

A LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY INFORMATION SHEET

THE HALLSTONE JEWEL

In 1919, after the First World War Grand Lodge decided, in response to a suggestion from the M.W. The Grand Master, H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, to embark on the building of a new headquarters for the English Craft as a memorial to the many brethren who had given their lives during the War. For this purpose a special committee was set up in 1920 and an appeal made to every member of the Constitution for contributions to the fund which, from the target set, came to be known as the Masonic Million Memorial Fund. Contributions to this Fund were to be entirely voluntary and were to be recognised by special commemorative jewels. These were of three types for the three categories of subscribers, of the same basic design but of different sizes and precious metals (the sizes given below are the diameter of the encircling wreath). Examples of all these jewels are on display in the museum:

- (i) A medal (35.0mm) called the Masonic Million Memorial Fund Commemorative Jewel on a dark blue ribbon, to be worn as a personal breast jewel by any member of a lodge under the English Constitution subscribing to the Fund: ten guineas or more, a silver medal; one hundred guineas or more, a gold medal. Some 53,224 individual jewels were issued.



- (ii) A medal (42.0mm) in gold on a light blue collarette to be worn by successive Masters of lodges contributing an average of ten guineas per member, such lodges to be known as Hall Stone Lodges (thus giving the jewel its name). 1,321 lodges at home and abroad qualified as Hall Stone Lodges; their names and numbers are inscribed on commemorative marble panels in the main ceremonial entrance vestibule of Freemasons' Hall.



- (iii) A medal (48.0mm) in gold and coloured enamels, on a dark blue Collarette, to be worn by successive Provincial and District Grand Masters of Provinces or Districts contributing an average of five hundred guineas per lodge. Two Districts, Japan (now defunct) and Burma, and one Province, Buckinghamshire, qualified as Hall Stone Districts/Province. Certain lodge rooms in Freemasons' Hall were therefore named after them in recognition of their achievement, this being commemorated on a bronze plaque therein. Lodges Rooms 11, 12 and 17 were thus named respectively the Japan, the Burma and the Buckinghamshire Rooms. They are the only lodge rooms in Freemasons' Hall distinguished in this way by a name, although only the Buckinghamshire Room is still so called.



The design of the medal, the outcome of a competition won by Bro. Cyril Saunders Spackman, R.B.A., R.M.S., was described at the time in these terms:

“The jewel is in the form of a cross, symbolising Sacrifice, with a perfect square at the four ends, on the left and right, squares being the dates 1914-1918, the years in which the supreme sacrifice was made. Between these is a winged figure of Peace presenting the representation of a Temple with special Masonic allusion in the Pillars, Porch and Steps. The medal is suspended by the Square and Compasses, attached to a ribband, the whole thus symbolising the Craft’s gift of a Temple in memory of those brethren who gave all for King and Country, Peace and Victory, Liberty and Brotherhood”.

Three other jewels also need to be considered along with those already mentioned (usually referred to as the “Hallstone Jewels”). The Peace Jewel (below) was awarded to masons who attended the Especial Meeting of Grand Lodge on the 27th of June 1919 when the decision to commence funding for a new hall was taken. Later the jewel was also made available for those who were eligible to attend but were unable to do so, this jewel omitted the “S” on the ribbon.



On the 8th of August 1925 a sit-down fundraising meal was held at the Kensington Olympia, where 7,250 masons joined the Grand Master in what is still the largest ever catered meal served in Europe. Attendees received a jewel to commemorate the occasion (seen below, left), with an “S” on the ribbon denoting that the wearer had been a steward at the meal. At the end of the meal it was announced that over £825,000 had been raised for the building fund.

Finally a jewel was also created to be awarded to those individual masons who had donated the sum of 240 guineas or over, known as the Collector’s Jewel (below, right).



Building work on the Masonic Peace Memorial, as it was at first called - later to become known as Freemasons’ Hall - commenced in 1927 and was completed in 1933 when the Hall was dedicated. At the June 1938 Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge the Special Committee presented its final report recording that the building had been handed over to the Board of General Purposes free from debt and that well over one million pounds had been subscribed to the fund. The fund itself was closed on the 31st December 1938 and, although it is unlikely that there is any active mason still entitled to wear them, these jewels survive as a testament to the efforts made in raising that money.

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February 2011

