but rather provided their own food. These Lodges almost always used the glasses from the kitchen and the used glasses were regularly left for the Caterers to wash and tidy away, and also to clean up the room which had been used. Needless to say, the Caterers considered this unfair as they did not get paid for their time taken in this way.



A circular to Lodges appealing for co-operation in washing up any glasses used, and tidying away, plus tidying the room really met with inadequate response, and in November 1984 it was proposed and accepted by the Committee that Lodges would not be allowed to bring food into the hall. Lodges were duly informed.

In 1985 it appeared that the Donegall Club were able and willing to supply refreshments over the whole building. The committee was divided on whether or not the terms offered by the Club were acceptable. The Club had undertaken to organise a pool of Lodges setting out their terms for supply of refreshments. It later emerged that these enquires had not been successful, and it seemed unlikely that the matter would be taken any further.

“Scannervision” had applied for space on the face of the building to erect a sophisticated electronic advertising sign and were willing to pay a rent of £2,000 p.a. Following conversations with our Secretary, the rent was negotiated at £4,000 p.a. However the proposition had to be submitted for Planning Approval because ours is a Listed Building. Approval was refused, and consideration was given to lodging an appeal. This was not proceeded with, and the entire proposal was dropped.

The well known Hall Steward Alastair Gray retired 31 October 1986 and his son Leslie Gray was appointed from that date. A benefit collection was made around the Lodges, and a similar amount was added by agreement of the hall Committee.

Bearing in mind the installation of Ladies toilets the hall would now be available (from October 1986) for Ladies Nights. No charge would be made for the use of the hall for such functions.



In January 1988 the secretary reported that certain Lodges and Chapters were in arrears with rent for 1986 and 1987. The total amount was almost £4,000.

Following a number of problems with the allocation of Dining Rooms 1,2, and 3, discussion took place as to whether it was right to give priority to Lodges which had customarily used Dining Room No 1 when Lodges with larger numbers were allocated to No 2 or No 3 on the same night. Clearly there was some sympathy for the view that the use of the larger room by one Lodge for many years would seem to confer some priority. However there was no doubt in the minds of the Committee that this could not continue, and Lodges with the larger numbers should have No 1. A Lodge claiming historical priority would have to select a different night if they wanted to use that room. (Sept 1988 Minutes) It was agreed, however, that the Caterer should be required to give six weeks notice if any alteration to a reservation was to be made for any specific room.

Several suggestions were made in 1989:

Lodge Rooms to be repainted  
- agreed.

Carpets to be replaced  
- agreed.

An icemaker to be purchased  
- agreed.

An electronic organ to be purchased  
- no further action at that time.

Dimmer lights to be fitted in No 1 Dining Room  
- not possible with fluorescent lights.

Double glazing to reduce noise from outside  
- no further action.

Locker doors to be replaced  
- agreed.



A letter from the P.G.M. was read to the Committee in April 1990 again proposing the building of a Masonic Centre for County Antrim, and selling the Arthur Square Hall. Close scrutiny of the proposition led to the following comments:

- (a) It affected Down as well as Antrim: many members of Arthur Square came from North Down, East & South Belfast.
- (b) The number of Lodges in Arthur Square was not declining.
- (c) No estimate appeared to have been given for the running costs.
- (d) Construction Cost of £50 per square foot was given, but it was thought this would merely provide a basic building without the facilities existing in Arthur Square.
- (e) Estimated costs did not allow for Corporation Tax on the sale of Arthur Square which would raise about £230,000
- (f) Cost of buying out Arthur Square tenants, estimated at £200,000
- (g) Cost of High Court process to change the Trust Deed, which provided that the proceeds of a sale would go to Masonic Charities.
- (h) Taking all these costs into account would produce a substantial deficit, rather than a credit balance as was suggested.

After general discussion, during which some members reported that their Lodges would oppose the proposal, and if it was to go ahead, they would hand in their warrants. A vote, which was unanimous, proved that the scheme did not have the support of the meeting, Secretary was asked to inform all Lodges of this decision, and to notify the P.G.M. accordingly.



Despite the aforementioned, P.G.M. had set up a Committee to look into the proposal described. Concern was expressed that the matter was being pursued despite the fact that Lodges in Arthur Square were not in favour.

In September 1991 the P.G. Secretary wrote to the Secretaries of all Lodges to invite any Brother in the Province who wished to submit constructive ideas to do so. It was decided to write from the House Committee to all Lodges asking each one to write to P.G. Secretary saying that his Lodge was not interested in any proposal which involved the sale of Arthur Square. The P.G. Secretary's circular had said that submissions would not be acknowledged, therefore it was suggested that Lodges should each send a copy of their letter to the Hall Secretary. In due course our Secretary reported that he had received copies of 26 letters. Later, it was mentioned that 45 Lodges had now sent copies.

Early in 1992 the Committee set up by P.G.L. to advise on the proposed Masonic Centre, recommended that Rosemary Street and Crumlin Road halls should be sold and a new centre created for Belfast Lodges Arthur Square would be left as it is.

At the end of 1991 Arthur Square Masonic Charity Committee asked if we would be prepared to establish a residential home for elderly distressed brethren in Country Antrim Lodges. It was agreed that we did not have sufficient resources to do this, but would be prepared to make a financial contribution if another body could produce an acceptable plan, including all estimated costs.

Trustees were reminded in 1992 that drinks must not be brought into the hall for sale to Lodge members. P.D.G.M. made it clear that where this practice existed it must be stopped at once. The Trustees and the Secretary had a meeting with representatives of



the Donegall Club and suggested that the Club's licence might be extended to include the three banqueting rooms and the appointment of a sole supplier of alcoholic and other beverages to Lodges. As soon as the Trustees had firm proposals to ensure that the licencing laws were strictly observed, a special meeting of all Lodges in the hall would be called to explain the matter fully.

It appears from the minutes that the Donegall Club were happy to take this matter further but, under the current Licencing Laws they were not able to do so.

A circular was again sent to all Lodges (on 14 December 1992) stating that it is unlawful to sell, or make available for sale, any alcoholic beverages in unlicensed premises. Consequently Cash Bars must not be operated on any occasion.

Good wishes were expressed to Brothers John Black and Maurice McCoubrey on their retirement as Trustees in 1994. All concerned were most grateful for their careful attention to matters affecting the hall over almost 20 years in each case, Presentations were made to both retiring Trustees and the occasion was marked by a Dinner to honour them.

Provincial Grand Master attended the House Committee meeting in April 1995 and thanked the Brethren of Arthur Square for their kind donation towards the refurbishment of the Rosemary Street building. He gave a report on the current position and said that he hoped to attract non - Masonic use of the dining room. He also mentioned that invitations to visit Lodges in Arthur Square would be very acceptable, not necessarily at installation Dinners.

A new Caterer was appointed in 1996.



It was reported that insurance cover on the building in 1997 was £2,625,000 and for contents, 10% of that figure.

The proposal to install a system to assist those who had hearing problems was examined and the Secretary said he would look into the solution. It was later reported that this was not a practicable proposition and it was allowed to drop.

Two members of Carrickfergus Masonic Hall were admitted to the meeting on 30 November 1998 to plead for a grant to assist them with the extension of their Hall, despite the fact that P.G.L. had not given their approval. Total expenditure would be in the region of £300,000. Grand Lodge maximum advance would be £10,000 but it was not known if this would be a grant or a loan. No funds were available from P.G.L.. Northern Bank would lend £250,000 secured by a mortgage on the property. The terms of repayment of the mortgage and the sources from which it would be repaid could not be explained. An application to the International Fund for Ireland had been rejected because the location was not in the geographical area in which the Fund could assist. There was a possibility that the Fund's area could be changed, and the outcome was awaited. It appeared that there was a shortfall of about £50,000 and it was this amount which they hoped they might obtain from Arthur Square. It was decided to defer consideration of this until the project was approved by P.G.L. and the shortfall became known.

As we approach the millennium, preparations are being made to carry out the Grand Master's wish to open all Halls to the public on St. John's Day 24th June 2000 which is the 275th anniversary of the establishment of Masonry in Ireland. The Arthur Square hall is being given a "face-lift" with improved lighting, decorations and necessary repairs to furniture. Plans include



the issue of invitations to a large number of business, service, sporting and religious organisations, and to widows and friends of members sitting in Arthur Square. The object is, of course, to prove that our places of meeting are open to be seen and, although we have certain secret methods of recognising one another, our history and our premises are not in any way secret. We are indeed a society with secrets; not a secret society.

The splendid plasterwork in the second dining room contains two phrases,

one in Latin: \_\_\_\_\_ (Phrase missing, Ed.)

Which means: Let there be light, and there was light,

and the other in Hebrew: Kodesh Londoni:

Which means: \_\_\_\_\_ (Phrase missing, Ed.)

Arthur Square has gradually become more prosperous, due to the foresight of the original Trustees and their professional advisers in the design of the building and in placing shops on the ground floor. Thus we have been able in recent years to help in certain ways, those who are less fortunate, as follows:-

- 1987: Grant of £8,000 to Glen Masonic Hall, Ligoniel.
- 1992: Gift of £26,000 to Whiteabbey Masonic Hall Co. Ltd. to repay a Loan from Grand Lodge.
- 1994: Gift of £30,000 to Brookville Masonic Hall Co. Ltd. to pay off its indebtedness to Northern Bank Ltd.
- 1996: £10,000 to Charities split as follows:
  - £5,000 to Grand Master's Festival.
  - £3,250 to Belfast Masonic Widows Fund.
  - £1,000 to Victoria Jubilee Annuity Fund.
  - £500 to Belfast Masonic Charity Fund.
  - £250 to Masonic Orphans and Widows Charity.



It will be of interest to record here some of the renewals and repairs agreed by the Hall Committee in recent years. Prices shown are those which applied at the time:

1964 Complete electrical wiring £2026.

1964 Lift modernised to accept AC current £779.

1967 Toilets modernised £750.

1973 Gas fired boilers replaced £1384.

1973 Stokes Room, RAC Room, kitchen and staircase decorated £626.

1981 Kitchen completely rebuilt.

1987 Exterior repairs.

1983 Lift replaced and lift shaft repaired £30,000.

1983 Outside of building repainted (D.O.E. grant of 50% received).

1984 Toilets refurbished £14,900 + VAT.

1985 Carpets replaced in Chapter Room and Leighton Room.

1985 No 1 Banqueting Hall refloored with wooden floor.

1986 Ladies toilets installed £12,000 + VAT.

1987 Central heating changed from gas to oil, Cost £50,278 but grant from DOE reduced this outlay to £30,000.

1988 No 3 Dining Room and entrance hall redecorated £30,000.

1989 Fire alarms and smoke detectors installed £7,000.



Members will also be aware of the considerable improvements made in the last six or seven years when the portraits and frames were cleaned and restored, and all three dining rooms very much refurbished. However it may not be appreciated that repairs and renewals cannot always be tackled within a week or two; there are many difficulties which arise because the hall is in use most evenings and sometimes during the day. This means that everything but the most minor work has to be done in June, July and August - say 13 weeks. Set against this is the normal "12th" holidays, now three weeks, which reduces the time to 10 weeks. We must allow, say two weeks as "run-over" time, leaving 8 weeks. Preparation, finishing and cleaning time reduces this to 7 weeks for all practical purposes. Planning of work has to take account of the requirements of the various trades, so that electricians and plumbers and, builders come first, and painters after that, followed by contract cleaners. These trades do not like to be frustrated by the work not being programmed appropriately, and we also have to bear in mind certain legal matters, for example the window cleaners are not allowed to erect their long ladders except on Sundays when few members of the public are around. Outside painters and roofing contractors can only work in July with their scaffolding, for the same reason. This explains why some of the desirable work suggested by members frequently takes many months before it can be started.

Lodges now sitting in Arthur Square (1999) are:

22 - 31 - 51 - 54 - 59 - 64 - 97 - 98 - 106 - 111 - 118 - 128 - 166  
- 169 - 177 - 181 - 182 - 213 - 226 - 229 - 257 - 272 - 279 - 285  
- 294 - 314 - 327 - 340 - 353 - 372 - 389 - 393 - 418 - 420 - 424  
- 432 - 434 - 440 - 442 - 445 - 485 - 509 - 525 - 545 - 573 - 587  
- 609 - 651 - 659 - 663 - 664 - 665 - 669 - 679 - 698 - 839.

A total of 56 Lodges. There are also 35 Royal Arch Chapters, Council of Knight Masons, and 5 Preceptories.



One example of how our use of the English Language has changed in 200 years is revealed in the following letter addressed to the W.M. and Brethren of Lodge 257 by the Editor of a Masonic publication in 1782:

Dear Sirs and Brethren,

“..... you who have confessedly constituted and established one of the first Lodges of Free and Accepted Masons in the three Kingdoms, a Lodge that has been productive of the most munificent acts of Charity and Benevolence.

You have, Gentlemen, released the prisoner, comforted the weary, and given food and raiment to the hungry and naked. Your Lodge has been the happy asylum to strangers, friendless till their propitious stars directed them to you. You pay no particular attention to Country, Religion or to Station, but are happy in diffusing bliss indiscriminately to all the honest and worthy of every Denomination, of every Country, of every Persuasion, and of every Rank, and you have not only established one of the most respectable and numerous Lodges in the World, in Belfast, but you have been the glorious means of reviving the Royal Craft all over this Province; and Lodges which have long lain dormant and neglected are now forming and reconstituting with redoubled ardour; indeed it is now not only honourable but fashionable to be a Freemason.

Go on and prosper, and may your endeavours to illumine the hitherto unenlightened part of mankind meet with that success the generous undertaking deserves.

Which are the earnest wishes and prayers of, your affectionate Brother and obedient humble servant, The Editor.”



Lodge 257 had 150 members in 1783 when the foundation stone of the White Linen Hall was laid. Subsequently the Lodge declined and the warrant was surrendered. However in 1885 it was again taken up and, happily, is one of the Lodges housed in Arthur Square today.

This brings our history up to 1999. Examining the old records has been a most interesting and rewarding experience and we would recommend all Lodges to engage in the same operation as a “Millennium” Task. Over the years, Lodge records seem to become lost or destroyed and it would be of much interest to pick out the important aspects from Lodge minutes and have them placed in a safe place to assist future research. If any Lodge requires a safe home for such records, a proper place will be provided in the Arthur Square Building.

Many good and true Masons had arranged the basis for the progress made in our building and we are now in a very well maintained structure and also in a stronger financial position than at any time in the last 100 years. Our predecessors formed the proper foundations and we aim to promote everything which will continue this success and encourage new candidates. All of this takes a great deal of thought and careful administration, and the thanks of all concerned are due to our secretary Bro. W.A. Crawford for his guidance over the last 25 years. And so, we pass on our very best wishes for the new millennium and hope that those involved will be rewarded by every success in their efforts.

for the Trustees: A.R.G.R. Patterson  
A.V. Rodgers, T.D., A.C.I.I.  
R. Wilson.



### TRUSTEES

NAME	Appointed	Resigned	Deceased	Lodge No.
Sir Charles Lanyon				7
James McCracken				609
Robert McCalmont				272
T. Nesbitt	1889		1917	97
W.J. Stokes	1889	1922	1926	88
W.J. Williamson	1889		1902	103
J. Young	1904		1916	372
S. Leighton	1917		1938	51
W.H. Andrews	1917		1920	272
J.G. Michaels	1920		1948	359
W. Wallace	1923	1937	1939	272
H.E. Morton	1937		1950	
A.H Carse	1938	1949		
S. McCrainor	1938	1948	1961	229
J.W. Storey	1949		1969	440
C. McCallion	1950		1966	314
H. Houston	1961	1975		
D.A. Holmes	1966	1974		
W.M. McCoubrey	1975	1994		103
J. Black	1975	1994		694
A.R.G.R. Patterson	1994			348
A.V Rodgers	1994			545
R. Wilson	1999			51

### SECRETARIES

NAME	Appointed	Resigned	Deceased	Lodge No.
H.J. Hill	1869	1870		111
J.D. Templeton	1870	1874		51
Thos. Nesbitt	1874	1893		97
Hugh Smylie	1895	1938		111
Cecil V. Smylie	1938	1960		111
T.D. Lorimer	1960	1974		327
W.A. Crawford	1974			327



## **PORTRAITS**

The pictures in the large dining room, in sequence reading from the left as you enter the door, each have a plate showing the names and ranks and details of those concerned. However it may be interest to add here some other features known about them:-

### **James H. Stirling:**

Initiated in Lodge 36 in 1891. W.M. in 1894.  
Representative from Grand Lodge of Denmark.  
Member of Belfast City Council  
President of N.I. Chamber of Commerce.  
Chairman of Governors of Belfast Royal Academical Institution ("Inst.")  
Hon. Treasurer of Queens University.  
Managing Director of York Street Mill.

### **Samuel Leighton:**

Initiated in Lodge 51.  
Provincial Grand Organist, Provincial Senior Grand Warden.  
Trustee of Arthur Square Masonic Hall.  
Author of Hall History 1863 - 1927.

### **Thomas Valentine:**

Deputy Provincial Grand Master 1885 - 1897.

### **Hugh Doey:**

Lodge 609. Portrait was presented to the hall by a number of his Brethren in recognition of his life-long labours in the cause of Masonic Charity.

### **Sir Robert H. Baird:**

Initiated in Lodge 109.  
Grand Treasurer of Grand Lodge of Ireland.  
Rep. to the Grand Lodge of Virginia U.S.A.  
Managing Director of "Belfast Telegraph"  
Knighted (K.B.E.) for services during World War 1.

### **Wm. Thos. Braithwaite:**

Provincial Senior Grand Warden.  
Specially interested in, and generous to the Charities.  
Distinguished sportsman and famous rifle shot.  
Water Commissioner in Belfast.



**Wm. Reafern Kelly:**

Initiated about 1860.

Provincial Inner Guard and headed the great procession to the laying of the foundation stone of the hall in 1868.

Interested in astronomy, psychical investigation and Masonic research.

The portrait was provided in 1914 by a number of Masonic friends to recognise his long and faithful service on behalf of Freemasonry.

**Robert J. Hilton:**

Provincial Deputy Grand Master, Antrim, 1897 - 1916 and previously Provincial Grand Secretary. Was one of the members of the first House Committee in 1869 and one of the original Trustees under the 1870 lease. He resigned from his position as deputy Provincial Grand Master due to failing health, and died soon after.

**David Hannay:**

W.M. of St John's Lodge No 88 and Provincial Senior Grand Warden of Antrim.

A quiet man, not fond of speaking in public, but his sterling worth, his charity to all men and his loyalty to his obligations were recognised by his Masonic friends who presented his portrait in 1903. His early death was a great loss to the Order.

In the middle dining room. Again starting from the left inside the door, portraits are hung as below. The first three of these were the only ones brought to the Hall in 1870. Although the names of these were known then, and were mentioned in the press notices at the time, the nameplates eventually disappeared, and it was not until 1924, after an exhaustive search, that the names and titles were established. Old minute books of Lodge 22 were of great help in discovering the following:-

**Rt. Hon. Thomas, 2nd Earl of Zetland:**

Grand Master of England 1844-1870

It is not known how the portrait came into the possession of Lodge 22, but it was presented by them to the hall in 1900.

His identity was established by a cutting from "Illustrated London News" of 25 May 1844 where he was seen in full Masonic Costume Laying the Foundation stone of the Caledonian Benevolent Institution in Copenhagen Street, London on 18 May 1844. No doubt the trowel shown in the portrait was a memento of that occasion.



### Sir Archibald Alison, Bart:

Grand Master of Provincial Grand Lodge. Glasgow 1847 - 1867. Called to the Scottish Bar 1814, and became Advocate Depute 1822. A prolific writer on law and history. Toured Europe after the Napoleonic Wars before writing his famous "History of Europe" which ran to 14 volumes. Was created 1st Baronet by Lord Derby 1852.

The Minutes of Lodge of Truth No 22 of 2 August 1864 report that a ballot was to be held for this oil painting, and a metal tablet is fixed to the frame, engraved "272" and it is presumed that Lodge 272 must have won the ballot. It is not clear how Lodge 22 came into possession of picture; perhaps the winning Lodge never claimed the prize.

### His Grace Augustus Frederick, 3rd Duke of Leinster:

Grand Master of Ireland 1844-1873

Portrait brought to the hall in 1870 by Lodge 22 when that Lodge moved from Donegall Place Buildings. It was painted by S. Catterson Smith P.R.H.A. a distinguished English artist who settled in Dublin about 1850 where he executed many important works including a portrait of Queen Victoria.

### Robert Godby:

Secretary of Lodge 59

Devoted his spare time to furthering the Peace, Love and Harmony of that Lodge.

In appreciation of his work his Brethren had the portrait painted in 1873.

### James McCracken:

Lodge 609

Several Provincial offices from 1859 and became Provincial Senior Grand Warden of Belfast and North Down in 1864.

First Chairman of Belfast Masonic Charity Fund 1862-1863. Enthusiastic and sincere, he had a remarkable record and was a prime mover in the efforts to build our hall. He was present at most of the meetings and his subscription of £100 was only exceeded by that of the Grand Master, the Marquis of Donegall. His name appears on the lease of 1870 with R.W. Bro Sir Charles Lanyon as Co-Trustee. He carried on business as builder and contractor in Divis Street.

Quite a number of other pictures are displayed in Leightons History but it appears that most, if not all of these have either not survived the last 100 years or so, or are photographs of paintings, never in our possession.



Leighton mentions:-

**R.W. Venerable Archdeacon W.B. Mant:**

Provincial Grand Master Belfast and North Down 1848-1856

**Most Hon. George Hamilton, 3rd Marquis of Donegall:**

Provincial Grand Master Belfast and North Down 1856-1868

G.M. Antrim 1868-1883

**Sir Charles Lanyon:**

Lodge 7

Provincial Deputy Grand Master Belfast/N. Down 1863-1868

Provincial Deputy Grand Master Antrim 1868-1883

Provincial Grand Master 1883-1889

Member of Parliament 1866 - Belfast

First Chairman, Masonic Hall Co Ltd. and laid the foundation stone on 24th June 1868. His profession was Architect and he designed many public buildings in Belfast, including our hall.

**Most. Hon. Hugh de Grey Seymour, Marquis of Hertford:**

Lodge 10, Belfast

R.W. Provincial Grand Master, Antrim 1888-1897.

Had family connections with Ulster and owned considerable property in and around Lisburn. M.P. for County Antrim 1860-1864.

**Rt. Hon. The Earl of Shaftesbury:**

Provincial Grand Master, Antrim 1897-1921

Provincial Grand Master, Dorset

Inherited the Donegall Estates through his mother, the Countess of Shaftesbury, and he came to reside in Belfast. Very enthusiastic Freemason and entered the life of the City becoming a member of the Corporation and later, Lord Mayor.

Deeply interested in Public Affairs, and his musical talents were cheerfully given in the cause of Charity. His duties at the Court of the King resulted in having to give up Public work in Ulster.

**Martin H. Turnbull:**

Provincial Deputy Grand Master, Antrim 1921-1923

Treasurer, Belfast Masonic Charity Fund to which he devoted himself through many years of generous service. He was stricken by a severe illness which tragically ended his life suddenly. His Brethren realised that they had lost a Brother who had set an example of unselfish devotion and his death was considered one of the greatest losses the Order in Northern Ireland had ever experienced.



**William Wallace:**

P.M. Lodge 272  
Provincial Deputy Grand Master Antrim 1923  
Trustee Arthur Square Hall 1923.  
Had a long association with the House Committee Appointed a Trustee  
and Representative at Grand Lodge of New Hampshire U.S.A.

**John Milne Barbour:**

Initiated into Apollo University Lodge, Oxford.  
Provincial Senior Grand Warden, Antrim 1902  
Rep. of Grand Lodge of Rhode Island USA at Grand Lodge.  
Member of Parliament held the portfolio of the Ministry of Commerce.  
Member of Belfast Harbour Board. Ex Sheriff of Counties of Antrim and  
Down. President of Chamber of Commerce. Managing Director of Linen  
Tread Co Ltd. which owned William Barbour and Sons Ltd. Trustee of  
Belfast Masonic Charity Fund.

**Thomas Nesbitt:**

Assistant Provincial Grand Secretary, Antrim 1881-1893.  
Trustee, Arthur Square Hall 1889-1917.  
Mentioned in the earlier text and most enthusiastic in connection with  
the "Purchase Scheme". His great work is recognised on the brass plate in  
the entrance hall.

**W. Joseph Stokes:**

P.M. Lodge 88.  
Trustee of the Hall 1889-1922  
Member of City Corporation for Windsor Ward.  
Chairman Unionist Association for Ormeau.  
Like V.W. Bro Nesbitt, there is a memorial brass plate in his honour in the  
entrance hall.

**Wm. John Williamson:**

P.M. Lodge 103  
Hall Trustee, 1889-1902 and much admired.

**James Young:**

P.M. Lodge 372  
Trustee Arthur Square Hall 1904-1916.  
A good ritualist, wise counsellor and deeply interested in matters concerning  
the hall.  
Was very proud that his five sons were all members of the Order.



**Wm. H. Andrews:**

P.M Lodge 272  
Provincial Junior Grand Warden.  
Chairman House Committee 1911.  
Represented Windsor Ward on the Belfast City Council.

**John G. Michaels:**

P.M. Lodge 359, P.M. Lodge 418  
Member of Grand Lodge of Instruction.  
Trustee Arthur Square Hall 1920.  
Rep. of Grand Lodge of Ireland at Grand Lodge of Oklahoma USA.  
Director of Gallaher and Co, Tobacco factory, Belfast.

**Hugh Smylie:**

P.M. Lodge 111, P.M. Lodge 154.  
Secretary to Trustees and Hall Committee 1895-1938  
Well known Chartered Accountant.  
Member of City Council for Cromac Ward

**O'Connell Shaw:**

P.M. Lodge 111  
President Donegall Masonic Club 1880.  
Held in the highest esteem and with much influence although of modest and retiring disposition.

**Henry J. Hill:**

P.M. Lodge 111 Provincial Junior Grand Warden, Antrim.  
Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, for many years.  
Secretary of House Committee 1869-1870.  
Chairman of House Committee 1912-1913.

Obviously there are many important, notable, and enthusiastic Masons of all degrees whose names have not appeared in this account.

For the last 60 years, no photographs of such members have been obtained showing those deserving of comments similar to the above.

It is sincerely hoped that Lodges who can do so will produce photographs and biographies for entries in a further account in due course. As stated earlier, all such material will be received with much thanks by the Trustees and safely retained to await the next compiler.