

## ARROW LODGE No 2240

The Arrow Lodge was founded in 1888 and was the second Lodge to be created in the market town of Kington, in the northwest of the county of Herefordshire. The first Lodge was named the Silurean Lodge, founded in 1796 by the ubiquitous Thomas Dunkerley, a year before his death, and at a time when as Provincial Grand Master of five Provinces, he was setting up new Lodges wherever possible to increase the overall membership in Freemasonry. Sadly, the Lodge failed after only four years, it being unable to attract sufficient members to keep it going.

For around 90 years the Arrow Lodge met in rooms above the then Old Radnor Trading Company, a business at that time responsible for the Gore Quarry, *et al.* When that business was taken over, their office building was bought by the Herefordshire County Council and eventually converted to provide the town library. The County Council Officers at that time made it clear they needed the whole building and so the Lodge was given a Notice to Quit.

So, for the Arrow Lodge members, the hunt was on for alternative premises and they eventually became interested in a redundant building previously used by a local Plant Hire business. In its then state it was difficult to imagine turning such a building into a Masonic Hall, but the decision was taken and the premises acquired. Then began the massive task of conversion, extension and development, resulting in the splendid facility enjoyed today.

The town of Kington has suffered much in recent years due to the closure of many of its small businesses, at one time the main source of membership of its Lodge. In the decade or so before the millennium the Lodge had around 80 members, but is now reduced to less than 50, many of whom are resident further afield.

Meeting on the second Monday in the months of October to May each year, the Lodge works hard to provide good quality ceremonies followed by traditional fare at its after proceedings. It also provides the occasional social event in the Hall and holds the traditional Ladies' Festival in the town. The Masonic Hall is regularly used by the local Gardening Club as well as for the occasional other non-masonic events.

With the advent of greater 'openness' encouraged by the United Grand Lodge of England, and in conjunction with special events like the Millennium and the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the Grand Lodge, the Masonic Hall has been opened to the public to view displays of masonic effects, with only limited success. Such a display was also mounted recently at a local Village Show, sadly spoiled by heavy rain!

Modern society seems to have moved away from organisations such as Freemasonry, Rotary, Round Table, etc., and thus its weakness is in its inability to attract new members from its immediate catchment area. This does make the future somewhat uncertain, but the Arrow Lodge has much strength and pride in having its own Masonic Hall, keeping costs down and allowing lower levels of subscription. It is an inclusive Lodge, never having appealed to any particular section in the community it endeavours to serve.