

An Introduction to English Freemasonry



Internet Lodge No. 9659
Province of East Lancashire
The United Grand Lodge of England

An introduction to English Freemasonry

*(with particular relevance to Internet Lodge No. 9659
within The United Grand Lodge of England)*

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Preface

This document is intended to be a guide to English Freemasonry as practised by the United Grand Lodge of England, particularly for those members of Internet Lodge who hail from different Constitutions

This information originated from a document published by the Grand Lodge of Western Australia of Antient Free & Accepted Masons Inc.

It has been amended and expanded a little, with their permission, by a small team of members of Internet Lodge to reflect practices and customs that apply generally within the United Grand Lodge of England. Mention is made of specific practices of Internet Lodge where these differ significantly from general custom.

You will see the occasional abbreviation. Note these because Freemasonry uses quite a lot and now is the time to notice and memorise them. They are only shown at the first appearance in the text but there is a list at the end of the document.

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A Brief History of Freemasonry

The precise origins of freemasonry have been lost in the mists of time; however its traditions date back to the middle ages and to the stonemasons who built the great cathedrals and castles of Europe.

To construct these great buildings it was necessary for the builders to have considerable knowledge of geometry, arithmetic and stone masonry. These highly skilled masons formed themselves into Lodges to protect the skills and the secrets of their trade and pass their knowledge to worthy apprentices. These men were not bondsmen, hence the word "free" in the title of "Freemason".

By the seventeenth century, when the building work on the great cathedrals and castles diminished, masonry began to lose its "operative" aspects and worthy men who were not craftsmen were accepted into its membership. It was from this time that Masons were known as "Free and Accepted Masons", as they continue to be known to this day.

The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) was established in England in 1717 and thereafter Freemasonry spread rapidly throughout the world.

Freemasonry and the community

Charity is a basic principle of Freemasonry, and members have been involved in charitable activities for almost as long as Craft Freemasonry has existed. There are a number of Masonic Charities which are not just for the benefit of our members, and a substantial amount of the funds distributed go to the community at large for the care of young people, orphans, the sick, the elderly and those affected by tragedy and natural disaster.

For too long Freemasons have been hesitant to speak up and tell the world about the financial assistance they give to the disadvantaged. In any one year Freemasons across the UK give generously and significantly to charities, and at the time of writing, the combined Masonic Charities are the second largest fund in the UK after the National Lottery.

Money is raised at local, Provincial and national level, through initiatives at Freemasons' meetings, dinners and other social events which can be attended by the broader community by invitation.

Trusts and other Masonic institutions administered by Grand Lodge distribute grants according to the purpose for which they were established. These include funds of benevolence, educational grants, scholarships, disaster relief and various philanthropic activities



Guidance for new Brethren

A Mentor is appointed by the Worshipful Master (WM) of your Lodge annually. He or your proposer and seconder are also available to provide guidance and in this sense they are your personal mentors.

They do not have specific duties but may help in the following ways:

1. To become your advisor, friend and first line of support until you have become a proficient Master Mason (MM).
2. To make sure that you have fully understood all the literature you have received and clarify any areas of doubt. They can help by explaining the importance of punctuality and regular attendance, fees, style of dress, the format of meetings and Festive Boards, catering arrangements and social activities in your particular Lodge.
3. After each step in your progress one of these, or other Brethren, will help you learn the questions and answers relative to your next step and generally prepare you for your next meeting.
4. Ideally, after each step, to arrange for you to visit at least one other Lodge where the work for the evening is in the appropriate Degree so that you can be reminded of what happened during your ceremony.
5. After your final step up the ladder to Master Mason (MM), to continue to maintain an interest in you to ensure that all is well. Your Mentor or another member of the Lodge should explain such matters as Grand Lodge Communications, the higher Degrees and orders in Freemasonry, and generally guide, befriend and direct you in the first twelve months so that you are, by then, very much involved in the life of your Lodge and Freemasonry in general.

After this you should know quite a lot of people and any experienced member of the Lodge will help you by answering any specific queries you may have.



Your obligations and conduct as a Freemason

As you take your various steps in Freemasonry you will take a formal obligation to respect the moral code and traditions of Freemasonry as they apply to that level of your attainment. Prior to being obligated, you will be told that the obligation contains nothing incompatible with your moral, civil or religious duties.

In broader terms, as a Freemason you will be expected to make every effort to continue always to be a good husband and father, a dependable and diligent employee or employer and an exemplary citizen. Remember the priority – family and friends, work, Freemasonry. You will be required to do all within your power to support your Lodge in their efforts to foster Freemasonry and on all occasions inside and outside the Lodge to conduct yourself with dignity and courtesy. Your regular attendance at our meetings is essential to the efficient running of your Lodge and on any occasion when you are unable to attend it is important to advise the Secretary or his delegate as far in advance as possible.

The ceremonial component of Freemasonry requires a serious demeanour and it is important that propriety is maintained by all the members at all times whilst present in the Lodge rooms. All discussions of a political or religious nature are studiously avoided in Lodge as harmony among the brethren is critical to the well being of our institution.

Freemasonry is a happy and enjoyable fraternity and a good sense of humour and a friendly disposition are important attributes for each of its members. It is however, important to exercise good judgment and maintain a sense of time and place. Be assured that Freemasonry is filled with times of great joy and good humour and that laughter is no stranger to our assemblies.

How a Freemasons' Lodge operates

Every Freemasons' Lodge is an independent body which operates under a Warrant, or Charter, from Grand Lodge. The Warrant entitles the Lodge to conduct the ceremonies and rites of Freemasonry. Without this Warrant no Lodge is legal and its members cannot consider themselves to be Freemasons.

The Lodge pays two capitation fees for each of its members, one to Provincial Grand Lodge (PGL) and one to the United Grand Lodge (UGLE) to meet the considerable costs involved in the administration and governing of the Order and the maintenance of fraternal relations with Grand Lodges overseas. It also pays a contribution to The Grand Charity on your behalf. These fees must be paid regularly by your Lodge on the due date. Therefore, it is essential that you in turn are prompt in the payment of your dues to avoid placing any unnecessary financial burden on your brethren for the administrative costs involved in the running of your Lodge. Note that the Lodge in which you were initiated is, and will always remain, your 'mother' Lodge.

Lodge accounts are normally separated into a General Fund and a Benevolent Fund. They are kept quite distinct from each other. A full report is given to, and voted on by, the Members at the end of each Lodge year.

The business component of the Lodge meeting is conducted on the established lines of motions requiring a formal proposition, a seconder and a vote by the membership. Minutes and Accounts are also transacted. A Freemasons' Lodge is structured, in part, much the same as any other club or association.

The Worshipful Master is the chairman and his Wardens are his first and second vice-chairmen. The Immediate Past Master (IPM) acts as an advisor to the reigning Master. There is a Secretary (Sec) and a Treasurer (Treas) who handle the matters of administration and finance, and a Director of Ceremonies (DC) who is the Master of Ceremonies both within the Lodge and at the after proceedings.

The Stewards are assistants to the Junior Warden (JW) who is responsible for the Festive Board or dining arrangements for the evening.

All our ceremonies involve music, and ideally each Lodge should have an Organist. Skills at the keyboard are scarce now that fewer people learn to play the piano. If you can help with music, please tell us. Great virtuosity is not required, so any talent, however modest, should be offered for the good of your Lodge.

How a Freemasons' Lodge operates (continued)

Each of these Officers has an important function in the successful operation of the Lodge meeting and their regular attendance is of particular importance. Freemasonry is progressive and after becoming a competent Master Mason you will be considered for an Office or role in the Lodge team.

Usually the first role is that of Steward (not actually an Office) and from there you may progress through the offices of Inner Guard (IG), Junior (JD) and Senior Deacon (SD), Junior (JW) and Senior Warden (SW) and ultimately into the Chair as Master of the Lodge. In most Lodges the offices of Tyler and Chaplain are occupied by Past Masters (PMs) of the Lodge but this may vary from one Lodge to the next.

In Internet Lodge the Inner Guard, and Junior and Senior Deacons are appointed annually by the Worshipful Master from amongst those who attend meetings regularly. The Junior Warden is elected by the brethren after the submission of a manifesto by the end of August in each year. He then progresses normally to Senior Warden and ultimately Worshipful Master of the Lodge.

For the position of Director of Ceremonies it is essential that the Officer should be a well qualified Past Master as the Lodge depends heavily on his in-depth knowledge of ceremonial procedures.

If you become Master of the Lodge the brethren will look to you for guidance in all aspects of the Lodge's operations but you will be well supported by a Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Ceremonies and your Immediate Past Master.

In addition, most Lodges have a management committee which usually comprises the Master, Past Masters and senior Officers of the Lodge together with at least one newer Master Mason. This however is impractical for Internet Lodge. In some Lodges there is also a social committee which is chaired by the Junior Warden and includes brethren chosen by him to organise social functions such as the Lodge Ladies' Night and other events. In Internet Lodge these arrangements are made by the Worshipful Master who normally asks other members to assist him.

Whatever position you hold in Lodge, there will always be willing support and assistance available to you.

Charity

As Masons, part of our journey is to contemplate charity and its meaning in all aspects of our lives. This must start with an understanding of ourselves and, with that understanding, how charity applies to the world around us. It is founded on our character and attitude; our bearing; kind thoughts, words, and deeds; and how we treat those around us having no limits except caution and discretion. This starts with our families and extends to friends and associates, to our communities and thence to the world around us that gives us all life.



Expressing this through Masonry, a society which is spread across the four quarters of the globe, we attempt to relieve some of the afflictions around us but in a particular way. At a personal level many of us are involved in volunteer work in our communities and more widely devote our spare time organising that which brings benefits and well being throughout the world.

When we join a Masonic Lodge there is an implied commitment to support that Lodge's charitable efforts and it is considered to be the duty of a Lodge consecrated in England to support those charities approved by its Masonic Province and the United Grand Lodge of England. Additionally, a Lodge may wish to support charities designated specifically by its Master, or, indeed, its individual members.

At some stage, and often when retiring from the Lodge Room or Temple, a collection for charity will be made. The amount you give is entirely up to you, but nowadays a sum of GBP 2-3 is the norm, although this is by no means mandatory. You may hear the expressions "Broken Column" or "Charity box" mentioned in this context.



If you stay to dine, further calls on your charity will be made, when raffle tickets are sold for prizes donated by the members, and again GBP 5 is becoming increasingly the norm - but anything you choose to give will be gratefully received and faithfully applied.

Note that giving to charity is voluntary and confidential and you should never feel pressured to give if your personal circumstances at the time make it difficult.

The above are considered spontaneous gifts. Your Lodge Charity Steward (ChStwd) may approach you to make a more substantial donation, provided this is within your means. Most people sign a Standing Order for regular payments, and accompany this by signing a Covenant Form which enables English Freemasonry to reclaim UK tax for UK tax payers. Again there is no implied sum, but for guidance many people give around GBP 100 per year. The Internet Lodge "Bit Club" is an example of this regular giving.

The amount you donate is entirely up to you and is confidential between you and the Charity Steward and the Charity concerned which is responsible for making the tax claim on your behalf. The Master of the Lodge and your brethren will not know how much you give.

There are four national Masonic Charities within UGLE:

The Freemasons' Grand Charity (GC) is a grant-making charity, which is funded by Freemasons and their families. Annually it gives grants totalling over GBP 5 million to support people in need including Freemasons and their dependants and fund the work of charities helping the wider community. Grand Charity also donates significant sums of money to non-Masonic causes every year in such areas as disaster relief, medical training and research, education etc.

The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys (RMTGB) aims to relieve poverty and provide an education and preparation for life for the children of the family of a Freemason, particularly if he is deceased or "passed to the Grand Lodge Above". Where funds permit, relief may be extended to other deserving children, to provide what their fathers would have done had they been able so to do.

The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution (RMBI) has been caring for older Freemasons and their dependants for over 160 years. It operates 17 residential care homes across England and Wales offering high quality care. Many of the homes are registered for both residential and nursing care and a number offer specialist dementia care.

The Masonic Samaritan Fund (MSF) is a grant-making charity that supports Freemasons and their dependants who have an identified medical need and, faced with a long wait for treatment, are unable to afford their own private care.

There is a system of Charity Festivals within the Provinces under the constitution of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Every year each national Masonic Charity arranges with a Province to commence a 5 – 7 year appeal for charitable donations from all the Lodges in the Province. At any one time there will therefore be 20 – 28 Festivals at some stage in their efforts towards a goal of several million GB pounds each. The culmination of the appeal is called a Festival which is an event, including a formal dinner, to celebrate handing the sum collected to the charity. As an example 2009 will see the Festival in the Province of Hertfordshire for the Grand Charity come to fruition with GBP 2.75 million collected to date. The following year will see the end of the 2010 Festival for the Masonic Samaritan Fund in the Province of West Lancashire which will raise in excess of GBP 5 million.

The Festive Board

The Festive Board is the Masonic name for the dining which follows the Lodge meeting. The Director of Ceremonies acts as the Master of Ceremonies. At the Festive Board following your Initiation you will, in most Lodges, sit at the top table next to the Worshipful Master. The next time you will sit there will be when you are installed as the Worshipful Master in your own right.

After Grace is said by the Chaplain, there are a number of traditional Masonic toasts that are observed throughout the evening and always include the Queen, the Grand Master (GM), the Provincial Grand Master (PGM) and may include the Initiate of the evening, referred to for the only time as Brother Initiate, and the visitors. The Tyler's toast is the final toast of the evening and is for all poor and distressed brethren. This toast signifies that formal proceedings have ended.

It is expected that each person present who is toasted will respond to his toast and in so doing acknowledge the Master, the proposer of the toast and all the brethren assembled. On no account should anything of a vulgar, lewd or disrespectful nature be included in a speech.

The fare offered at Lodge Festive Boards varies considerably. Some have a simple main course and dessert, whereas some have many more courses and wines.

Virtually all Lodges have bar facilities where they meet although there are some tee-total, or 'dry', Lodges. It is the Stewards' job to see every brother is well catered for, but excess consumption should be strictly avoided.

Although the Festive Board is the relaxed social part of the evening the conduct of the brethren should always be of a standard acceptable to all Freemasons.

The Festive Board offers every member a unique opportunity to broaden and cement friendships within the fraternity and for one Lodge to form bonds of friendship with another.

Visiting other Lodges

One of the great pleasures of Freemasonry is visiting other Lodges. Here you can observe the ceremony in a relaxed manner, broaden your Masonic knowledge and experience, and create and strengthen friendships with other brethren. Ideally your first visits should be in the company of an experienced brother who will remind you of the conventions.



Provincial Grand Lodge

A Masonic career is organised as a progression through a series of positions within the Lodge. It is intended that every Freemason who so desires should have the opportunity to become the Master of his Lodge.

About five or six years after passing through the Chair, worthy Past Masters may then be awarded Provincial honours. This takes the form of either an active or a "past" rank in Provincial Grand Lodge.

The Provincial Grand Lodge administers and regulates the fraternity in an area, often about the size and area of the old English and Welsh counties. It also manages local charitable funds which may be required for emergency relief.

Brethren who have received such an honour wear a dark blue (known as garter blue) apron and collar. Each of them is an achiever who has worked tirelessly over many years for the good of their own Lodge, Freemasonry in general and in various other ways for the benefit of the community in which we live.



You should learn to distinguish between Provincial regalia and Grand regalia, and between dress (formal) and undress designs. Provincial dress regalia comprises a collar and apron, both with gold edgings. The Provincial undress apron does not have the gold edging and fringe and is slightly less ornate. The badge on the apron identifies the Office held and the Province or District which awarded it. It is not unusual for a Mason to hold Provincial Grand rank in more than one Province.



An active rank relates to a specific task such as Provincial Junior Grand Deacon which is abbreviated to PrJGD. There are, however, only about 15 active duties, so many Masters who passed through the Chair six years ago will be awarded a "Past" rank, such as Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon - PPrJGD.

You will occasionally see red regalia. This is reserved for Provincial Grand Stewards.



United Grand Lodge of England

All the Provincial Grand Lodges are governed by the United Grand Lodge of England. This administers the whole of England and Wales and many Districts overseas.

Grand Lodge Officers are appointed from among the more senior Brethren within each Province and the appointment is based on their knowledge and great experience of Craft Masonry. Their regalia is more elaborate and splendid than Provincial regalia, but is still of the same dark blue colour. The collar can be distinguished from the Provincial Grand collar since it has ornate gold work. The undress apron is similar to the Provincial apron except that the white area is smaller. Grand aprons are also slightly bigger than their Provincial counterparts. There are also red aprons for Grand Stewards.



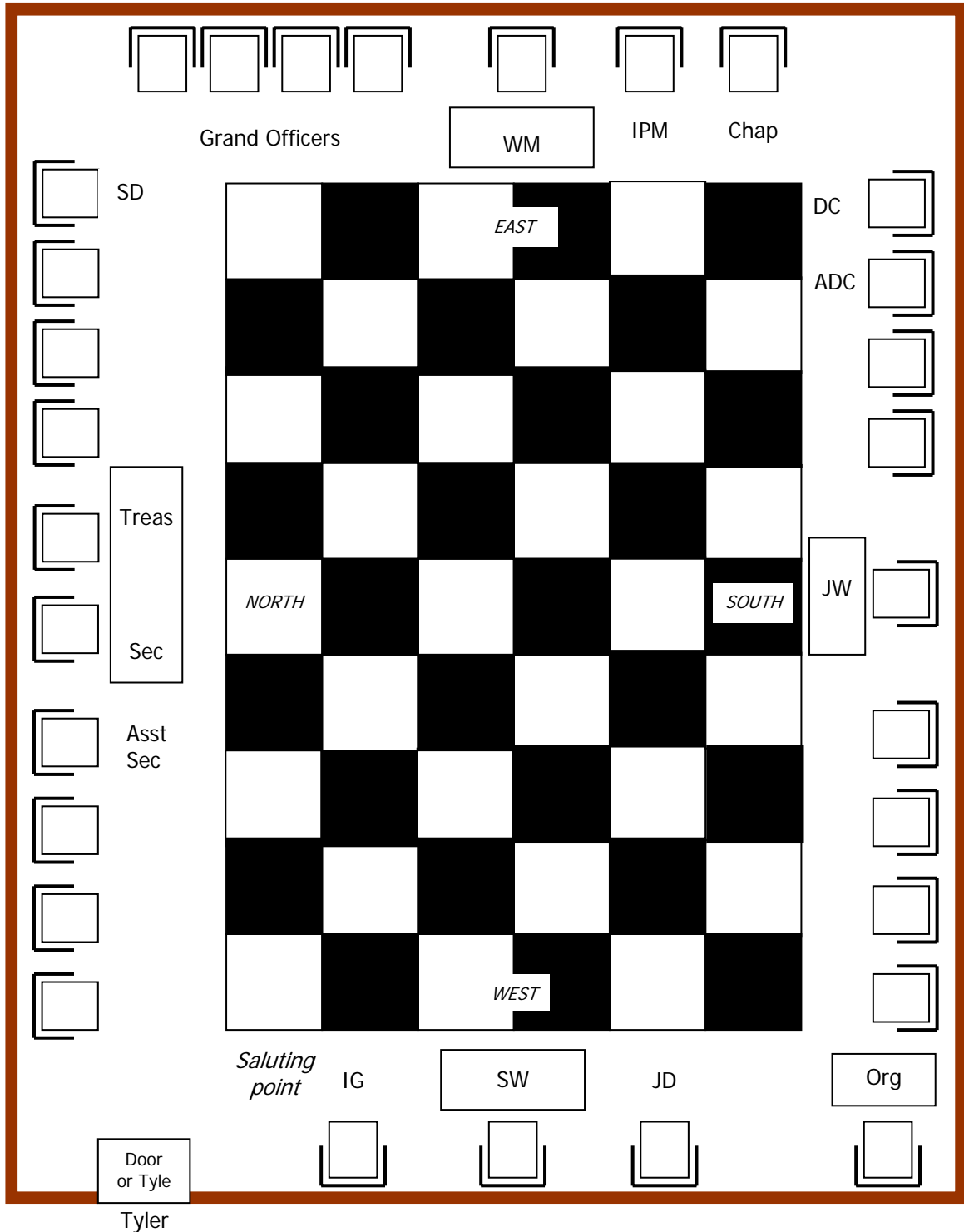
Of course, a Worshipful Brother who has not attained Provincial or Grand Rank is not in any way regarded as a lesser Mason. Often demanding personal and professional commitments will prevent many from fulfilling the level of commitment required for the position.



It is also important to remember that we are all Brothers, and we are all members of Grand Lodge (but not necessarily *Officers* of Grand Lodge) and that everyone's opinion is valued. We all have access to high ranking Masons through the proper channels. It is also worth remembering that since there are only three Degrees in Craft Freemasonry the Grand Master is also a Master Mason.

Typical Lodge layout

This page shows the layout of a typical Lodge in the Province of East Lancashire and elsewhere within UGLE.



The Entered Apprentice Freemason

As an Entered Apprentice Freemason (EA) the brother on the very first step of the ladder is the most valuable asset the fraternity possesses. The future of Freemasonry will depend entirely upon your happiness, satisfaction and dedication to the principles and practices of Freemasonry in general, and your devotion to your own Lodge in particular. Every Freemason regardless of his rank or standing earnestly desires you to have a Masonic career filled with pleasure and satisfaction for yourself and usefulness to the organisation generally.



Your apron will be of pure white lambskin with no markings.

At the end of your First Degree ceremony, or Initiation, you will be handed three documents. The first one is the Book of Constitutions which are the rules governing all UGLE Freemasonry. There will be no subject you might have a question about that is not covered in the book. Take time to become familiar with it for it will guide your Masonic career. The second document is the By-laws of your Lodge. You should memorise them so that you do not let yourself or your Lodge down through ignorance of the way that your Lodge governs itself. The third document is a little blue booklet entitled Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft which gives a wealth of information in a simple form.

As an Entered Apprentice, your principle objective will be to gain a basic understanding of the moral teachings of the First Degree of Freemasonry and the progressive nature and structure of the organisation itself. This is best achieved by regular attendance at your Lodge, and to any rehearsals which may be of benefit to your Masonic education.

Your first task will be to learn the answers to the questions on the card handed to you after your First Degree Ceremony. These are questions that you will be asked at your Second Degree ceremony. You owe it to your proposer, seconder and to your Lodge to do the best you can in learning these. There will be a rehearsal and before that your proposer or others will help you learn the dialogue.

On the night of your Second Degree the Deacon will be at your side ready to give you a prompt should you need it, so you should be quite relaxed and enjoy the challenge.

Don't be hesitant about asking questions on any aspect of Freemasonry. Your proposer, seconder, the Lodge Mentor and other brethren will delight in giving you a detailed explanation. On those occasions when it is considered your education would best be served by waiting for the answer to be given at a later date, they will tell you so and you should respect their judgment.

The Entered Apprentice Freemason *(continued)*

If there is an opportunity to visit a Lodge that is working a First Degree Ceremony this will be a most enlightening experience. You can expect an enthusiastic welcome in both the Lodge room and at the Festive Board.

In some Lodges a new Brother is called upon to assist the Stewards at the Festive Board. This should never be considered a menial task; it is a useful preparation for your own future elevation to the Steward's role and a constructive way of getting to know the members of your own Lodge and the visitors.

In the years ahead you will look back on your time as an Entered Apprentice with great affection. You will form a very special bond of friendship with those brethren who also took their first step in Freemasonry at about the same time as you. Often these friendships will endure and blossom throughout your Masonic career. It is not uncommon for such brethren to travel literally from the opposite sides of the country to share in a special Masonic occasion with a much loved friend and brother

Finally, it is important to remember that as an Entered Apprentice you are as much a Freemason as any other brother and the non Masonic world will judge you as such. The respected name, high reputation and expectations of Freemasonry are as much in your hands as they are with our most senior Brethren. You are a Freemason inside the Lodge and out and should always conduct yourself as such.

The Fellow Craft Freemason

As a Fellow Craft Freemason (FC) you have taken your next important step towards the Degree of Master Mason. Your Masonic apron now displays two blue rosettes to signify your elevation in rank and denotes that you are midway in your primary Masonic education.



Your new duty is to study the questions on the card in readiness for your elevation to the Degree of a Master Mason. Once again you can depend on your Lodge Mentor, proposer or seconder for all the help and support you will need in learning these answers. As in the former Degree the Deacon will be at your side to prompt you during the actual ceremony should you require him to do so.

Your duties to the Lodge in particular and to Freemasonry in general are much the same as that of the Entered Apprentice but your knowledge has now increased and your understanding of the principles of the organisation have broadened. You should now be in a position to use this knowledge to prepare yourself for your next step in your Masonic career and so increase your enjoyment of the meetings that lie ahead of you.

You are also in a position to encourage the Entered Apprentices that follow you by providing an example of dignified conduct and an appropriate bearing within the Lodge rooms and at the Festive Board.

Your Masonic education will be greatly advanced by witnessing a Second Degree ceremony as an interested observer and arrangements will be made for you to attend a similar ceremony as soon as possible.

The Master Mason

When you have been raised to the “sublime” Degree of a Master Mason your primary education in Freemasonry is complete. Your apron now displays your rank and your understanding of Masonic principles. Regardless of whether your apron is new or inherited it should be treated with respect, maintained with care and repaired as required. Your apron is your badge and it should be accordingly worn with great pride. It is worth noting that some Master Masons have great pride in wearing their father’s, or even grandfather’s, apron.



Another important milestone is being presented with your Grand Lodge Certificate (GLCert) which will be issued by UGLE following your raising to the Degree of a Master Mason. Although it is a large and formal document it also acts as a sort of passport to Lodges where you are not known, although they may test you in other ways to establish your *bona fides*.



You are now encouraged to visit other Lodges to further polish and embellish your Masonic education and to broaden your circle of Masonic friendships.

It is good to stay after the meeting and dine, as this enables you to meet people and get to know much more about our fraternity. Sometimes you will be invited as a guest and your meal paid for by your host. But there is a useful convention of saying “I wish to dine under Rule 3”. This is a code saying, “I’m pleased to accept your invitation to visit the Lodge but I should like to pay for my own meal”. The alternative is, of course, that you can reciprocate by inviting your host back to your Lodge and paying his dining charges. This has the benefit of ensuring your Lodge has visitors, which is very important.

At this stage you should be giving thought to your first step on the ladder. For many, this is the role of Steward and if you have been assisting the Stewards to perform their duties whilst you were an Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft you will already be well acquainted with the duties of this essential function. If it has been indicated that you may be offered another position and you have decided to accept, it would be prudent to consult the Lodge Mentor, or your proposer or seconder to discuss the ritual, so that you can prepare yourself for your new duties. Once again, this is not a step you will be required to take unaided.

Furthermore, as a Master Mason you are now in a position to assist the new Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts and encourage them by your example. Your input into issues of Lodge management and social activities will be greatly appreciated. Your individual talents are needed by your Lodge and your brethren will be delighted to see you put them to good use.

For example if you are a pianist or have any experience of playing a keyboard, it would help enormously if you would bring your talents to the notice of other Lodge organists. They would help you find how to accompany our Ceremonies with dignity and solemnity

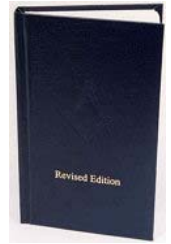
The Master Mason *(continued)*

If you are of a clerical, administrative, financial or IT bent you could assist the Secretary, Treasurer or Charity Steward. This opens up the possibility of learning about the administration of the Lodge and the interaction with PGL, UGLE and the Charities, which in turn could direct your course in the future.

Your progress in Freemasonry should proceed at your own pace. Your circumstances in your family life and your career may dictate your decision to advance or not. As a Freemason your first duties are to your family and your career and you are the best qualified to judge if you are ready to take on the responsibilities of advancement. Although your brethren are keen to see you progress, they will fully understand if your commitments preclude you from doing so. This applies equally to any ritual work that you may be asked to learn. This opportunity is a valuable preparation for your future advancement and you are always advised to avail yourself of it but this must be tempered with the responsibilities of your domestic and professional lives.

Memorising Ritual

You may be worried about having to commit ritual to memory. You should remember that all Freemasons started as you did, knowing nothing. They were not experts at memorising ritual, but by gradual and small steps, you will be able to succeed, and it is very good for the mind (as well as for our fraternity) for you to very gradually develop this skill. There are countless examples of new Freemasons being completely tongue-tied and unable to memorise anything only to become great ritualists through gaining the confidence that the Lodge and your brethren can inspire.



Many Lodges encourage Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts to learn parts of the ritual relevant to their Degree. This enables them to start with small, easily-learnt passages and even take an active part in Lodge ceremonies.

When you have passed the Third Degree you will be entitled to purchase a Ritual book which includes our ritual and ceremonies. Some Proposers, Seconders and even Lodges of Instruction make a gift of a Ritual book to the newly-made Master Mason.

The Lodge of Instruction is very important to new Freemasons. Your Lodge may allow you to participate as soon as you are an Entered Apprentice although you will be restricted to practising ceremonies relevant to your Degree. Lodge of Instruction is normally held weekly or fortnightly and casual dress is the norm. Normally two or three senior members of the Lodge dedicate their time to running Lodges of Instruction and it is worth remembering that they are giving up their time to assist you. It should be a casual interactive atmosphere where they guide and teach, and you learn. You are there as a student and so you are not expected to be word-perfect or know it all. However you will be surprised how soon you have parts of the ritual on the tip of your tongue because you have heard and practised them so regularly.

Take particular note of the layout of the Lodge, floorwork, position and movements of Officers and various signs etc. Learning is not restricted to ritual; it includes actions and movements at relevant times in ceremonies, somewhat like short plays.

The Stewards

The duties of the Steward are much more than simply serving the drinks at the Festive Board. A good Steward will accept his role as an important contribution to the Lodge and regard himself as being in the front-line of public relations with both the Lodge members and the visitors. This requires a cheerful disposition and a friendly and happy outlook towards the allotted tasks and to the guests and brethren at the Festive Board.



As an important contributor to the Lodge's functioning there may also be opportunities to assist with ceremonial duties in the Lodge room with the delivery of charges from the ritual and passages called Working Tools (WTs), one for each Degree. This is an ideal preparation for those future offices which will require a more active role in the ceremonial work.

The Inner Guard and Tyler

Inner Guard is normally the first Office that a Master Mason holds in the Lodge, following on from Steward, which is not officially an office.

The Inner Guard is the communication link between the Junior Warden and the Tyler. He relays reports from the Tyler to the Junior Warden and instructions from the Junior Warden to the Tyler. In other words, from inside the Lodge room to outside, and vice versa.



Part of the system of communication between Inner Guard and Tyler is our system of knocks which allows the Inner Guard to convey to the Tyler in which Degree the Lodge is working without opening the door. In turn the Tyler announces the presence of members, visitors, candidates or even intruders also without opening the door, by signalling his intention to make a report through the appropriate knock.

The Inner Guard is also the second line of defence against errors in the preparation of Candidates and is well placed to see that the visiting brethren are correctly attired when entering the Lodge.

A simple fact often overlooked is that the Inner Guard is responsible for opening the door to the Lodge room but it is the Tyler who is responsible for closing it.

The Office of Inner Guard is quite an active one and does require concentration, particularly at the point of admission of Candidates. It is important to be fully competent in the short sections of ritual words attached to the position. The first contact the Candidate has as he enters the Lodge room is with the Inner Guard and as we are all very well aware, first impressions are very important.

As with all Lodge Officers it is incumbent on the individual Officer to become proficient in the ceremony of opening and closing the Lodge in the various Degrees and of course, to be regular and punctual at attendances to meetings and rehearsals.

The Deacons

The Office of Senior Deacon is a very active and important one. The Senior Deacon is the messenger and facilitator of the Worshipful Master. Together with the Junior Deacon the Senior Deacon carries the responsibility of the smooth and efficient operation of our ceremonies.

The Deacons' wands are a symbol of their authority and allow them to move about the Lodge rooms without giving the usual salutes. The wands should never be used as either a pointer or as a means of support and should always be carried with the dove's beak pointing forward. The dove is the universal emblem of peace and accordingly the Deacons are also the appointed peace keepers of the Lodge and should act as such in the unlikely event that it becomes necessary.



In addition to the recitation of significant portions of the ritual it is also important that the Senior Deacon is familiar with the movements required in each of the three Degrees.

The Candidate will require firm and confident direction to help him feel at ease throughout the ceremony and the Deacon should always be encouraging and supportive. The Deacon is the closest to the Candidate throughout the ceremony and therefore he is in the best position to assist him in his steps, grips and salutes. If the candidate is unsure or is obviously incorrect, the Deacon should correct the mistake on the spot in a friendly and unobtrusive manner. It is the responsibility of the Deacons to prompt where necessary the Candidate's answers to his test questions. Deacons should make sure they know these answers prior to each Degree rehearsal.

The Deacons also assist in ballots with the distribution and collection of ballot materials and with the distribution of any written reports that may be required to be circulated among the brethren.

The Deacons also have the duty of opening and closing the Tracing Boards (TBs) and presenting the Minutes to the Worshipful Master for signing.

As already stated, the Office of Deacon is critical to the ceremony and requires a special commitment to attend meetings and rehearsals regularly and punctually. The appointment to the Office of Deacon is a tangible demonstration of the confidence the Lodge has in your competence and devotion to both the Lodge in particular and to Freemasonry in general

The Junior Warden

The position of Junior Warden is a very significant step on the ladder of Freemasonry. You now become a principal Officer of the Lodge and your responsibilities are of such high importance that your brethren will now depend upon your skills and application for the successful fulfilment of your duties.

It is the Junior Warden's responsibility to ensure that only those who are properly qualified to witness the ceremony about to be performed are admitted to the Lodge room. Although the Tyler and the Inner guard are also charged with this responsibility they are under the direction of the Junior Warden and it is he who must be most alert.

The Junior Warden and Senior Warden and the Worshipful Master are required to represent the Lodge at Provincial Grand Lodge communications (meetings) and other official functions. They must be regular and punctual in their attendance at all meetings and rehearsals.

It should never be forgotten (but often is) that the Junior Warden is in control when the Lodge is closed. Therefore he is responsible for arranging the Lodge Festive Board although he may delegate this to the senior Steward. Part of the ritual describes the Junior Warden as "the ostensible Steward of the Lodge".

In many Lodges, social functions including Lodge Ladies' Night etc are also the responsibility of the Junior Warden but in Internet Lodge the Worshipful Master does this. Often there is a committee in place to assist in the organisation of such events; alternatively the Junior Warden, or Worshipful Master as appropriate, may appoint someone. The important point is that you fully understand that the ultimate responsibility for these functions rests entirely with the Office of Junior Warden.

During the years as Junior and then Senior Warden you are expected to visit other Lodges to ensure your Lodge is properly represented in the Province. This builds a bond between you and other Wardens, so that when you reach the Chair you can support each others' Lodges. Again this is impractical in Internet Lodge.



The Senior Warden

The Senior Warden carries the responsibility of supporting the Master in his duties in both the ceremonial and administrative contexts. Together with the Master, Immediate Past Master and Junior Warden, the Senior Warden should be active in all the management decisions and gain a comprehensive understanding of the customs and practices peculiar to the day-to-day running of the Lodge. Each Lodge differs a little, and these local landmarks should be preserved.



With this in mind it is important that the incumbent gives careful consideration to his year as Senior Warden in preparation for taking the Chair the following year. He will need to appoint a team of Officers for, and must ensure a smooth transition to, the next Masonic year.

The Past Masters of the Lodge will have a useful contribution to make with the selection of the future Officers of the Lodge and it is wise to seek and consider their advice.

It is also necessary to plan a programme of work for the ensuing year and to consider extra activities, maybe a Lodge open night, together with other strategies to attract additional membership into the Lodge. It is also important not to overlook any additional help the Lodge may need with the Installation ceremony, either from Past Masters of the Lodge or even from members of other Lodges which a special relationship with your Lodge.

The Worshipful Master

The offices or positions you occupy prior to the position of Master are intended to prepare and educate you for this high honour, so it usually takes 7 – 10 years to progress to the Chair. It is at this point your title changes from Brother (Bro.) to Worshipful Brother (W.Bro.) and the rosettes on your apron are exchanged for the inverted "T" known as the silver Tau, a symbol of wisdom. These are sometimes referred to as the Levels. This is the highest honour the Lodge can bestow upon a member.



Although the Office of Worshipful Master is supported by the Immediate Past Master, the Wardens, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Lodge Past Masters, the full responsibility for the efficient and regular operation of the Lodge rests squarely on the Master's shoulders.

On all occasions the Master must lead his brethren by his own example. This rule applies to personal conduct inside and outside of the Lodge rooms; diligence in the performance of ceremonial duties; a strict attention to Lodge management issues; cementing the particular customs of the Lodge; and the Masonic education and development of the brethren. A totally impartial attitude is essential in dealing with every brother's concerns and opinions regardless of their Masonic status.

The Master should also be intimately involved in the general welfare of his brethren and their families. He should work closely with the Lodge Almoner to ensure no brother is neglected in a time of need.

It is the Master's duty to encourage the brethren to broaden their Masonic knowledge. He should also encourage the brethren's attendance at Provincial Grand Lodge and to cement relationships with other Lodges of the area through visits. It is wise to programme any formal visits well in advance to allow as many of the brethren as possible the opportunity of supporting the Master in this pursuit. Whilst this is an important duty it must always be tempered by the demands of the family and professional life of the Master and his brethren. To this end no brother should ever be pressured to make visits at the expense of his domestic or professional obligations.



There is no doubt that the Office of Master is a demanding one and in a hectic schedule it is possible to lose sight of the necessity to bear in mind the final duty of installing your successor into the chair of King Solomon.

The Office of Master is also the most rewarding; it is perhaps this period of the Masonic career, more than any other, in which he will form the greatest number of strong Masonic friendships. It is a time of great joy and personal satisfaction and should ever be remembered as such.

Other offices

After passing through the Chair there are various offices to be fulfilled, such as Director of Ceremonies and Charity Steward described above. A list of Lodge offices is also at the end of the document.

The Chaplain

The importance of the Chaplain's Office is indicated by his position in the Lodge room, close to the Master. His primary responsibility is to offer the prayers as required in all the opening and closing ceremonies and during each of the three Degrees. It is preferred that the Lodge Chaplain commits these prayers to memory and attains a level of proficiency that avoids the necessity for prompting.



If there is a Clergyman in the Lodge, he is likely to be appointed Chaplain, even if he is new to the Craft. Otherwise, the position is usually held by a senior past Master.

In addition it is the duty of the Chaplain to offer Grace at the Festive Board and prior to dining at all social functions.

Almoner

The Almoner's task is to keep in touch with those who do not attend, to ascertain if they are unwell or have some other problem. He communicates to the Master any help that could be needed by a Brother, and should report in open Lodge the progress of elderly and sick Brethren and widows. If he is entrusted with confidential information by a Brother in distress, he can apply directly to the Provincial Grand Almoner (PGAlm) for assistance, in order to maintain confidentiality.



Other Orders

Finally, it is inevitable that at some stage later in your career as a Master Mason you will be invited to join one or more of the many other "Orders" of Freemasonry. Again this is purely your own decision; many Freemasons derive immense pleasure and satisfaction from their membership of several other Orders whilst many are content to devote their efforts to Craft Freemasonry or "the blue" as it is often called outside UGLE jurisdiction.

UGLE recommends that Master Masons join Chapter, or the Holy Royal Arch to give it its correct title. Most Craft Lodges have a Chapter attached or have a relationship with a Chapter. Holy Royal Arch is the only other part of English Freemasonry that is *officially* recognised by United Grand Lodge of England and is governed by the Supreme Grand Chapter of England. Nevertheless there are many other Orders which all lead on from Craft and Royal Arch Freemasonry and most Freemasons are members of one or more other Orders.



All other Orders are subordinate to, and require membership of, Craft Freemasonry and the truth is that there is no Degree "higher" than that which you have currently obtained. The term "higher Degree" is derived only from the qualifications required for admission and not the Masonic status they bestow.

Every Lodge normally has a representative of one or more of the other Orders, or one or more of the members are also members of other Orders, and more information is normally contained in the Provincial Directory. If you wish to explore this, please enquire among the senior Past Masters and they will direct you to be best source of information.

Some useful abbreviations and links

1°	First Degree	
2°	Second Degree	
3°	Third Degree	
BoC	Book of Constitutions	
EA	Entered Apprentice	
FC	Fellow Craft	
FMH	Freemasons' Hall	www.ugle.org.uk
	<i>normally understood as Freemasons' Hall in London, but East Lancashire Province's headquarters in Manchester are also known as Freemasons' Hall</i>	
GC	Grand Charity	www.grandcharity.org
GLCert	Grand Lodge Certificate	
GM	Grand Master	
QQS	Great Queen Street	www.ugle.org.uk
	<i>the address in London of Freemasons' Hall</i>	
MM	Master Mason	
MSF	Masonic Samaritan Fund	www.nmsf.org
PGL	Provincial Grand Lodge	www.pglel.co.uk
PGM	Provincial Grand Master	
PM	Past Master	
RA	Holy Royal Arch	www.grandchapter.org.uk
RMBI	Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution	www.rmbi.org.uk
RMTGB	Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys	www.rmtgb.org
S&C	Square and Compasses	
SGC	Supreme Grand Chapter	www.grandchapter.org.uk
UGLE	United Grand Lodge of England	www.ugle.org.uk

Precedence of offices and roles within a Lodge

WM	Worshipful Master
IPM	Immediate Past Master
ME	Master Elect, normally the SW
SW	Senior Warden
JW	Junior Warden
Chap	Chaplain
Treas	Treasurer
Sec	Secretary
DC	Director of Ceremonies
Alm	Almoner
ChStwd	Charity Steward
SD	Senior Deacon
JD	Junior Deacon
ADC	Assistant Director of Ceremonies
Org	Organist
AsstSec	Assistant Secretary
IG	Inner Guard
Tyl	Tyler
Stwd	Steward

remember that this is not an Office