

INFORMATION FOR THE  
GUIDANCE OF  
MEMBERS OF THE CRAFT



FREEMASONS' HALL  
GREAT QUEEN STREET  
LONDON, WC2B 5AZ

2024



## **INFORMATION FOR THE GUIDANCE OF MEMBERS OF THE CRAFT**

In September 1974 the Board reported that it had reason to believe that some confusion existed in Lodges over the distribution of the booklet *Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft*. The Report continued:

“The Board feels strongly that every member of the Craft should possess a copy of this booklet and has therefore reviewed its earlier recommendations in order to achieve this result. The Board now recommends that each newly made Mason should be given a copy of the booklet at the same time as he is presented with the Book of Constitutions and the By-Laws of his Lodge during the initiation ceremony. In addition the Board reiterates its view that a copy should be presented to each newly installed Master.”

All succeeding editions of the booklet have included the above extract inside the front cover, together with a statement that it was adopted, and thereby became an edict binding on the Craft.

It appears to the Board that the confusion still exists and the Board has therefore no hesitation in reaffirming its recommendation that each newly made Mason and each newly installed Master should be given a copy of the booklet at the same time as he is presented with the Book of Constitutions and the By-Laws of his Lodge during the ceremony of initiation and the ceremony of installation.

The above extract from the report of the Board of General Purposes to Grand Lodge was adopted in June 2007 and thereby becomes an edict binding on the Craft.

Freemasons' Hall  
London  
September 2024

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# AIMS AND RELATIONSHIPS OF THE CRAFT

*Accepted by Grand Lodge, 7 September 1949*

In August 1938, the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, and Scotland each agreed upon and issued a statement identical in terms except that the name of the issuing Grand Lodge appeared throughout. This statement, which was entitled 'Aims and Relationships of the Craft', was in the following terms:

1. From time to time the United Grand Lodge of England has deemed it desirable to set forth in precise form the aims of Freemasonry as consistently practised under its Jurisdiction since it came into being as an organised body in 1717, and also to define the principles governing its relations with those other Grand Lodges with which it is in fraternal accord.
2. In view of representations which have been received, and of statements recently issued which have distorted or obscured the true objects of Freemasonry, it is once again considered necessary to emphasise certain fundamental principles of the Order.
3. The first condition of admission into, and membership of, the Order is a belief in the Supreme Being. This is essential and admits of no compromise.
4. The Bible, referred to by Freemasons as the Volume of the Sacred Law, is always open in the Lodges. Every Candidate is required to take his Obligation on that book or on the Volume which is held by his particular creed to impart sanctity to an oath or promise taken upon it.
5. Everyone who enters Freemasonry is, at the outset, strictly forbidden to countenance any act which may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society; he must pay due obedience to the law of any state in which he resides or which may afford him protection, and he must never be remiss in the allegiance due to the Sovereign of his native land.
6. While English Freemasonry thus inculcates in each of its members the duties of loyalty and citizenship, it reserves to the individual the right to hold his own opinion with regard to public affairs. But neither in any Lodge, nor at any time in his capacity as a Freemason, is he permitted to discuss or to advance his views on theological or political questions.
7. The Grand Lodge has always consistently refused to express any opinion on questions of foreign or domestic state policy either at home or abroad, and it will not allow its name to be associated with any action, however humanitarian it may appear to be, which infringes its unalterable policy of standing aloof from every question affecting the relations between one government and another, or between political parties, or questions as to rival theories of government.
8. The Grand Lodge is aware that there do exist Bodies, styling themselves Freemasons, which do not adhere to these principles, and while that attitude exists the Grand Lodge of England refuses absolutely to have any relations with such Bodies, or to regard them as Freemasons.

*continued*

9. The Grand Lodge of England is a Sovereign and independent Body practising Freemasonry only within the three Degrees and only within the limits defined in its Constitution as 'pure Antient Masonry'. It does not recognize or admit the existence of any superior Masonic authority however styled.

10. On more than one occasion the Grand Lodge has refused, and will continue to refuse, to participate in Conferences with so-called International Associations claiming to represent Freemasonry, which admit to membership Bodies failing to conform strictly to the principles upon which the Grand Lodge of England is founded. The Grand Lodge does not admit any such claim, nor can its views be represented by any such Association.

11. There is no secret with regard to any of the basic principles of Freemasonry, some of which have been stated above. The Grand Lodge will always consider the recognition of those Grand Lodges which profess and practise, and can show that they have consistently professed and practised, those established and unaltered principles, but in no circumstances will it enter into discussion with a view to any new or varied interpretation of them. They must be accepted and practised wholeheartedly and in their entirety by those who desire to be recognised as Freemasons by the United Grand Lodge of England.

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The Grand Lodge of England has been asked if it still stands by this declaration, particularly in regard to paragraph 7. The Grand Lodge of England replied that it stood by every word of the declaration, and has since asked for the opinion of the Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland. A conference has been held between the three Grand Lodges, and all unhesitatingly reaffirm the statement that was pronounced in 1938: nothing in present-day affairs has been found that could cause them to recede from that attitude.

If Freemasonry once deviated from its course by expressing an opinion on political or theological questions, it would be called upon not only publicly to approve or denounce any movement which might arise in the future, but would sow the seeds of discord among its own members.

The three Grand Lodges are convinced that it is only by this rigid adherence to this policy that Freemasonry has survived the constantly changing doctrines of the outside world, and are compelled to place on record their complete disapproval of any action which may tend to permit the slightest departure from the basic principles of Freemasonry. They are strongly of opinion that if any of the three Grand Lodges does so, it cannot maintain a claim to be following the Antient Landmarks of the Order, and must ultimately face disintegration.

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR GRAND LODGE RECOGNITION**

*Accepted by Grand Lodge, 4 September 1929*

The M.W. The Grand Master having expressed a desire that the Board would draw up a statement of the Basic Principles on which this Grand Lodge could be invited to recognise any Grand Lodge applying for recognition by the English Jurisdiction, the Board of General Purposes has gladly complied. The result, as follows, has been approved by the Grand Master, and it will form the basis of a questionnaire to be forwarded in future to each Jurisdiction requesting English recognition. The Board desires that not only such bodies but the Brethren generally throughout the Grand Master's Jurisdiction shall be fully informed as to those Basic Principles of Freemasonry for which the Grand Lodge of England has stood throughout its history.

1. Regularity of origin; i.e. each Grand Lodge shall have been established lawfully by a duly recognised Grand Lodge or by three or more regularly constituted Lodges.
2. That a belief in the G.A.O.T.U. and His revealed will shall be an essential qualification for membership.
3. That all Initiates shall take their Obligation on or in full view of the open Volume of the Sacred Law, by which is meant the revelation from above which is binding on the conscience of the particular individual who is being initiated.
4. That the membership of the Grand Lodge and individual Lodges shall be composed exclusively of those who were made Masons as men; and that each Grand Lodge shall have no Masonic association of any kind with bodies which make women Masons.\*
5. That the Grand Lodge shall have sovereign jurisdiction over the Lodges under its control; i.e. that it shall be a responsible, independent, self-governing organisation, with sole and undisputed authority over the Craft or Symbolic Degrees (Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason) within its Jurisdiction; and shall not in any way be subject to, or divide such authority with, a Supreme Council or other Power claiming any control or supervision over those degrees.
6. That the three Great Lights of Freemasonry (namely, the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square, and the Compasses) shall always be exhibited when the Grand Lodge or its subordinate Lodges are at work, the chief of these being the Volume of the Sacred Law.
7. That the discussion of religion and politics within the Lodge shall be strictly prohibited.
8. That the principles of the Antient Landmarks, customs, and usages of the Craft shall be strictly observed.

*\* Amended wording of paragraph 4 adopted 12 September 2018.*

# MUSEUM OF FREEMASONRY

(The Library and Museum Charitable Trust of the United Grand Lodge  
Registered Charity No: 1058497)

The Museum of Freemasonry at Freemasons' Hall is a nationally accredited museum with a designated outstanding collection and includes a library and archive. For three decades it has regularly presented temporary exhibitions on Masonic history and life to the public including the permanent exhibition 'Three Centuries of English Freemasonry'. The museum houses a fine collection of masonic objects, regalia, jewellery, furniture, glass and ceramics. The library enjoys an international reputation for its historically significant collection of books of Masonic interest, while the archive collections include resources, such as Lodge and Chapter records, correspondence, prints, photographs and films, created by UGLE and its predecessors and records collected by the Masonic charities on deposit.

The museum, library and archive provide a number of services and resources for exploring family history and subjects relating to Freemasonry. The museum is open to all, Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm. Admission is free. The library and archives are available to researchers, who pre-book a desk, on Wednesdays to Saturdays, also from 10 am to 5pm.

Freemasons' Hall is closed on Sundays and Public Holidays, and from 12 noon on Friday, 22 December 2023, until it re-opens on Tuesday, 2 January 2024.

Further information on Museum of Freemasonry: [museumfreemasonry.org.uk](http://museumfreemasonry.org.uk)

## **THE SHOP AT FREEMASONS' HALL**

The Shop at Freemasons' Hall is the first destination for all Masonic regalia, suits and accessories, jewellery, books, magazines and souvenirs. Located on the first floor it supports the museum through its profits and is open Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 5:30pm, and Saturdays 10am to 4pm.

Visit the Shop at Freemasons' Hall: [shopatfmh.com](http://shopatfmh.com)



## POINTS OF PROCEDURE

*Recommendations adopted by Grand Lodge, 1916–2021  
(see Rule 229 Book of Constitutions)*

### **ADVERTISING AND THE EXHIBITION OF MASONIC CERTIFICATES**

It should be understood by every Brother – and made clear at an early stage to every Candidate for Initiation – that membership of the Craft is not to be used as a means of promoting his personal or business advantage.

The word ‘Masonic’ or any symbol or words with a Masonic significance that is obvious to members of the Craft are not to be used in advertising or promotional material unless permission has first been obtained from the appropriate Masonic authorities. Applications should be sent to the Provincial (or District) Grand Secretary if such material is to appear in a single Province (or District) and to the Grand Secretary in all other cases, through Provincial (or District) Grand Secretaries if appropriate.

Similarly, the Board emphatically condemns the display of Masonic certificates, especially on business premises or in public places in such a way as to be likely to promote business, professional or personal advantage.

Any conduct which infringes the rulings set out above will be deemed un-Masonic and the Brother or Brethren concerned will be liable to disciplinary action.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes adopted 10 June 1981)

### **AFTER-PROCEEDINGS (SEE ALSO LODGE AFTER-PROCEEDINGS, P. 22; NON-MASONS AT AFTER-PROCEEDINGS, P. 29; PRECEDENCE OF TOASTS, P. 32)**

The practice by the Master of ‘taking wine’ at dinner becomes detrimental to congenial conversation unless kept to a minimum, and should be confined to Brethren in their Masonic status. The Board wishes to emphasise that Masonry can be brought into disrepute unless the Master ensures that after-proceedings are conducted with decorum. Challenging and cross toasting should not be permitted.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 6 June 1956)

### **APPROVAL OF DESIGNS**

The Board wishes to remind Brethren of the requirement in Rule 241, Book of Constitutions, that the designs of jewels must have been approved or allowed by the MW The Grand Master. By long-standing custom, and for similar reasons, approval is also required for any design used as the emblem of a Lodge, whether on summonses, Lodge stationery, or as a Lodge banner.

Notes for guidance on designs are available from the Grand Secretary’s office.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 March 1996)

### **ATTENDANCE AT LODGES OVERSEAS**

Brethren are reminded that they are permitted to visit Lodges overseas only if they come under a jurisdiction which is recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England.

A list of recognised Grand Lodges is published annually, but as the situation does change from time to time, Brethren should not attempt to make any Masonic contact overseas without having first checked (preferably in writing) with the Grand Secretary's Office via their Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Secretary, that there is recognised Freemasonry in the country concerned and, if so, whether there is any particular point which should be watched.

The Board recommends that the terms of this warning should be repeated:

- a. verbally in open Lodge whenever a Grand Lodge Certificate is presented,  
and
- b. in print once a year in a Lodge's summons.

Brethren should also be aware of the Masonic convention that communications between Grand Lodges be conducted by Grand Secretaries. They should therefore not attempt without permission to make direct contact with the Grand Secretary of another Constitution. This does not preclude direct contact on a purely personal level between individual Brethren under different Grand Lodges.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 September 2021)

### **ATTENDANCE AT LODGES UNDER THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION BY BRETHREN FROM OTHER GRAND LODGES**

The Board considers it appropriate to draw attention to Rule 125 (b), Book of Constitutions, and the list of Grand Lodges recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England, which is published in the Masonic Year Book, copies of which are sent to Secretaries of Lodges.

Only Brethren who are members of Lodges under recognised jurisdictions may visit English Lodges. They must produce a certificate (i.e. a Grand Lodge certificate or other documentary proof of Masonic identity provided by their Grand Lodge), should be prepared to acknowledge that a personal belief in T.G.A.O.T.U. is an essential Landmark in Freemasonry, and should be able to produce evidence of their good standing in their Lodges. It is the Master's responsibility to ensure that the requirements of Rule 125 (b) are met.

It is particularly noted that the hazard of admitting a member of an unrecognised constitution arises not only in connection with overseas visitors, or individuals resident in this country who belong to an unrecognised constitution overseas, but there are also Lodges of unrecognised constitutions meeting in England, and care must be taken that their members are not admitted to our meetings.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 September 2021)

## **AUDIT**

It has been brought to the Board's attention that both national and international professional accountancy bodies are seeking to place restrictions on their members carrying out any process described as an "audit" that does not conform to the exacting regulations that they lay down. Those regulations are in general intended to govern the audit of accounts far more complex than those of Masonic units, and impose a level of compliance and responsibility in excess of what is required for most Masonic accounts.

The Board is concerned that Brethren possessed of useful (even though not essential) skill and expertise will be discouraged or prevented from undertaking the audit of Lodge and other Masonic accounts as a consequence of what it considers to be no more than a matter of nomenclature.

It therefore trusts that the Grand Lodge will endorse its recommendation that whenever a Rule in the Book of Constitutions or a Lodge's, Province's or District's by-laws requires that accounts be audited such Rule will, in the case of an individual who is a professionally qualified accountant or auditor, be deemed to be complied with if he carries out an "examination" of those accounts and certifies that he has done so.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 June 2014)

## **BLACK TIES (BUT SEE ALSO THE ROYAL ARCH TIE, P. 37 AND STANDARD OF DRESS, P. 40)**

Brethren will have noticed that the instructions for dress at the Communications of Grand Lodge include the words 'all Brethren attending must wear plain black ties'. The Board wishes to stress that ties bearing an emblem, whether in the weave or as a coloured design, are not acceptable for wear in Grand Lodge.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 March 1983)

## **'BOARD', IMPROPER USE OF WORD**

Confusion has arisen because of the description 'Board of General Purposes' being sometimes applied to Masonic Committees not recognised by that name in the Book of Constitutions. The book limits the title to the Board of General Purposes directly responsible to Grand Lodge, and to those bodies chosen by District Grand Lodges, under Rule 81, these latter being specifically permitted to be termed 'Boards'. Every other such body, except the Board of Benevolence\* and the Board of Grand Stewards associated with Grand Lodge and the Board of Installed Masters in Private Lodges, is properly styled 'Committee'.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 1 March 1922)

\*Board of Benevolence dissolved and its functions taken over by Grand Charity, 1 January 1981 and by the Masonic Charitable Foundation, 1 April 2016.

### **BOARD OF INSTALLED MASTERS, ATTENDANCE AT**

The Board of General Purposes has had under consideration a report by the Grand Secretary on the subject of Installation Ceremonies performed in the private Lodges of Constitutions with which the United Grand Lodge of England is in amity: this report was compiled from answers to a questionnaire sent to all recognised Grand Lodges. It is clear from it that very wide variations of practice exist and that nothing comparable with what English Freemasons know as the 'Inner Working' is to be found in the majority of such ceremonies.

The Board feels that the fact of being installed as Master of a regular Lodge should be the paramount consideration and should outweigh variations of method of installation, being encouraged in this belief by the recollection that the obligation of secrecy taken in the first degree covers equally all secrets subsequently communicated.

It therefore suggests to the Grand Lodge that any member in good standing of a recognised Constitution (a full list of all such bodies being given in the current Masonic Year Book) who can satisfactorily prove that he is or has been Master of a Lodge should be permitted to attend the Inner Working of the Installation Ceremony. Where such proof is solely documentary it must include convincing evidence of identity, but lack of knowledge of such signs, tokens, and words as are communicated in Boards of Installed Masters of English Lodges should not debar an Installed Master from remaining present at a Board of Installed Masters. The Board believes that this procedure will be beneficial to good relations with senior members of Constitutions with which the United Grand Lodge of England is in amity, and recommends its acceptance by the Grand Lodge.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 March 1966)

### **BOARD OF INSTALLED MASTERS, DEFINITION OF**

The Board has been asked to define the scope and purpose of the Board of Installed Masters. After a close examination of the whole matter, and avoiding as is its practice giving any ruling as to details of ritual the Board wishes to make the following points:

- (i) No one who is not an Installed Master (with the exception of certain brethren who hold high rank in the Scandinavian system and about whose eligibility to attend any question should be addressed to the Grand Secretary) may take part in or be present at a Board of Installed Masters. It is not permissible for Master Masons, Fellow Crafts, or Entered Apprentices to be in the same room as the Board of Installed Masters even under the pretext that they are unable to see or hear what takes place.
- (ii) The Board of Installed Masters is opened out of the third degree after all brethren below the rank of Installed Master have retired from the Lodge Room. (There is no objection to the method employed in the Province of Bristol so long as (a) it is restricted to Lodges of that Province and (b) Installed Masters alone take part in the Bristol ceremony.)

- (iii) The Board of Installed Masters is employed solely for the purpose of installing the Master (and investing the Immediate Past Master, but it should be borne in mind that such investiture is only a formality since the Immediate Past Master operates by virtue of his position as such: if he is not present at the installation of his successor he cannot be invested on some later occasion but is nonetheless the Immediate Past Master).
- (iv) The Board of Installed Masters has no other function and cannot by any pretext be opened at any other time or occasion. Equally no Master can be regularly installed except in a Board of Installed Masters.
- (v) The quorum for a Board of Installed Masters is three, apart from the Master Elect and a brother acting as Tyler, who need not of course be an Installed Master.

Any idea that a Board of Installed Masters should or may be held prior to the day of installation or as part of any earlier ceremony on that day is quite erroneous, and where such practice exists it should cease.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 12 September 1973)

#### **BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS**

The Board notes that the full content of the Book of Constitutions, which has for many years been available for purchase by members of the public, will in the near future be posted on the Grand Lodge's website. It hopes that Lodge Secretaries and others who have need to refer from time to time to the contents of the Book will find it helpful to have available on-line an authoritative up-to-date version of the Rules in the Book of Constitutions and the Royal Arch Regulations. The Board considers that there is no objection to such Brethren periodically downloading the text of those Rules and Regulations, but recommends that an official bound version of the Book should continue to be presented to every initiate and every Brother joining from another Constitution.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 March 2005)

#### **BUSINESS CONDUCTED WITH NON-MASONS PRESENT**

The practice of admitting ladies and other non-Masons to a Lodge room after the Lodge has been closed or called off in order to receive a talk or presentation on Freemasonry is becoming increasingly common. The Grand Secretary and the Board receive enquiries from time to time as to whether it is permissible to conduct part of a Lodge's work in front of non-Masons. The Board has sought advice from the Grand Director of Ceremonies as to what constitutes Masonic business that may only be transacted while a Lodge is open and what business may be carried out in the presence of non-Masons, and after consideration hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse the following statement:

1. In a Private Lodge no non-Mason may be present while the Lodge is open. (See the last of the Antient Charges in the Summary submitted to by every Master before his Installation – “You promise that no Visitor shall be received into your Lodge without due examination, and producing proper Vouchers of his having been initiated in a regular Lodge.”)

2. So far as Grand Lodge, or a Provincial or District Grand Lodge, is concerned, precedents exist for the meeting being called on – so that Masonic business (of a purely administrative nature) could be carried out – while non-Masons are present, the most notable instance being at Earls Court in 1992. The Board recommends that such precedents should not be followed in future by Provincial or District Grand Lodges.

3. No part of the ceremonies of Initiation, Passing, Raising and Installation may be conducted with non-Masons present; those ceremonies, to be valid, must take place in open Lodge. This extends to those elements such as the Charge after Initiation, which some might argue are not strictly part of the ceremony. The Board notes that the text of that Charge is already in the public domain, and in particular is sometimes recited at ‘open days’, but draws a distinction between such events and a ‘live’ ceremony to which it is inappropriate to admit non-Masons.

4. The administrative business of a Lodge, besides being of a private nature, to be validly transacted must be conducted in open Lodge (i.e. without non-Masons present).

5. Apart from those items of Masonic ritual and administrative business referred to above, there is no compelling need to adopt a mysterious or secretive attitude towards other Masonic activities which can take place while a Lodge is called off or after it has been closed. For example the laying of Foundation Stones with Masonic ceremonial was once commonplace. Banner dedications afford another example where an impressive show of Masonic ceremonial (as opposed to ritual) can be given without in any way compromising Masonic principles. In such instances, an important test is whether the Lodge feels comfortable with such a display and, provided that the local Masonic authority has no objection either generally or in relation to a particular activity, the Board considers that Lodges should not be discouraged from (or, conversely, pressed into) admitting their ladies and friends on such occasions. No Masonic signs **whatever** may be given on such occasions, as the Lodge is not open.

6. The Board does not wish to discourage the admission of non-Masons to investitures, which do not of themselves involve anything that an outsider may not see and are, in any event, conducted by or on behalf of a recognised Masonic authority. It does, however, note that some Brethren may be reluctant to attend on such occasions to be invested because they do not feel comfortable at the presence of non-Masons.

7. Whilst there is nothing especially esoteric in the Masonic ceremonial which accompanies a Private Lodge’s Centenary or Bi-Centenary celebrations and the associated presentation of a Warrant, the Board recommends that as an official ceremony, the essential elements of which have been laid down by central Masonic authority, it must be conducted while the Lodge is open and without non-Masons present.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 December 2002)

#### **'CALLING OFF' DURING MASONIC CEREMONIES**

On several occasions the Board of General Purposes has expressed the opinion that Masonic ceremonies should be carried through without interruptions, and this opinion has been endorsed by the Grand Lodge.

As a result of representations which have been received, the Board of General Purposes has reconsidered the matter and it recommends that the Master of a Lodge should be permitted to make a short break in the proceedings at a suitable time during a meeting, provided that the Lodge is properly 'called off' and 'called on' again.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 March 1961)

#### **CANDIDATES FOR INITIATION FROM ABROAD**

Rule 158 sets out the procedure to be followed by Secretaries of Lodges regarding candidates for Initiation whose residence or place of business is in 'a different locality'. In the case of candidates whose residence or place of business is in a locality which is under the jurisdiction of another Grand Lodge, enquiry should be made of the Grand Secretary of this Grand Lodge, who will, if appropriate, pass the enquiry to the Grand Secretary of the foreign Grand Lodge. There are special provisions, contained in Rule 161, regarding candidates for Initiation whose place of residence is in any place where the Grand Lodge of Ireland or the Grand Lodge of Scotland has exclusive jurisdiction.

Attention is drawn to the provisions of sub-paragraphs (e) to (h) of Rule 163 regarding Joining Members from Lodges under another Grand Lodge

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 September 1982)

#### **CANDIDATES FOR INITIATION: RULES 159 AND 160 OF THE BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS**

The Board wishes to draw the particular attention of Lodges to Rules 159 and 160 of the Book of Constitutions which deal with Candidates for Initiation. Apart from exceptional circumstances, all proposals must be made and all ballots must be taken at Regular Meetings. A ballot can only be taken at an Emergency Meeting when conditions arise with respect to the Candidate which require the powers conferred by Rule 160 to be exercised. In such cases the procedure under the Rule must be strictly followed.

It is further to be noted that advantage must not be taken of the Rule for any purpose other than a real emergency affecting the Candidate.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 5 June 1935)

### **CIRCULATION OF LODGE MINUTES**

The Board is most anxious to encourage Lodges to save time at meetings by distributing the Minutes of the previous meeting to members with the summons. It notes, however, with concern that in some cases such Minutes contain far more detail, particularly in relation to the ceremonial work of the Lodge, than is either necessary or appropriate. The Board considers that the function of Minutes is to provide the formal record of the business transacted at each meeting of a Lodge, rather than a detailed description of every aspect of the ceremonies and administrative business. It also notes that such lengthy Minutes are a relatively recent development, in many cases linked with the increasing use of word processors. It accordingly suggests that Lodge Secretaries should restrict the Minutes, in so far as they relate to the ceremonies of the three degrees and the Installation of the new Master, to identifying the ceremony, the Candidate and the particular Brethren undertaking the work (if that is not immediately obvious from the offices such Brethren hold).

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 March 2005)

### **CONCORDAT WITH GRAND LODGES OF IRELAND AND SCOTLAND**

A Concordat was drawn up in 1905 between representatives of the three Grand Lodges, the English deputation being led by MW Bro the Earl Amherst, Pro Grand Master. It was adopted by the Grand Lodge and published in the Grand Lodge Proceedings for September, 1905.

Recent experience where new Grand Lodges have been formed out of Lodges drawn from the three Constitutions has shown that the present requirements of the Concordat in relation to recognition are unduly restrictive in today's conditions. Representatives of the three Grand Lodges, when they met in August 2005, agreed to the insertion of a phrase allowing for the relaxation of the strict requirements of the Concordat by agreement in individual cases.

The Board has decided to republish the Concordat in full, and has arranged that the new phrase shall be underlined.

“The three Grand Lodges agree that any member of the Order who may be suspended or expelled in one jurisdiction shall not, while so disqualified, be permitted to remain a member of or to visit or join any Lodge under the jurisdiction of the others: and each Grand Lodge shall cause notice of all decrees of suspension or expulsion to be sent to the other Grand Lodges. And in case of such decrees being made abroad, the District or Provincial Authorities acting, shall also notify the neighbouring District or Provincial Authorities of all three jurisdictions.

In each of the three jurisdictions, a duly installed Master under either of the other Constitutions shall, if not otherwise disqualified, be entitled to be present at a Board of Installed Masters, and to form one of the quorum; but not to preside therein or to instal a Master, unless requested to do so by the Board. Nor can a Visiting Master or Past Master of another Constitution preside in the Lodge he is visiting. In case there is not present a Master or a Past Master duly qualified under the home jurisdiction, then and then only the Officer in charge of the Lodge may request a Master or Past Master under one of the other two Constitutions to perform any ceremony which the Warden is not competent to perform. This agreement is not to interfere with the right of the Worshipful Master of a Lodge to invite a Member of the Lodge or a visiting Master or Past Master of any of the three Constitutions to perform any ceremony without assuming the Chair.



The question of recognising a new Grand Lodge in any Colony or other territory in which the three Grand Lodges have equal jurisdiction and have Warranted Lodges working therein, shall not be taken into consideration unless at least two-thirds of the Lodges under each jurisdiction or such other proportion as the three Grand Lodges shall agree in the light of local circumstances have signified their adhesion to such new body; and such recognition shall only be granted by agreement of the three Grand Lodges. After the recognition of such new Grand Lodge as a sovereign body, the respective authorities of the three Grand Lodges will surrender their rights to warrant new Lodges within the Jurisdiction of the new body, provided always that the rights of Lodges not adhering to the new body shall be fully safeguarded.”

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 December 2005)

#### **CONTINGENCIES AFFECTING THE MASTER OF A LODGE**

The Board understands that there is uncertainty on the part of some Brethren as to whether it is in the power of the Master of a Lodge to resign from his office. The Board reaffirms categorically the view taken in the past that the Master, having been installed until the next regular period of election within the Lodge and until a successor shall have been duly elected and installed in his stead, cannot resign. The only option available to him is to resign from the Lodge, thereby automatically terminating his Mastership. Moreover, if the Master dies or resigns from the Lodge, another Master cannot be elected to fill the vacancy that has arisen; the provisions of Rule 119 apply. The Senior Warden therefore summons the Lodge, but the business of the Lodge, while it is open, is conducted by the Past Master identified in accordance with Rule 119, subject to his power to delegate the duty to another Installed Master who is a member of the Lodge.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 June 2009)

#### **CORRESPONDENCE WITH OTHER GRAND LODGES AND THEIR MEMBERS**

It is an established Masonic convention that Masonic correspondence outside the Lodges and membership of the United Grand Lodge of England should be conducted through the offices of the respective Grand Secretaries. It appears from correspondence in the Grand Secretary’s office from his colleagues in other jurisdictions that this convention is being increasingly disregarded. The Board wishes to remind members of the Craft that all enquiries directed to other Grand Lodges should be sent to the Grand Secretary at Freemasons’ Hall, London. This applies equally whether the correspondence is conducted through the medium of the post or by electronic means such as e-mail and facsimile transmission.

Where in certain areas overseas there are, in addition to an English District Grand Lodge or a Group under a Grand Inspector, similar bodies under other jurisdictions no exception is taken to contact **on routine matters** through our District Grand Secretary or Grand Inspector.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 December 2004)

### **CUSTODY AND PRODUCTION OF LODGE WARRANTS**

It has come to the notice of the Board that Lodge meetings have taken place without the Warrant being present. The Master is responsible not only for its safe custody but also for its production at every meeting. Safe custody does not necessarily mean physical retention of the Warrant by the Master, and the Board is aware that other satisfactory arrangements are often made, but these do not absolve the Master of his ultimate responsibility for its safety and for its production whenever or wherever the Lodge meets.

The Board realizes that on rare occasions circumstances beyond the Master's control may make it impossible for him to attend a meeting: in such cases he must take steps as soon as possible to ensure that some other responsible Officer of the Lodge is in a position to produce the Warrant at the meeting. If these steps fail and the Warrant is not produced, the Lodge must not be opened nor should any item of business on the Agenda be dealt with: the circumstances giving rise to such a situation should be reported immediately to the proper Masonic authority by the Master.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 June 1962)

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A recent investigation by the Local Ombudsman suggests that some Brethren may not have fully understood the implications of what is said about declarations of interest in the Board's leaflet 'Freemasonry and Society', which was re-issued in a revised form and with Grand Lodge's approval in September 1988.

In local government, as in many walks of life, the pecuniary interests of those involved in making decisions must be disclosed. Other interests (which may include Freemasonry) may also be appropriate for disclosure. Such interests should be disclosed if they are likely to have a bearing on the matter under discussion or on relationships with any of the people concerned. The disclosure need not be specific (e.g. 'I declare an interest' would be enough). After disclosure of an interest, the standing orders or customs of the committee or council, etc., will govern further participation in making the decision concerned.

Brethren who may be involved in local government or where similar rules apply should consider the foregoing advice against the background of the leaflet 'Freemasonry and Society'. If difficulties arise, the Grand Secretary should be consulted (through the Provincial and District Grand Secretaries if appropriate).

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 December 1989)

### **DEMONSTRATIONS OF RITUAL**

The Board has reviewed the guidance on demonstrations of ritual approved by the Grand Lodge in June 2002 and has concluded that where a Lodge rehearses or demonstrates its normal ritual (e.g. because it has no candidate) there is no need for the Lodge to be called off to enable the demonstration or rehearsal to take place. It accordingly hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse the revised consolidated statement set out below.

1. The ritual of a recognised Grand Lodge which works in English may be demonstrated at a meeting of a Private Lodge provided that the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) only Master Masons are present at the demonstration;

(b) the Lodge has been closed, or is “called off” for the duration of the demonstration;  
and

(c) the Lodge room remains fully tyled throughout.

2. The ritual of any Grand Lodge which works in a language other than English may not be demonstrated in a Lodge under the English Jurisdiction, except with the express permission of the Board. Any such permission will only be given subject to the conditions set out above.

3. No demonstration of the ritual of another Grand Lodge may in any circumstances be given in a Lodge of Instruction.

4. Paragraphs 1 to 3 apply equally to reconstructions of historical forms of Craft ritual.

5. Brethren are reminded that arrangements for the demonstration of the ritual of another Grand Lodge should be made through the Grand Secretary’s Office. (See also the section headed “Correspondence with Other Grand Lodges and their Members” in the booklet “Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft”).

6. No Lodge of another Constitution may meet and confer a degree upon a “live” candidate (as opposed to demonstrating a conferral) in an English Constitution Lodge; nor may a dispensation be granted for an English Constitution Lodge to hold a meeting or confer a degree within the territory of another Grand Lodge.

7. Where a Lodge desires to rehearse or demonstrate its normal ritual at one of its meetings (e.g. because it has no candidate), there can be no objection to the presence of Entered Apprentices or Fellow Crafts who have already received the degree being demonstrated, and the Lodge need not be “called off”.

8. The Ceremony of the Consecration of a Lodge is of a special nature and may only be carried out by the Grand Master or by some other Grand Officer or Master or Past Master of a Lodge appointed to act for him (Rule 97, Book of Constitutions). It may not therefore be demonstrated either in whole or in part.

9. The extended Inner Working of the Board of Installed Masters, if worked in a Lodge is regulated by the following resolution passed by Grand Lodge on 1 December 1926:

“Grand Lodge takes note of the exceptional and traditional circumstances attaching in certain Lodges to the ceremonial Opening and Closing in extenso of a Board of Installed Masters. While it still deprecates the use of any signs, tokens, or words unknown to, or unrecognised by, the majority of English Installed Masters, it declares, in view of these circumstances, that, provided that there shall be incorporated in such ceremony a precise declaration by the Installing Master to the Master Elect that the signs, tokens, and words given in the course of the extended portion of the working are not essential to the Installation of a Master, and are not known to, or to be required from, Installed Masters generally, and that no further Degree in Masonry is being conferred, Lodges are permitted to perform the ceremony”

The Board considers that that resolution applies equally to any demonstration of the extended Inner Working.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 June 2004)

### **DESCRIPTION OF CANDIDATES FOR INITIATION OR JOINING**

Grand Lodge ruled in June 1955 that the description of the occupation or profession of a candidate for Initiation or Joining Membership must in every case be fully stated. Terms such as ‘Company Director’ or ‘Civil Servant’ are not sufficiently descriptive.

The Board now recommends that Masters should be instructed not to sign the certificate in the printed application form for membership unless they are satisfied that a candidate’s occupation is described in sufficient detail for the Brethren to have a clear understanding of his field of activity.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 June 1987)

### **ELECTIONS BY BALLOT**

The Board finds it necessary to emphasize that elections which are required to be by ballot must be carried out strictly according to constitutional procedure.

It is unconstitutional to announce, in connection with a ballot for an Officer of the Lodge, that blank papers will be treated as votes for any particular person, as this tends to stultify the secrecy of the ballot. All papers which are blank, or for any other reason uncertain, must be excluded from the count.

In the case of election of a Master, there is no objection to a statement being made that the Senior Warden (or any other qualified member) is willing to serve, if elected: and the same condition would apply to the election of the Treasurer. But the Lodge should also be reminded that every member is free to vote for any other qualified member if he so wishes.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 4 March 1959)

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION OF FORMAL DOCUMENTS (SEE ALSO RESIGNATIONS FROM PRIVATE LODGES UNDER RULE 183, P. 34)**

The Board has been asked whether it is permissible for a member of a Lodge to resign his membership under Rule 183 by e-mail, and in considering the question has concluded that it is appropriate to give guidance in addition on the electronic communication of other formal documents and to make the recommendations to the Grand Lodge set out below.

While it recognises the very considerable advantages of e-mail communication in terms of speed and convenience, the Board has significant concerns in relation to establishing the authenticity of communications made in electronic form. It therefore hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse its view that, except in the case of Lodge summonses (on which guidance has been given in the past – see *Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft* [p. 41]), whenever a Rule in the Book of Constitutions requires a written notice, request or document to be given by or to a specific individual or individuals that document must have been received in paper form and bear an original signature in order to be effective and to be acted upon. Accordingly a notice under Rule 106, a request under Rule 173, or a certificate under Rule 175, may not be sent by e-mail. These are, however, examples only and are not intended to restrict the general principle stated above.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 June 2009)

In June 2009 the Board recommended to the Grand Lodge that a resignation from a Lodge under Rule 183 might in the first instance be communicated by e-mail, but that the notification should, however, be ineffective until the Secretary received a paper notice bearing an original signature of the member. The written notice should then be deemed to have been received at the moment the Secretary received the e-mail message (but if the Secretary had not received the written confirmation before the next regular meeting of the Lodge, he must not report the resignation and the e-mail message would be void).

The amendments to the Book of Constitutions to pave the way for the introduction of Project Hermes, which were approved by the Grand Lodge in March 2021, permit a Brother in a Province or District where Hermes has been introduced to submit written notice of resignation by electronic means, without the need for a further paper notice.

At that time – March 2021 – it was confidently expected that Hermes would be in use in every Lodge throughout the Constitution by the end of 2022, and accordingly no steps were taken to permit resignations to be made by purely electronic means in areas where the paper-based system remained in use. The delays in the implementation of Hermes, however, have meant that it is now largely a matter of chance which method is required in order for a resignation to be effective. The Board considers it inequitable that the ability to resign electronically should not be available to all Brethren. It accordingly recommends that the requirement for a paper version of a resignation cease to apply anywhere in the Constitution.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted September 2024)

#### **ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF FORMS**

The Board has decided to exercise the power granted to it under Rule 191C of the Book of Constitutions in order to authorise the electronic transmission to the Grand Secretary's Office of the form of application for a Grand Lodge Certificate referred to in Rule 174 (a). The Board has been concerned, before exercising the power, to be satisfied that any necessary safeguards exist, and wishes to stress that, for the time being, this is the only form that may be transmitted by electronic means.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 12 March 2008)

#### **EMOLUMENTS TO LODGE OFFICERS**

Rule 104 of the Book of Constitutions provides that a Brother who is not a subscribing member of the Lodge may not hold any office therein except that of Tyler, but permits of the inclusion in the By-Laws of a Lodge of a provision for the remission of the Lodge subscription of the Secretary. It follows that it would be ultra vires to include in the By-Laws any provision for the remission of the subscriptions payable by any member of the Lodge other than the Secretary: for no By-Law can be valid which is inconsistent with the Book of Constitutions or until approved by the Grand Master (see Rule 136).

It would also be ultra vires for the Brethren of a Lodge, present at any meeting, to vote any remuneration out of the Lodge Funds to any member of the Lodge other than the Tyler whether that purports to be authorized by the By-Laws or not.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 1 June 1955)

## **FREEMASONRY AND SOCIETY**

It must be clearly understood by every member of the Craft that his membership does not in any way exempt him from his duty to meet his responsibilities to the society in which he lives. The Charge to the new Initiate calls on him to be exemplary in the discharge of his civil duties; this duty extends throughout his private, public, business or professional life. The principles of the Craft make it clear to him that his duty as a Freemason does not conflict with his duty as a citizen, but reinforces it.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 June 1987)

## **FREEMASONRY AND THE MEDIA**

There has recently been a revival in interest in Freemasonry on the part of the broadcast media. The Board believes it timely to remind Brethren of the general advice given on this subject on previous occasions. Whilst it has no desire to prevent Brethren from voicing their views, the Board believes that participation, at both the national and local levels, in broadcast debates on Freemasonry is best left to spokesmen who have the background knowledge and experience to participate in such events, and, preferably, have been duly authorised in advance. Any Brother who is approached to take part in a broadcast should seek guidance either from the Communications Department at Freemasons' Hall or the Information Officer\* appointed by his Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master. It follows also that Brethren, other than those authorised, should not voluntarily approach the media to solicit coverage.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 September 2005)

[\*i.e. Communication Officer]

## **FUND-RAISING**

The Board acknowledges that Grand Lodge has no jurisdiction over non-Masonic organisations such as Associations of Friends. It does, however, draw attention to its Report, accepted by Grand Lodge on 5 December 1934 about the improper use of the words 'Masonic' or 'Freemasons', etc., in connection with alleged Masonic enterprises or undertakings of a commercial or quasi-commercial character, and urges the Masonic members of such Associations to use their influence to ensure that the dignity of the Craft is maintained in the conduct of their fund-raising activities.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 March 1981)

## **GRAND CHARITY CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Board's attention has been drawn to a recent suggestion that it would be permissible for Lodges to use Lodge charitable funds to make the contribution payable each year by Lodges to the Grand Charity under the provisions of Rule 271 of the Book of Constitutions. The obligation to pay the contributions is that of the Lodge and not of its members and the Board considers that the payment should come out of the Lodge's general funds and not out of its charitable moneys, whether the latter are raised solely from its members or from charity collections to which non-members may have contributed. It accordingly recommends that all Lodges pay the contribution from their general funds.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 June 2005)

## **GRANTS FROM LODGE FUNDS**

The attention of the Board has been drawn to the practice within certain Lodges of using Lodge Funds to defray the cost of presentations to Ladies or to meet any deficit in the running of Ladies' Nights or similar functions. The Board reaffirms that Lodge Funds should be applied solely to recognised Masonic purposes, though it has long been accepted that customary subscriptions to local Charities may continue to be met from this source. A Ladies' Night is not a Masonic function and, as such, must not in any way be subsidized from Lodge Funds. If any such payments are found in Lodge Accounts it is the undoubted duty of the Lodge Auditors to draw attention to them and to ensure that such irregularities are at once rectified.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 December 1968)

It has come to the notice of the Board that, despite the fact that the above edict has been reprinted annually in each successive edition of the booklet *Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft*, instances are still occurring of deficits on Ladies Nights being met from Lodge funds. The general fund of a Lodge, into which the members' subscriptions are paid, is intended to be used for defraying the costs of running the Lodge in accordance with the established principles of Freemasonry, the Rules in the Book of Constitutions and the Lodge's by-laws. The Board is of the view that a Lodge may legitimately maintain a separate fund for "social events", into which moneys raised for that purpose may be paid; but payments from the general Lodge fund may not be transferred, directly or indirectly, to such a fund. Such a fund, being maintained [by or] in connection with the Lodge is subject to the provisions of Rule 153(e) regarding accounts and audit.

The Board accordingly recommends that, while there can be no objection to a shortfall on a Ladies Night or similar event being made up from a fund specifically maintained for such events (or by donations from individual members), the general funds of a Lodge must not be so used, and trusts that the Grand Lodge will reaffirm its edict set out above.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 12 June 2019)

## **HALL STONE JEWELS (SEE ALSO HALL STONE LODGE JEWEL, P. 50)**

Two versions of the Hall Stone Jewel issued to reward donations to the "Masonic Million Memorial Fund" established to finance the building of the present Freemasons' Hall as a Masonic Peace Memorial are in common circulation: the individual subscriber's breast jewel, 1½" wide, in silver, engraved with the name and Lodge of the Brother, which is suspended from a dark blue ribbon; and the Hall Stone Lodge Jewel, 1⅞" wide, in silver gilt, engraved with the name and number of the Lodge and date of its presentation in the Grand Lodge, which is appended to a light blue collarette, as prescribed in Plate 58 of the Book of Constitutions.

Very few Brethren indeed are left who are entitled to wear the small individual jewels, and those jewels now appear to be regarded as collectable items, which are traded quite regularly. The Board sees nothing objectionable in this.

The Lodge Hall Stone Jewels were presented to qualifying Lodges by the MW The Grand Master to mark the contributions those Lodges had made. They were not, however, *bought* by those Lodges, and have always been the property of the Grand Master, to be returned, along with the Warrant and Lodge's records if the Lodge ceased to exist. Such

returned Jewels have then been available as a source of replacements where a Hall Stone Lodge has lost – whether through theft, accident or otherwise – its original Jewel.

The Board is concerned both at the frequency with which Lodge Hall Stone Jewels have recently been offered for sale over the internet, and that former members of certain Lodges which have been erased have refused to return the Hall Stone Jewel despite repeated requests that they do so.

The Board therefore recommends that the Grand Lodge place the matter beyond argument by declaring that a Lodge Hall Stone Jewel remains the property of the Grand Master and must be delivered up along with the Warrant if the Lodge is erased.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 March 2012)

### **HONORARY MEMBERSHIP (SEE ALSO PRECEDENCE OF HONORARY MEMBERS, P. 32 AND HONORARY MEMBERS, P. 50)**

The Board's attention has been drawn to the tendency to elect to Honorary Membership Brethren who might find it difficult to continue to pay even a country member's or non-dining subscription, but have in no sense qualified for such honours under the terms of Rule 167, Book of Constitutions. This practice is strongly deprecated. The compliment of Honorary Membership should be granted only in recognition of distinguished service.

The Board wishes to point out that Honorary Membership is a distinction conferred by a Lodge on an individual, and that it is not in order to elect, for example, the Master and Wardens for the time being of the sponsoring Lodge.

Lodges are reminded that care should be taken particularly in cases where a Brother is a subscribing member of one Lodge only, that he understands clearly the disabilities under which a non-subscribing Mason labours, since by accepting Honorary Membership such a Brother will at once put himself into this category.

A circular letter dealing in greater detail with this matter has been produced and is available on application to the Grand Secretary.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 December 1963)

### **INSTALLED MASTERS' LODGES**

Since 1 January 2006 Installed Masters' Lodges have been exempt from paying dues to Grand Lodge and the contribution to the Grand Charity, except in respect of those members who belong to no other Lodge. From time to time the Grand Secretary receives a request from a Lodge such as a Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge or a research Lodge, all of the Members of which are Installed Masters, to be considered an Installed Masters' Lodge and therefore entitled to the exemption. The Board wishes to remind Brethren that the exemption was introduced to recognise the special role traditional Installed Masters' Lodges play in education and communication, and to make it plain that the exemption will not be granted to Lodges which are merely *de facto* Installed Masters' Lodges.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 12 September 2012)

### **INSTALLED MASTERS' WORK**

The Board has been asked to give guidance on which parts of the Craft ritual allocated to the Worshipful Master may be performed by Master Masons and which may only be carried out by an Installed Master. It notes that it is becoming increasingly common for Brethren who have not yet reached the Chair to be invited to undertake part of the work.



The Board considers that it is a matter for the Master, having regard to the custom of the individual Lodge, to decide what arrangements should be made when allocating work to other Brethren. The Board, however, hopes that those portions of a ceremony that can properly be carried out by junior Brethren should not be allocated to them to the complete exclusion of Past Masters, and in particular of the more junior Past Masters, who having neither an office in the Lodge nor an early prospect of receiving one may need to have their interest maintained.

It therefore recommends that both the administration of the Obligations and the communication of secrets be the preserve of those who have reached the Chair, and it hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse the following list as comprising the work which must be performed by an Installed Master:

the Ceremonies of Opening and Closing the Lodge;

the Ceremony of Initiation down to the end of the entrustment of the candidate with the secrets of the degree;

the Ceremony of Passing (including the test questions and the subsequent entrustment) down to the end of the entrustment of the candidate with the secrets of the degree;

the Ceremony of Raising (including the test questions and the subsequent entrustment) down to the end of the main part of the Ceremony, the Traditional History (but not necessarily the explanation of the Tracing Board) and the communication of the full secrets; and

the entire Ceremony of Installation, including the three Addresses, but excluding the Working Tools.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 September 2010)

#### **INTERNET – FORUMS AND ‘CHAT ROOMS’**

It has been brought to the notice of the Board that some Brethren are using the internet not only to make contact with other Freemasons, which may be unexceptionable, but also as a means of seeking guidance on questions which should properly be addressed to their Provincial or District Grand Secretaries, from whom authoritative answers are available. Such enquiries frequently elicit a variety of different answers (of which many are, in the nature of things, likely to be wrong) and the Board considers that directing questions on protocol and similar matters to those participating in an internet forum is inappropriate both for that reason and because of the nature of the subject-matter involved.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 March 2002)

#### **INTOXICANTS IN LODGE ROOMS**

When the Licensing Act of 1902 was passed, an undertaking was given to the Home Secretary by the Grand Registrar that the Masonic authorities would condemn the practice of consuming any intoxicating liquor in Lodge, or on premises directly associated with a Lodge, in connection with the ceremony of Installation. This undertaking was carried out in instructions issued from Freemasons’ Hall, and confirmed by Grand Lodge, with a direction for them to be read at the next meeting of each Lodge. The Board condemns the practice; and continues to enjoin that neither directly nor by any colourable evasion shall it

be indulged in at any period during the meeting of a Lodge when engaged in the Ceremony of Installation.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 3 March 1926)

#### **JOINING MEMBERS AND FOUNDERS**

In the opinion of Grand Lodge, it is most undesirable that any appeal should be made directly or indirectly by circular or advertisement inviting Brethren to become Joining Members of Lodges, or to be Founders of proposed Lodges.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 5 September 1917)

#### **JOINING MEMBERS OF LODGES**

Rule 163(c) of the Book of Constitutions requires that a candidate for joining or rejoining a Lodge must, before the ballot is taken, produce to the Secretary of the Lodge not only his Grand Lodge Certificate, but also a certificate of good standing from every Lodge of which he is or has at any time been a member. The Board is aware that a number of Lodge Secretaries neglect to inspect the certificates. While the Board does not wish to say that such a failure invalidates the election, it wishes to make it plain that a Secretary who ignores the requirement of the Rule does so at his peril and renders himself liable to disciplinary sanctions. It is also incumbent on the Master to satisfy himself that the Rule has been complied with.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 December 2009)

#### **LANGUAGE OF WORKING**

The Board wishes to remind Brethren that under the English Constitution it is the general practice of the Craft that Lodges conduct their work in English. In the case of a small number of Lodges, mainly abroad, special permission has, for historical or other cogent reasons, been given for an individual Lodge to work in another language – generally that of the country in which the Lodge is located. For many years, however, the Grand Master has granted Warrants for new Lodges on the implied condition that the Lodges concerned will work in English, unless for some special reason the Board of General Purposes gives permission for a different language to be used. Such permission is very sparingly given and the Board has no reason to expect that in future permission will be granted to any Lodge in England.

The Board has, however, recently received reports (not always fully substantiated) of units in England working in other languages, for which permission has been neither sought nor given. It accordingly has no hesitation in bringing this matter to the attention of the Grand Lodge, which it trusts will fully endorse the principle set out above that Lodges under this Constitution must, unless given permission to work in a foreign language, work in English.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 December 2023)

**LODGE AFTER-PROCEEDINGS (SEE ALSO AFTER-PROCEEDINGS, P. 5; NON-MASONS AT AFTER-PROCEEDINGS, P. 29; PRECEDENCE OF TOASTS, P. 32)**

It has been reported that in some instances individuals are being called upon to pay the entire costs of the after-proceedings. The Board finds it necessary to state plainly that no Brother, and particularly no Candidate and no Master, should in any circumstances be required to pay for meals provided for anyone other than himself and his personal guests.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 March 1983)

**LODGE INCOME DERIVED FROM INVESTMENTS**

The Board wishes to draw the attention of all Lodges with invested funds to the following matters:

Where Lodges own property, investments, or bank deposits there is a duty to declare the income derived and, except where the income consists of dividends from UK-resident companies, to pay Corporation Tax thereon. Any liability to Corporation Tax will be reduced by income tax suffered at source on the income.

This general liability to tax on investment income does not arise if the investments have been irrevocably transferred to a Benevolent Fund which has been placed in trust for charitable purposes with the approval of the local Inland Revenue authorities.

A model trust deed which has been approved by the Inland Revenue authorities (and also by the Charity Commission) is available on application to the Grand Charity.

It must, however, be borne in mind that not only must the general object of such a trust fund be charitable, but the actual application of the fund in individual cases must be charitable also. One of the general objects of charity in respect of which relief from tax is obtained is the relief of poverty, but poverty is a relative term, and with this in mind the model trust deed includes as the stated object 'poor and distressed Brother Masons and their poor and distressed widows and children'. The use of the word 'distressed' means that the person being relieved must be feeling the pinch of poverty and is thus distressed as well as poor. This ensures that the application of the fund is charitable also. Those responsible for recommending the application of such funds should therefore satisfy themselves that these conditions obtain in every case.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 June 1987)

**LODGE INSURANCES**

Lodges are reminded of the continued advisability of insuring against Public Liability, against loss of or damage to Lodge Equipment and loss of Cash. Combined policies covering these various headings are issued by several Insurance Companies but should any difficulty be experienced in effecting a suitable policy, advice may be obtained on application to the Grand Secretary.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 June 1975)

**LODGE MINUTES**

It has been brought to the attention of the Board that many Lodges are less meticulous than was formerly the case in recording, and subsequently preserving, Minutes of their meetings. Rule 144 of the Book of Constitutions requires every Lodge to keep a Minute Book and lays upon the Master or the Secretary the duty of regularly entering the names and particulars of all candidates, together with the names – and, in the case of visitors,

their Lodges and Masonic ranks – of all those present at each meeting, and minutes of the business transacted. Any deficiency in this respect will inevitably have an impact on those who in later years may be charged with the duty of writing Lodge histories and may even in an extreme case prevent a Lodge from being able to establish its entitlement to a Centenary or Bi-Centenary Warrant. The Board therefore trusts that the Grand Lodge will endorse the following guidance which, apart from being largely a matter of common sense also draws in some respects on previous edicts of the Grand Lodge.

1. Every care should be taken to ensure the permanence of Minutes or other records. In the present context a “Minute Book” is a permanently bound volume in which the particulars required by Rule 144 are entered either in handwriting or by affixing sheets by means of permanent glue or gum (and not by means of adhesive tape, which deteriorates over time and loses its effectiveness). A loose-leaf folder or binder is not a suitable substitute for a bound book and the Board recommends, for the avoidance of any doubt, that such folders and binders be not used.
2. Rule 144 is not complied with by keeping Minutes exclusively or partly in electronic form. The Board feels impelled to point out that, apart from the inherent risk of corruption of electronic data, the software necessary to read an electronic document is liable to become obsolete within a relatively short time.
3. Where Minutes are handwritten, record ink or some other permanent ink should be used.
4. No valid objection can be raised to the use of a typewriter or a word-processor, provided that each typed or printed sheet is irremovably affixed to the Minute Book and initialled by the Secretary before being submitted for confirmation by the Lodge. Care should, however, be exercised in ensuring that the ink or other printing medium used in producing such sheets is itself permanent in nature and is not liable to deterioration in the conditions in which Minute Books are stored.
5. Similarly, loose attendance sheets may legitimately be used to record the signatures of members or visitors present at Lodge meetings in numbers beyond the capacity of the normal Signature or Attendance book. The Board is of opinion that the requirements of the second part of Rule 144, Book of Constitutions, are met if these sheets are irremovably affixed to the Minutes of the meeting to which they refer, provided that each sheet is initialled by the Master or Secretary. In stating this opinion the Board does not wish to encourage the use of loose sheets to the exclusion of Signature books, which serve a useful purpose as a record of the attendance of Officers and distinguished visitors. The use of a Signature Book, however, does not obviate, and never has obviated, the need for the names and details of all those present at a meeting to be entered into the Minute Book: it cannot be too heavily stressed that all names appearing in the Signature book must continue to be recorded in the body of the Minutes.
6. Lodges are advised to take steps for the permanent housing of Lodge records which have ceased to be of day-to-day use. The Board suggests that in order to ensure that future Office holders or historians are aware of where the records have been

deposited, a comprehensive list be placed in the current Minute book and transferred to its successor when its turn comes to be laid up in safe-keeping.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 December 2015)

#### **LODGE TRUSTEES**

It has been brought to the Board's attention that a Lodge has incurred unnecessary expense by having to apply to the Courts to appoint Trustees of its real property after it was discovered that all of the Trustees named in the Deed had long since died.

The Board considers that where a Lodge has property (real or otherwise), or Funds, held in Trust, it is the duty of the Secretary of the Lodge to keep a list of the names and addresses of the Trustees and check periodically that he is aware of their situation.

Where for any reason a Trustee ceases to be able to exercise his responsibilities, the Lodge should take prompt action to ensure that a new Trustee is appointed in accordance with the terms of the Deed.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 June 1990)

#### **LOTTERIES**

Since the Board reported to Grand Lodge on lotteries in March 1981 and September 1983, there has been no significant change in the law on the subject. There has, however, been a change in Grand Lodge's approach towards outside bodies and the public in general. The Board has considered its previous reports in the light of that change, and hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse the following statement on lotteries.

There is no inherent Masonic objection to any form of lottery currently permitted by law, and a lottery with a Masonic character may, therefore, be used by members of the Craft to raise money for any lawful purpose, subject to the qualifications set out below. Such a lottery should, in general, be used to raise money only for charity, other benevolent purposes, or some other specific object not directed to private gain; no form of lottery should in any circumstances be used to defray the general running expenses of a Lodge, Province or District.

A lottery has a Masonic character if it is promoted or run by Freemasons

- a. who declare their capacity as such; or
- b. for a purpose, or on behalf of a body, which is identifiably Masonic, whether or not the purpose or body includes words such as "Masonic" or "Freemason" in its title or description.

The Board considers it essential that the purpose for which any such lottery is held is clearly stated to anyone to whom chances in the lottery are offered for sale.

It does not accord with the spirit of Masonic charity or of Masonic bodies that lotteries should be held which seek money under the banner of Freemasonry from other than Masonic sources (Masonic sources include anyone who has a family or other close personal connection with the Craft or with any of its members). It is therefore inappropriate for tickets for a lottery with a Masonic character to be made available for sale to the public at large.

The responsibility for compliance with the provisions of the law rests firmly on those responsible for promoting and assisting in the running of lotteries. It is the duty of such

Brethren to ensure, by obtaining where necessary appropriate procedural and legal advice, that the Craft is not brought into disrepute by any failure to meet all legal requirements, or for any other reason. Advice is readily available from, among others, the Gaming Board for Great Britain, local authorities, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Institute of Charity Fundraising Managers.

Three classes of lottery are currently permitted by the law of England and Wales (except in the case of local authorities), namely small lotteries incidental to exempt entertainments, private lotteries and society's lotteries.

- a. The Board sees no objection to "small lotteries incidental to exempt entertainments" (for example, a raffle at a dinner), provided that the entertainment is of a Masonic character.
- b. A "private lottery" (for example a "100 club") is subject to complex and restrictive rules with which it is difficult to comply, and the Board therefore considers that such lotteries, if appropriate for Masonic purposes, should be subject to the same restrictions as society's lotteries (see below).
- c. A "society's lottery", for which registration of the organisation is required, is appropriate for fundraising on a larger scale, for example a Provincial Benevolent Fund or one of the Masonic Charities or local charities, or when a Private Lodge sponsors a special appeal. The written leave of the Provincial or District Grand Master (or, in London, of the Board of General Purposes) must be obtained at the earliest opportunity, both before registration is applied for, and again before any individual lottery is organised.

Literature which includes Masonic forms of address in promoting the sale of lottery tickets is unacceptable, even if it emanates from Associations of Friends, over which Grand Lodge has no jurisdiction.

Provincial and District Grand Masters and Masters of Lodges should refuse to permit the distribution of literature or tickets which clearly infringe any of the above principles, and may refuse to permit their distribution if in their opinion the spirit of those principles is infringed.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 December 1994)

#### **MASONIC DESIGNATIONS ON ENVELOPES**

It has been brought to the attention of the Board that members of the Craft are embarrassed by being addressed on envelopes in Masonic form. Brethren are asked to note that, on an envelope, the Masonic prefix to a recipient's name should not be used, nor should abbreviated Masonic ranks be so shown after the name.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 December 1968)

#### **MASONIC JEWELS, ETC.**

The Board feels it desirable to bring together under one heading the various references in the Masonic Year Book to the wearing of Masonic jewels, etc. and has therefore drawn up the following consolidated statement on the subject which, together with a new final paragraph, it hopes Grand Lodge will endorse.

Rule 241, Book of Constitutions, makes it clear that no Masonic jewel, medal, device, or emblem (which includes those pertaining to other Jurisdictions) can be worn without the approval of the M.W. The Grand Master. This approval extends to the wearing of the jewels issued on the occasions of their Annual Festivals by the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls, the Royal Masonic Institution for Boys, and the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution, but it should be particularly noted that unless the M.W. The Grand Master has given his special approval for a particular jewel to be worn permanently such jewels may be worn only during the year in respect of which the Festival concerned is held. In this connection, the M.W. The Grand Master's special approval has already been given for the permanent wearing of the jewel issued by the Royal Masonic Hospital to mark a Life Governorship.

Special Warrants issued under Rule 252, Book of Constitutions, authorize the wearing of Centenary jewels and Bi-Centenary bars: this privilege is restricted to subscribing members of Lodges which have been granted Centenary and Bi-Centenary Warrants.

Rule 253, Book of Constitutions, lays down in detail the variations of the Grand Lodge Charity jewel.

Rule 262, Book of Constitutions, refers to the wearing of a Chain over the centre of an Officer's Collar but a Grand Lodge ruling of September 1938 reminds Lodges that the design for such a Chain requires the approval of the M.W. The Grand Master. Those concerned should therefore bear in mind that they should first submit the proposed design through the proper Masonic channels to the Grand Secretary for submission to the M.W. The Grand Master.

The Board is aware that it is the frequent practice for Founders' and Past Masters' jewels to be worn on Masonic occasions. It should be clearly understood, however, that under Rule 241 the design of such jewels is subject to the approval of the M.W. The Grand Master and application for this should first be made by following the procedure outlined in the preceding paragraph. If desired a small emblem showing the office held may be worn on the ribbon of a Founder's jewel and a small replica of the Lodge badge on a Past Master's jewel.

A Past Master's jewel may be presented to a Brother only after his successor in the office of Master has been installed; but when a Master serves for a longer period than one year there is no objection to the fact being recorded on the inscription. For any subsequent Mastership an appropriate bar may be worn on the ribbon.

The jewels, collars, and chains of office of Installed Masters' Associations and similar bodies are not Masonic jewels within the terms of Rule 241: consequently no question as to approval for their use in Lodge can arise, and it is incorrect to wear them.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 September 1963)

#### **MASONIC REGALIA FOR CANDIDATES**

The Board has had its attention drawn to the question of the provision of the regalia required by Candidates for Freemasonry and recommends that all such regalia should be procured by the Lodge.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 6 June 1956)

## **MASONIC SECRETS**

The Board considers that it may be opportune to remind Brethren of the scope of Masonic 'secrecy', so that in explaining Freemasonry to their families and friends they may know what they may and may not discuss.

Every Freemason is bound by his obligations not to reveal the traditional modes of recognition. This admits of no compromise. The ceremonial ways of proving that one is a Freemason should not normally be used outside the context of Masonic meetings. Brethren making improper disclosure or use of the signs, tokens and words of Craft and Royal Arch Masonry render themselves liable to Masonic disciplinary sanction. The promise not to reveal the modes of recognition may also be seen as symbolic of a wider pledge by a Brother to abide by all his obligations, non-Masonic as well as Masonic. Brethren will also wish to bear in mind that it is greatly desirable that even those parts of our ceremonies which do not fall strictly within the scope of the preceding paragraph should be kept private, and not disclosed without very good cause, in order that the impact of those ceremonies on candidates may not be diminished.

Every Mason is free to reveal his own Masonic membership, except when it might appear that business, professional or personal advantage is thereby being sought for himself or another. The Board believes that Brethren should be encouraged to acknowledge their membership with pride.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 March 1999)

## **MASONIC STANDARDS AND VALUES**

The Board is concerned at the apparent increase in the number of disciplinary cases coming before those Masonic authorities charged with the duty of dealing with such matters. Freemasonry is above all a moral organisation, founded on the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth – or, as it could more familiarly be put in the language of today, kindness; charity and generosity; and integrity and honesty. Those principles – if they are to mean anything – clearly require the maintenance of the highest standards of behaviour by Freemasons in both public and private life. Whilst it is doubtless the case that the standard of conduct among Freemasons remains generally very high, the Board considers it appropriate to reiterate this obvious truth.

Not only is the conduct required of all Freemasons implicit in all that we do, but it has been set out expressly in writing on several occasions. For example, in June 1987 the Grand Lodge adopted the paragraph reprinted annually in *Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft* under the heading "Freemasonry and Society", which concludes with the words, "The principles of the Craft make it clear to [the new Initiate] that his duty as a Freemason does not conflict with his duty as a citizen, but reinforces it." In September 1989, Rule 179 of the Book of Constitutions was amended to make explicit what had always been implicit: "As a citizen every Freemason has a duty not to engage in conduct which is contrary to the law of the land. As a Freemason he also has a duty not to engage in activity which may bring Freemasonry into disrepute." It cannot be too clearly stated that such duty does not extend only to matters regulated by the criminal courts but also covers enactments dealing, *inter alia*, with discrimination and health and safety, as well as those codes of conduct which cover matters such as disclosure of interests.



The principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth also carry with them the notion of tolerance. Whilst this, of course, principally speaks to relations with and respect for others, regrettably there are from time to time instances of one Brother pursuing a grievance against another Brother or group of Brethren in so single-minded a manner that, however well-founded some aspect of his grievance may originally have been, all sense of proportion has been lost and his actions have crossed the line between what is reasonable and what is not, so that they have become vexatious and wholly unreasonable. We are urged in our ritual to drop a tear of sympathy over the failings of a Brother. Those words emphatically do not require Freemasons to condone lapses in standards by their fellow Freemasons, but they do require them to be proportionate in their response to such lapses, so that a Brother who signally fails to exercise a due sense of proportion, in the absence of circumstances which might justify such conduct, may himself be guilty of a significant lapse from Masonic standards of behaviour.

(Extract from the report of the Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 March 2015)

#### **MASTERS' AND PAST MASTERS' COLLARS**

**(SEE ALSO PAST MASTERS OF PRIVATE LODGES, P. 51)**

The Board emphasizes strongly that Past Masters (who are not Grand Officers, Past Grand Stewards, Provincial or District Grand Officers, or holders of London or Overseas Grand Rank) must always wear light blue collars as laid down in Rule 264, Book of Constitutions (with the Past Master's jewel attached to the point of the collar), in their own Lodges as well as elsewhere. Masters of Lodges (and Wardens) are permitted to wear their collars and jewels only in the Lodge in which they hold such office and in Grand Lodge and Provincial and District Grand Lodge. These collars must not be worn when visiting other private Lodges.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 March 1968)

#### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL ARCH (SEE ALSO ROYAL ARCH CHAPTERS, P. 36)**

The Committee of General Purposes in its reports to Grand Chapter has on a number of occasions expressed the view that Brethren who are members of the Royal Arch should in their Craft Lodges ensure that Master Masons realise that their knowledge of pure Antient Masonry is incomplete until they have been exalted into that important order, and give every encouragement to Brethren to become Royal Arch Masons.

The Board, which last drew attention to the subject in February 1992, reaffirms this view and believes that a convenient opportunity to do this arises when a Master Mason is presented with his Grand Lodge Certificate. The Board therefore hopes that Brethren making the presentation will urge the recipient to pursue his Masonic career by seeking exaltation.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 December 1996)

#### **NON-MASONS AT AFTER-PROCEEDINGS (SEE ALSO AFTER-PROCEEDINGS, P. 5; LODGE AFTER-PROCEEDINGS, P. 22; PRECEDENCE OF TOASTS, P. 32)**

Since June 1986 when the Board last reported to Grand Lodge on this matter it has become increasingly common for Lodges to entertain wives and other non-Masons to dinner. The Board does not wish to discourage this practice - indeed many non-Masons were present at the meal at Earls Court which followed Grand Lodge's Quarterly

Communication in June 1992 celebrating its 275th anniversary - but hopes that it will remain the exception rather than the rule, and will be confined to perhaps a single meeting in each year.

In the light of this change the Board has re-examined the policy on the giving of Masonic toasts on such occasions. It has concluded that there is nothing inherently improper in drinking the health of individuals in their Masonic capacity even though non-Masons are present, particularly when the latter are so clearly aware of the fact that the meal follows a Masonic meeting.

The Board accordingly hopes that Grand Lodge will endorse its recommendation that there is no objection to drinking Masonic toasts in the presence of non-Masons, provided that Brethren in the course of speeches avoid references to matters of Masonic ritual. For this reason it also recommends that 'fire' and the Tyler's toast, both of which have their origins in the Masonic Lectures, should not be given on such occasions, particularly as the latter might be seen to be divisive by its exclusion of non-Masons from its scope. The Board also considers it desirable that the number of toasts drunk should be kept within reasonable bounds, so that non-Masons are not overwhelmed or confused, and suggests that it should rarely be necessary for the list to be longer than 'The Queen and the Craft', 'The MW The Grand Master', 'The Provincial (or District) Grand Master', 'The Worshipful Master' and 'The Guests'.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 December 1995)

#### **PAST MASTERS' CERTIFICATES**

The Board further has had under consideration the question of Past Masters' Certificates, and has decided that these cannot be used as Grand Lodge has never given authority for their issue.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 6 June 1934)

#### **PETITIONS FOR NEW LODGES**

It may be useful to draw the attention of Brethren who wish to form new Lodges to the advice given in June 1922 by the then Grand Master. At that time there had been a rapid increase in petitions to form new Lodges; The Grand Master stressed that large numbers of signatures should not be aimed at and, in particular, that only experienced Brethren should sign. He specified then that no Brother who had not been a Master Mason for three years should sign the petition and that principle has been observed ever since.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 December 1981)

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY, MOBILE TELEPHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (SEE ALSO SOCIAL MEDIA, P. 38)**

Over the last twelve and a half years the Board has found it necessary to draw attention on three occasions to the misuse of cameras, mobile telephones and other electronic devices (e.g. tablets) during or in connection with Masonic meetings. In 2009 the Grand Lodge approved a consolidated statement on the matter (which was modified slightly the following year). The Board regrets that it appears necessary to revert once more to the subject. The last few years have seen significant technological advances, with the result that the use of such devices is less obtrusive – and therefore less easily detected – than was previously the case. The Board, however, remains firmly of the view that any objection

to the use of such devices is based on the impropriety of taking an electronic record of proceedings in open Lodge at least as much as on any distraction that the process may afford to the individual and others in his vicinity. At the same time social media, such as Twitter, have evolved, enabling the almost instantaneous transmission of information to a wide range of recipients.

The Board considers that relaying information by such means from within a meeting while that meeting is in progress falls within the scope of Rule 177 of the Book of Constitutions. It accordingly hopes that the Grand Lodge will approve the following new consolidated statement:

- (a) All mobile telephones must be switched off during meetings of the Grand Lodge, Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Lodges or Private Lodges. If an urgent call is expected, arrangements should be made for it to be received by the Tyler.
- (b) Whilst there is no objection to the taking of group photographs in a Lodge Room in connection with a special meeting after the Lodge has been closed, the taking of photographs during meetings (including any procession immediately before or after a meeting of a Private Lodge) is prohibited. The prohibition extends to any purported reconstruction after a Lodge has been closed of any part of the proceedings while the Lodge was open, but does not, subject to compliance with (c) below, preclude the taking of a photograph of a procession into or out of a Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Lodge by the express permission and under the control of the Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master.
- (c) Within Freemasons' Hall such specially posed group photographs may, subject to the permission of the Grand Secretary, be taken in a Lodge Room, but photographs in or of other parts of the building, and in particular in or of the Grand Temple, must not be taken unless special permission has been given by or on behalf of the Board of General Purposes.
- (d) The transmission of any photograph or information (whether in the form of text, images or otherwise) by electronic means from within a Lodge Room relating to a meeting in progress there, whether transmission is to a single individual or to any group of individuals, is also prohibited.
- (e) Brethren are reminded that Rule 177 of the Book of Constitutions imposes a prohibition on the publication of the proceedings of any Lodge (which includes the Grand Lodge and any Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Lodge) and that the taking of any photograph during a meeting is likely to lead to a breach of that Rule.
- (f) The submission of any such photograph for inclusion in *Freemasonry Today* will be met with a curt rejection, and it is expected that those responsible for the publication and content of Provincial or District magazines or newsletters will adopt the same policy.
- (g) Disciplinary action is likely to be taken against the Brethren concerned in cases of failure to comply with the above policy in respect of photography or use of social media.

- (h) Whilst the taking of photographs during the after proceedings of a Lodge (and, less importantly, during a reception between a meeting and dinner) is unlikely to offend against any Rule of the Book of Constitutions, it can nevertheless be intrusive and distracting. Accordingly Brethren are reminded that good manners dictate that the agreement of the individuals concerned should be obtained before they are photographed informally in such a context, and that such photographs be taken during the after proceedings only with the permission of the Master or whoever presides at the dinner.

(Extract from the report of the Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 September 2014)

#### **PRECEDENCE OF HONORARY MEMBERS**

Diversity of opinion having been expressed as to the precedence of Honorary Members in the list printed on a Lodge summons, the Board has taken the matter into consideration, and recommends that in all cases where such lists are printed, the names should be shown in order of seniority of the Masonic rank held by the Brethren concerned. In the case of Provinces and Districts, the names of the Provincial and District Grand Masters, followed by their Deputies and Assistants, should of course precede those of any other Brethren, with the exception of the M.W. The Grand Master and his Deputy and Assistant.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 3 December 1947)

#### **PRECEDENCE OF TOASTS**

The custom of remembering Brethren who are unable to attend a meeting of their Lodge is widespread and honourable. However, the Board recommends that no formal toast should ever be drunk before those of H.M. The Queen and the M.W. The Grand Master.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 March 1983)

#### **PRESENTATIONS BY INITIATES TO OUTGOING MASTERS**

The Board's attention is being increasingly directed to the growth of the practice in recent times of a presentation being made at an Installation Meeting to the outgoing Worshipful Master of a Collar or other recognition from the Initiates of the Lodge during his year of office. It has been made evident that, in many cases, this is not purely a spontaneous or voluntary effort; and the Board is strongly of opinion that it is undesirable that any presentation should be made to a Lodge officer in recognition of the performance of an official duty, save such as the Lodge itself as a whole, and not any section of it, shall resolve upon as a testimony to special service.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 4 September 1929.

*See also 4 September 1935)*

#### **READING OF LODGE BY-LAWS**

The Board has been asked if it is necessary for the By-Laws of Private Lodges to be read in Lodge each year, bearing in mind that most ritual books contain a form of words, addressed to the new Master on his Installation, recommending that this should be done. The Board considers that the delivery to the new Master of a copy of the By-Laws of his Lodge cannot have any esoteric significance, and believes that whatever words are contained in ritual books to cover this matter have come into being merely to give guidance to Installing Masters.

Although at one time it was not obligatory to print and circulate copies of Lodge By-Laws, it has for many years been a requirement of the Book of Constitutions (Rule 138) that every member shall be given a copy; his acceptance of the copy is deemed to be a declaration of his submission to them. In view of this the Board does not consider it necessary that the By-Laws should be read in Lodge once in every year, and suggests that such recommendation should be excised from the ceremonial.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 12 September 1979)

#### **RECORDED DELIVERY WITH ADVICE OF DELIVERY**

Rules 174, 175, 181, and 185, Book of Constitutions, require documents to be sent by Registered Post which is expensive. The rules aim to ensure that documents have been delivered at an address rather than to ensure their safety in transit, and in March 1963 Grand Lodge agreed that the words 'registered post' in the Rules quoted above and related rules should be deemed to include recorded delivery.

The Board believes it timely to draw attention to this ruling, with the modification that delivery is only certain under the Recorded Delivery system if the additional 'Advice of Delivery' service is used, and steps taken to ensure that the advice of delivery is rendered.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 March 1982)

#### **REGISTRATION OF NEW MEMBERS**

It has been brought to the notice of the Board that some newly raised members of the Craft are being made to wait nearly a year before being registered as Master Masons and receiving their Grand Lodge Certificates, to which they are then at once entitled. This appears to be due largely to the practice in their Lodges of presenting a whole year's worth of Certificates instead of each one as it becomes available. Delay in application sometimes leads to an urgent request to the Grand Secretary for special consideration being given to an application for a Certificate when, for example, a Brother wishes to join the Royal Arch or to go abroad: to interrupt the normal flow of Certificate issue in order to deal with such urgent applications naturally slows down the routine process.

The Board would therefore emphasise that applications should be made as soon as possible after Raising so that the flow of applications evens out over the whole year, thus assisting the issue of Certificates and speeding up receipt by new members.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 June 1977)

#### **RELATIONSHIP OF MASONRY AND RELIGION**

The Board has been giving the most earnest consideration to this subject, being convinced that it is of fundamental importance to the reputation and well-being of English Freemasonry that no misunderstanding should exist inside or outside the Craft.

It cannot be too strongly asserted that Masonry is neither a religion nor a substitute for religion. Masonry seeks to inculcate in its members a standard of conduct and behaviour which it believes to be acceptable to all creeds, but studiously refrains from intervening in the field of dogma or theology. Masonry, therefore, is not a competitor with religion though in the sphere of human conduct it may be hoped that its teaching will be complementary to that of religion. On the other hand its basic requirement that every member of the Order shall believe in a Supreme Being and the stress laid upon his duty towards Him should be sufficient evidence to all but the wilfully prejudiced that Masonry is an upholder of religion

since it both requires a man to have some form of religious belief before he can be admitted as a Mason, and expects him when admitted to go on practising his religion.

The Board hopes that Grand Lodge will agree that this is a valid statement of the Masonic position, and in the practical application of these principles will lay down:

- (i) that Masonic rites, prayers, and ceremonies be confined to the Lodge room, and that dispensation to wear regalia (which term includes white gloves) in public be granted only in exceptional cases;
- (ii) that there be no active participation by Masons, as such, in any part of the burial service or cremation of a Brother and that there be no Masonic prayers, readings, or exhortations either then or at the graveside subsequent to the interment, since the final obsequies of any human being, Mason or not, are complete in themselves and do not call in the case of a Freemason for any additional ministrations. That if it is wished to recall and allude to his Masonic life and actions, this can appropriately be done at the next Lodge Meeting in the presence of his Brethren, or at a specifically arranged Memorial Service;
- (iii) but that while no obstacle should be put in the way of Masons wishing to take part in an act of corporate worship, only in rare and exceptional cases should they be granted dispensation to do so wearing regalia; moreover that the order of service should in all cases be such as the officiating Minister or his superior consider to be appropriate to the occasion.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 12 September 1962)

#### **RESIGNATIONS FROM PRIVATE LODGES UNDER RULE 183 (SEE ALSO ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION OF FORMAL DOCUMENTS, P. 16)**

Rule 183 sets out a clear procedure to be followed if a Brother wishes to resign from a Lodge (as opposed to resigning from the Craft).

The Board considers that it would be helpful if it gave guidance on the operation of the Rule and the measures that may be taken when a resignation is received.

A Brother may resign orally in open Lodge, either with immediate effect or from a later date which he then specifies. Such resignation, once spoken, is irrevocable unless the Lodge votes immediately in accordance with the first proviso, that he be invited to withdraw it.

The more usual method of resigning is by written notice to the Secretary, again either with immediate effect or from a later specified date. The Secretary is obliged to report the resignation to the Lodge at the next *regular* meeting, unless the Brother has withdrawn it in the meantime, and once communicated to the Lodge it becomes irrevocable (unless the Lodge votes to invite him to withdraw it). The resignation takes effect from the date the Secretary received it, or from such later date as may have been specified in the notice. The Rule requires the written notice to be given to the *Secretary* and the resignation can be withdrawn by a further written notice at any time before it is reported to the Lodge, but once reported is irrevocable (unless the Lodge votes to invite the Brother to withdraw it).

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It is suggested that on receipt of a letter of resignation a Secretary should contact the Almoner of the Lodge (who should already be monitoring regular absentees from Lodge meetings) without delay, so that he may ascertain the reason for the resignation. He should normally at the same time inform the Metropolitan or Provincial Office that the Brother has resigned. The Secretary, in writing to the Brother himself, should take care to do no more than acknowledge receipt of the resignation and state that it will be reported to the Lodge at the next meeting; in particular he should not purport to accept the resignation on behalf of the Lodge (which he has no power to do).

It is entirely for a Lodge to decide whether to afford a Brother the opportunity to reconsider his resignation, but it is suggested that, except in cases where the procedure would obviously be inappropriate, no harm would be done by giving him that opportunity.

(Extract from the report of the Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 December 2014)

### **RIGHT TO VISIT LODGES**

The Board has been asked to express an opinion as to whether any Brother who is in good standing in the Craft has an inalienable right to visit any Lodge that he may choose. From time to time Brethren cause embarrassment to a Lodge or to individual members of it by seeking to visit either by prior invitation or by arriving on the day of the meeting.

The Board is aware that under some Constitutions the “right of visitation” is regarded as a landmark, but has concluded that it enjoys no such status under this Constitution. In particular, it does not figure in either the document *Aims and Relationships of the Craft* (adopted by the United Grand Lodge of England in September 1949, in common with the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the Grand Lodge of Scotland) or in *Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition*. The Board has concluded that the question is as much a matter of common sense and basic good manners as of Masonic principle, and hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse the following statement.

1. The custom of visiting has a long and honourable history in English Freemasonry and ought not to be discouraged. Brethren are, however, reminded that while every Freemason in good standing is *eligible* (subject to Rule 127 of the Book of Constitutions) to attend Lodges other than his own as a visitor, he is not necessarily *entitled* to do so.
2. There are certain Brethren on whom Rules 122 to 124 confer the right to be present at a meeting, either in their own capacity or as the emissary of the Grand Master or a Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master.
3. For visitors in the ordinary course, admission to any Lodge is subject to the power of the Master (under Rule 126) to refuse admission to any visitor of known bad character or whose presence is *in his opinion* likely to disturb the harmony of the Lodge; and apart from the fact that some Lodges have in their by-laws a restriction on the admission of visitors, every Lodge is entitled to expect a visitor to be properly introduced by a member (or, where a Lodge has indicated its willingness to accept visitors, by a suitable Masonic authority such as a Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Secretary).

4. The Board deprecates any deliberate solicitation of an invitation to attend a Lodge by someone who can claim no more than acquaintance with the Brother whom he wishes to adopt as his host, but whom the making of the approach may place in an embarrassing position.

5. Paragraphs 3 and 4 apply equally to the meal which follows, or occasionally precedes, a meeting of a Lodge.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 12 September 2007)

#### **RITUAL**

No form of ritual shall be used at any meeting of the Members of a Lodge held immediately or shortly before the opening of or after the closing of the Lodge, unless such ritual has been previously sanctioned by the Grand Master.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 6 June 1917)

#### **ROYAL ARCH CHAPTERS (SEE ALSO MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL ARCH, P. 29)**

Before a Charter is granted for a new Royal Arch Chapter, a recommendation must be signed in open Lodge by the Master and Wardens of a Lodge to which it is to be attached. The Chapter will generally look to the Lodge as the main source of candidates for exaltation; it is accordingly desirable for the Lodge to remain closely in touch with the Chapter and familiar with its situation. Any Lodge which has lost touch with a Chapter attached to it is encouraged to re-establish friendly links.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 June 1982)

#### **ROYAL ARCH COLLARETTES**

At its Convocation in April 2007, Supreme Grand Chapter approved a change to the Royal Arch Regulations to permit those Past Deputy Grand Superintendents and Past Second and Third Provincial or District Grand Principals (and their Metropolitan counterparts) who are Grand Officers to wear the jewels of their past rank on collarettes not exceeding one and half inches in width in Chapters, but only within the Metropolitan Area, Province or District in which they held the office.

Hitherto the only Royal Arch collarettes permitted to be worn in the Craft are those from which the jewels of the present Grand Principals and present Grand Superintendents are suspended (and these are worn only with Craft regalia). The Board has received a request from the Committee of General Purposes that the new jewels and collarettes be permitted to be worn with Craft regalia within the area to which they relate.

The Board has given very careful consideration to the request, as it is particularly anxious to support the Royal Arch and promote membership of it. It has, however, concluded that it is not appropriate for any collarette denoting a past Royal Arch rank to be worn with Craft regalia, any more than those collarettes worn in the Craft by Past Deputy and Assistant Provincial or District Grand Masters (and their Metropolitan counterparts) are permitted to be worn with Royal Arch regalia. It accordingly recommends to the Grand Lodge that their wearing be confined to the Royal Arch.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 June 2007)



**THE ROYAL ARCH TIE (BUT SEE ALSO BLACK TIES, P. 7 AND STANDARD OF DRESS, P. 40)**

At the recent Annual Investiture the MW The Grand Master announced that the new Royal Arch tie, approved by the Committee of General Purposes of Supreme Grand Chapter, could be worn in future in Craft Lodges, and that further guidance would be given on the appropriate wearing of the tie. The Board is anxious to emphasise the indissoluble link that exists in English Freemasonry between the Craft and the Royal Arch, and accordingly recommends that qualified Royal Arch Companions should be permitted, and indeed encouraged, to wear the new tie in Private Lodges, unless they are attending in an official capacity on behalf of the MW The Grand Master or their respective Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master, when the appropriate Craft or plain black tie should continue to be worn.

At meetings of the Grand Lodge, however, the Board recommends that there should be no change in the current practice and that only the Craft tie or a plain black tie be worn. In the case of a meeting of a Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Lodge the Board considers that it should be left to the discretion of the individual Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master which tie should be worn and by whom, but hopes that the wearing of the Royal Arch tie will not be discouraged.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 June 2010)

**RULE 158 'ENQUIRIES AS TO CANDIDATES FROM OTHER LOCALITIES'**

The Board is aware that from time to time difficulties and misunderstandings arise in connection with the scope and operation of Rule 158, and believes that guidance may be helpful to those who have to carry out the procedures which it lays down.

The Rule is designed to prevent a person of bad character seeking initiation in a locality where his reputation is not known. "Locality" is used deliberately, and allows scope for common sense in the interpretation of the Rule. The Board considers that there is no need to make enquiry merely because a Candidate lives and works in a different Province, if his address is within a short distance of the meeting place of the Lodge to which he seeks admission. However, it may be desirable in London or a large Province or District to make enquiry of the relevant authority if the Candidate neither lives nor works in the vicinity of the Lodge's place of meeting.

Except in the case of countries where another Grand Lodge has jurisdiction, the Masonic Authority referred to in the Rule is the Provincial or District Grand Master, Grand Inspector, or, in all other cases the Grand Master, depending on where the Candidate has his place of residence or work. In complying with the Rule Secretaries of Lodges should therefore approach the Provincial or District Grand Secretary, the Grand Inspector, or Grand Secretary, as the case may be, furnishing sufficient particulars to enable the Candidate to be identified with certainty. In cases where another Grand Lodge is the Masonic Authority, the convention that communications between Grand Lodges are conducted by Grand Secretaries must be observed and enquiries addressed to the Grand Secretary for transmission to his counterpart in the relevant jurisdiction.

The Board is aware that Provinces and Districts carry out their enquiries in a variety of ways and does not consider that it should dictate to them the procedure which they

should adopt. It does, however, wish to point out that an interview with the Candidate is not a necessary feature, especially as this step may already have been taken by the Lodge concerned. It also wishes to stress that the object of the procedure is not to prevent the “poaching” of Candidates, and therefore a reply that the Masonic Authority “has no objection” to the Candidate being initiated in the enquiring Lodge is misconceived.

As the Candidate may not be proposed in open Lodge until a reply has been received from the Masonic Authority concerned, it is important that Secretaries of Lodges should allow sufficient time when making, and Provincial and District Grand Secretaries should be prompt in dealing with, enquiries under the Rule.

If the Masonic Authority concerned replies that the Candidate is unsuitable, the enquiring Lodge should have regard to the purpose of the Rule. It should not, therefore, be swift to substitute its own judgement, or that of the Candidate’s Proposer and Seconder, for the judgement of those who may have better knowledge of the Candidate and his character. In such cases the objection of the appropriate Masonic Authority must be read out in open Lodge before a ballot is taken.

The Board is confident that the observance of the points set out above will reduce the delays which are at present apparent in the operation of the Rule.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 June 1989)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

In September 2016 the Grand Lodge adopted the recommendations of the Board in relation to social media and agreed a policy, available from the Grand Secretary’s office or online at [www.ugle.org.uk](http://www.ugle.org.uk). It has become clear recently that the policy is either not sufficiently understood or is being disregarded. The Board accordingly reminds the Grand Lodge of the policy by repeating it below in order that Brethren may not plead ignorance of it.

### *Policy on Social Media*

Social media platforms have become an increasingly popular channel for communication in the 21st century. They provide ways to share content with a wide audience, and as such are excellent tools for sharing information about Freemasonry and Masonic activities. However, as with any powerful tool, social media need to be used with caution, as incorrect use can have a damaging impact on Freemasonry’s public image, and therefore on Freemasonry itself. This should be a matter of common sense. This policy has been written to advise Freemasons on how to use social media within the compass of propriety.

#### 1. Digital Ambassadorship

It is important to note that any interactions a Freemason has on social media may be visible to anyone in the world: while it is possible to restrict the audience of one’s posts, it is not possible to control how others will react to them. A private post can easily be shared and reposted publicly by anyone who has access to it. Even if an original post is deleted or edited, someone could already have shared it in its original form. As far as social media are concerned, everything one does or says is permanently recorded, and there is no such thing as a truly private post.

Acting as an ambassador for Freemasonry online is part of a Freemason's duty, and is within the scope of Rule 179 of the Book of Constitutions which states that a Freemason "...has a duty not to engage in activity which may bring Freemasonry into disrepute". Rules (civil and Masonic) and expectations that apply to one's daily conduct apply equally within the digital sphere, as comments may be taken out of context and used as representative of the views of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Below is a list of behaviours and topics to avoid when posting on social media. These apply to personal accounts, as well as to accounts that individual Freemasons may manage on behalf of a Lodge, Province, District, or other Masonic entity. They apply to any Freemason who is identifiable as a Freemason online, whether he is posting in Masonic or non-Masonic channels. This list is not comprehensive, but is intended to act as an introductory guide to topics or behaviours that are inappropriate for posting to any audience on social media.

When posting on social media platforms, a Freemason must not:

- (a) produce, link to, or refer to any content that is illegal, defamatory, or likely to offend others
- (b) cause or contribute to any hostile or unproductive arguments, or carry on any private piques or quarrels (that is to say, good-natured debate is fine, but one should be prepared to abandon the exchange if it ceases to be friendly)
- (c) discuss or allude to any of the Masonic Signs, Tokens, or Words
- (d) claim to speak for any Masonic body (e.g. a Lodge, a Province or District, a charity or committee, or UGLE) on whose behalf he is not expressly authorised to speak (for instance, membership of a Lodge in London does not give one the authority to speak on behalf of Metropolitan Grand Lodge)
- (e) identify anyone else as a Freemason without his express consent
- (f) refer to any personal information about any Freemason without his express consent (such as address, telephone number, or anything else covered by the Data Protection Act 1998; see: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/> contents)
- (g) attempt to use Masonic channels as a vehicle for personal profit, or for any other form of self-promotion
- (h) attack the United Grand Lodge of England or any other legitimate Masonic authority.

## 2. Best Practice

A Freemason may publicly share any Masonic content that contributes to a positive public image of Freemasonry, such as charitable work and events, good causes supported by Freemasons, and information about Masonic history.

Social media channels can also be used to share information only relevant to Freemasons, but care should be exercised to use a more restricted channel, such as a closed or "secret" Facebook group. Topics that might be discussed here include:

- (a) discussions about Masonic allegory and symbolism (as long as there is no mention of any Masonic Signs, Tokens, or Words)
- (b) background information about other Masonic Orders (as long as it does not ruin the experience for those who are not members)
- (c) unusual visits to other Lodges (e.g. for a special ceremony).

When posting about non-Masonic subjects, it is important to remember to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Digital Ambassadorship section above.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 December 2017)

#### **SOLICITATION OF CANDIDATES FOR FREEMASONRY**

The question of improper solicitation of candidates has been raised on many occasions and the Board feels that a statement on this matter would be helpful to the Craft.

There is no objection to a neutrally worded approach being made to a man who is considered a suitable candidate for Freemasonry. There can be no objection to his being reminded, once, that the approach was made. The potential candidate should then be left to make his own decision, without further solicitation.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 December 1981)

#### **STANDARD OF DRESS (*BUT SEE ALSO BLACK TIES, P. 7 AND THE ROYAL ARCH TIE, P. 37*)**

The Board has on a number of occasions considered the standard of dress (including ties) to be worn by Brethren at Lodge meetings, and believes that it will be helpful if the guidance given previously is brought together, largely unchanged, under a single heading.

The Board is conscious that it has become common in many, if not most, Provinces as well as in London for a “Provincial tie” or a “Metropolitan tie” to be promoted – even stipulated – by the Provincial or Metropolitan Grand Master, often as part of fund raising for a charity Festival. After wide consultation some years ago the Board concluded that there should be some relaxation in the rules relating to the ties to be worn by Brethren, and commissioned – as an alternative to a plain black tie – the Craft tie, which was suitable for wear both at Masonic Meetings and in everyday life. To this tie must now be added the rather similar new Craft tie incorporating the logo recently adopted by the United Grand Lodge of England, and also, for those who are qualified, the Royal Arch tie adopted in 2010.

The Board accordingly recommends that

- (a) in Grand Lodge Brethren must wear either one of the two versions of the Craft tie, or a plain black tie (without any emblem, whether in the weave or as a coloured design);
- (b) on all other occasions, as an alternative to one of the Craft ties or a plain black tie, the relevant authorised Metropolitan, Provincial or District tie may be worn, as may the Royal Arch tie except that Brethren attending a Lodge in an official capacity on behalf of the MW The Grand Master or their respective Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master should wear the appropriate Craft tie or a plain black tie.

The Board wishes to remind Brethren, however, that when visiting a Lodge in London, a Province or District they should wear one of the Craft ties, the Royal Arch tie or a plain

black tie, unless the particular Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master permits other Metropolitan, Provincial or District ties to be worn (a permission which should not be assumed to have been given). In the case of a meeting of a Metropolitan, Provincial and District Grand Lodge the Board considers that it should be left to the discretion of the individual Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Master which tie should be worn and by whom, but hopes that the wearing of the Royal Arch tie will not be discouraged.

Regimental, College or School, Hospital, Livery and similar ties may continue by established custom to be worn in Lodges associated with regiments etc. to which they relate.

The Board strongly reaffirms that, unless it is the custom of a Lodge to meet in evening dress, traditional morning wear or dark lounge suit, with black shoes, continues to be the appropriate dress. Shirts must have a plain white collar and, if not completely white, should be of a restrained pattern or hue.

The Board also recommends that at other functions where Masonic regalia is worn in the presence of non-Masons the same standard of dress must be adhered to.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 December 2016)

#### **SUMMONSES, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION OF**

In December 2000 the Grand Lodge approved a recommendation from the Board that in those cases where the Secretary of a Lodge was able and willing to despatch summonses by e-mail, it should be sufficient compliance with the requirements of the Book of Constitutions if summonses were sent by e-mail to those members who had requested it. It was stipulated that any such request should be made in writing and on an annual basis.

The Board has given further consideration to the matter, having regard to the ever increasing use of e-mail as a means of communication, and now recommends that a written request once made need not be renewed annually but should continue in force until further notice to the Secretary of the Lodge. Moreover, the written request may itself be sent by e-mail. Every member who has not asked for summonses to be sent by e-mail must continue to receive them by post, and it is essential that at least one printed copy of each summons be retained by the Lodge for its records. In addition any summons required to be sent to the relevant Masonic Authority must be sent in printed form unless electronic transmission has been requested.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 December 2005)

#### **TRADITIONAL HISTORY OF THE THIRD DEGREE**

In May 2011 it was brought to the Board's attention that some Lodges were working only the main part of the Third Degree Ceremony, leaving the Traditional History to be delivered on a future occasion. The Board concluded that the delivery of the Traditional History of the Third Degree, containing as it does certain of the secrets of the degree, was an integral part of the Ceremony of Raising. It therefore instructed the Grand Secretary not to register any Brother as having received the Third Degree until it was established that he had received the Traditional History.

Although it was the hope of the Board that as a consequence of this direction the practice of delivering the Traditional History on a separate occasion would gradually cease, this has not proved to be the case.

The practice appears to be largely unknown in London and most Provinces, and Provincial Grand Masters generally have expressed surprise that it should exist. It has been suggested (though this is not easily capable of verification) that, with fewer candidates coming forward, Lodges are “spinning out” their work. If this is so, it would suggest that the practice is of recent origin; and it is, at any rate, certain that all the more commonly used rituals treat the Third Degree as a single indivisible whole. Moreover, the omission of the Traditional History saves only some ten to fifteen minutes, so that the overall length of the ceremony is unlikely to have been a significant consideration.

The Board has now reaffirmed its view that the delivery of the Traditional History of the Third Degree is an integral part of the Ceremony of Raising. It therefore trusts that the Grand Lodge will endorse its recommendation that the Third Degree be given in its entirety on every occasion that it is worked.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 11 June 2014)

### **TREASURER’S DUTIES AND LODGE ACCOUNTS**

The Board has recently given consideration to the provisions of Rule 153 of the Book of Constitutions and whether any amendment is desirable in the light of current conditions. It has concluded that the Rule is not only clear in its scope and intent, but, except in relation to electronic transfers, is no less applicable today than when it was originally framed. Nevertheless it considers that the Rule would be more readily understood if it were slightly amended and recast into separate paragraphs.

The Board also considers that the misunderstandings which periodically arise as to the proper application of the Rule will be reduced, if not eliminated, by a commentary on its provisions. It therefore hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse the following statement, which also draws together under a single heading several previous references to the same subject-matter. The numbering of the statement follows the proposed renumbering of the Rule into paragraphs:

- (a) Except where a payment is made direct into the bank account of a Lodge, it is the Treasurer to whom all subscriptions or other moneys due to the Lodge are to be paid, and he alone can give a discharge. That is not to say that a Brother cannot send cash or his cheque via the Secretary or some other Brother, but he does so at his own risk until the money reaches the Treasurer (or the Lodge’s account).

The words “without undue delay” deliberately leave some flexibility to the Treasurer as to the time within which moneys must be deposited (which is largely a matter of common sense, depending on the amount involved and the Treasurer’s location and circumstances); the important word is “undue”. In appropriate circumstances the Treasurer may reasonably delegate the task of paying in moneys to a trusted individual, but there should be no further delegation by the individual so chosen.

The bank and, where appropriate, the branch *must* be approved by a resolution passed in open Lodge, so that it may be known to the members and duly minuted; under no circumstances may this be delegated to the Lodge Committee. Similarly, if it is wished to enable the Lodge to make use of

electronic banking, a resolution must be passed by the Lodge authorising the Treasurer to make electronic payments from the Lodge's account. *Only* the Treasurer may be so authorised.

- (b) The Treasurer is primarily responsible for making payments out of the Lodge funds under his control, provided that they are for authorised purposes (e.g. regular payments such as Grand Lodge dues or dining charges) or have been specifically approved by the Lodge (in which connection, see the model by law "Payment of any sum exceeding £\_\_\_\_\_ if for other than ordinary purposes may be made only by resolution of the Lodge, of which notice has been given on the summons, except in a case of emergency when such payment may be authorised by the Master and reported to the Lodge at the next regular meeting.").

The Treasurer must normally sign every cheque. Since he has responsibility for the safe keeping of the Lodge's funds it is right that he retain control over payments and it would be inequitable that others should be permitted regularly to make payments without his knowledge. Under the Rule, in its amended form, the Treasurer can be solely authorised to make electronic payments, but two or more signatures (one of which must normally be that of the Treasurer) will in future be required on every cheque.\* The second signatory should be one out of *several* Brethren authorised for the purpose; any such authorisation must be of a named Brother (rather than the holder of a particular office) and must be given by resolution passed in open Lodge; under no circumstances may this be delegated to the Lodge Committee. Every signatory is under a duty to satisfy himself that the sum stated in every cheque he is called upon to sign is properly due from Lodge funds.

- (c) The traditional method of the Treasurer keeping a record of the moneys which pass directly or indirectly through his hands is by the use of a cash book. There can be no objection to the cash book taking an electronic form such as a spreadsheet, but in that case it is essential not only that regular "back-ups" are made of the electronic record but also that the data is printed out regularly and kept as "hard copy", so that there is available a written record showing every transaction. Some flexibility is implied by the word "regularly" in the Rule, and a similar degree of flexibility should apply to the printing out of data held electronically; it is suggested that whenever a significant amount of money flows in or out of the Lodge's funds a hard copy should be made.

A Lodge's accounting year does not have to be the same as its subscription year (although that is usually the case), but any change requires a resolution of the members passed in open Lodge.

\*In September 2017 this paragraph of Rule 153 was amended to permit a Lodge to resolve that the sole signature of the Treasurer on a cheque shall suffice.

The Brethren elected to the Audit Committee should generally be senior members and, wherever possible, they should also be Brethren with some knowledge of accountancy or book-keeping. The practice adopted in some

Lodges of appointing only junior members to the Audit Committee (unless they do have significant knowledge of accountancy or book-keeping) is disapproved and should be discontinued.

- (d) The form of the certificate of the Audit Committee is effectively set out in this paragraph of the Rule, and it should be noted that the audited accounts bearing the certificate must be sent out with the Lodge's summons so that every member has the opportunity to raise any issues whether or not he is able to be present at the meeting. For this reason it is not permissible for the accounts to be distributed at the meeting at which they are to be considered.
- (e) *Every* fund maintained by or in connection with the Lodge must be the subject of annual accounts, which must be audited and formally presented to the Lodge. This paragraph does not require that the Lodge's Treasurer be a signatory on cheques making payments from those funds, or that he be the person who keeps their accounts. It is, however, essential that the Lodge approve the bank at which such funds are held as well as the signatories on the respective accounts.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 March, 2013)

#### **TRIBUTES TO DECEASED BROTHERN**

The practice of commemorating a newly deceased Brother at the next meeting of his Lodge or Chapter has a long and distinguished history in Freemasonry, and deserves nothing but encouragement. Such commemoration normally takes the form of a brief (or not so brief) eulogy followed by a short period of silence, and sometimes concludes with a short prayer.

The Board is, however, concerned to discover that in an increasing number of Lodges the simple tribute has recently become amplified by the introduction of additional material, often imported from American or continental practice, the whole frequently being designated a "Lodge of Sorrow".

The Board strongly deprecates the use of such ceremonies, which have no genuine historical justification in English Masonic practice and risk blurring the clear lines between Freemasonry (which is emphatically **not** a religion) and religion. It hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse its view that the death of a Brother should be marked only by an eulogy or tribute, and that in particular there should be no display or parading of a deceased Brother's regalia at, or immediately before or after, a Lodge meeting.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 March, 2024)

#### **UNAUTHORISED APPEALS**

The Board has again had under consideration the Statement on Unauthorised Appeals contained in its report to Grand Lodge adopted on 6 June 1956, the text of which was as follows:

It is irregular for any appeal to be made to the Craft in general to support particular objects, causes, or movements without the sanction of the MW The Grand Master, or, in the case of any such appeal intended only for circulation in a specific Province or District, of the respective Provincial or District Grand Master.'



When originally promulgated in 1918, this Statement was intended to apply to Appeals on behalf of non-Masonic objects, but for many years it has been treated as applying also to Appeals on behalf of Masonic Charitable objects. After consulting the Presidents of the Grand Charity, the Masonic Foundation for the Aged and the Sick and the Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, the Board recommends that the matter should be put beyond doubt, and that the Statement be taken to apply also to appeals on behalf of Masonic Charitable objects.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 December 1983)

#### **VOCAL MUSIC IN DEGREE CEREMONIES**

Grand Lodge is of opinion that instrumental or vocal music at Masonic meetings is not per se objectionable during Masonic meetings; indeed it has never objected to the use of Opening and Closing Hymns, the National Anthem, and Hymns, Responses, and Anthems at Consecrations; but care must be taken that vocal music is such that it is not identified exclusively with a particular form of divine worship and that it does not offend the susceptibilities of a particular creed since Masonry is open to the adherents of every faith which requires a belief in a Supreme Being, and that all other items should be scrutinized with the same care as any spoken additions, thus preventing innovations in the body of Masonry and bringing to an end any that may have developed. Grand Lodge therefore trusts that no items of vocal music will be used in Masonic ceremonies unless with the sanction of the M.W. The Grand Master in respect of Lodges in London and of those abroad not under Districts, and elsewhere of the Provincial or District Grand Master concerned.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 13 March 1963)

#### **WEARING OF GAUNTLETS**

The Board has examined the historical background to the wearing of gauntlets by Present and Past Grand, Provincial, and District Grand Officers, and by holders of London and Overseas Grand Rank, and is satisfied that their use as separate items of regalia is derived rather from change in fashion and as a matter of convenience, than from any real symbolic significance.

The Board is also aware that gauntlets form an expensive part of an officer's regalia, and has therefore decided to recommend that the wearing of gauntlets as laid down in Rule 268, Book of Constitutions, should in future be permissive rather than mandatory.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 March 1971)

### **WEARING OF GLOVES DURING LODGE MEETINGS**

Enquiries are often made of the Grand Secretary as to the correct procedure to be observed in the wearing of gloves during Lodge meetings.

As laid down by the Grand Lodge in June 1950, it is left to the discretion of the Master of each Lodge to decide, after duly considering the interests of the members generally, whether to request that they be worn.

- (a) The Board considers that when such a request is made it should cover all present, and not, as sometimes occurs, the Officers only.
- (b) The Board recommends the Grand Lodge to rule that if gloves are worn they should be worn at all times except
  - (i) By candidates for the three degrees.
  - (ii) By the Master Elect when actually taking his Obligations on the V.S.L. Gloves would thus not be removed by the Master (or Wardens or any temporary occupant of their Chairs or by any Brother assisting them) in the course of entrusting or examining candidates, or when investing Officers.
- (c) The Board sees no objection to Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts wearing gloves when not actually being passed or raised.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 June 1964)

### **WEARING OF REGALIA IN ENGLISH LODGES**

The Board wishes to remind Brethren who have joined Lodges of the English Constitution from other Constitutions that they must wear English regalia in English Lodges, whether they are present as members or as visitors. Joining membership is not complete until a categorical promise is given under Rule 163, Book of Constitutions, to pay due obedience to all the Rules and Regulations of the United Grand Lodge of England. This applies inter alia to Rule 239, which states that no Brother (i.e. of the English Constitution) shall be admitted to the Grand Lodge or any subordinate Lodge without the clothing appropriate to his rank under the Grand Lodge.

The Board feels that it is only reasonable that 'dual members' who have in writing the request of their Grand Master to represent him in a meeting held under the English Constitution, or who as Masters of Lodges are invited, and are paying an official visit, to an English Lodge, should be excepted from these provisions, and hopes that the Grand Lodge will endorse this view.

In this connection attention is drawn also to a ruling of the Board that any Master installed in a recognised Constitution is entitled to the prefix 'Worshipful' and to wear levels on his apron. He is, however, not entitled to wear a Past Master's collar until he has qualified as such by service in the chair of an English Lodge.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 8 December 1965)

### **WEARING OF ROYAL ARCH JEWELS**

Rule 241 of the Book of Constitutions prohibits the wearing of jewels, etc., unless they appertain to those degrees specified in the preliminary declaration to the Book of Constitutions, namely, those of Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch, and have been approved or allowed by the Grand Master.

In view of the wording of the preliminary declaration, the Board feels that it should be made clear that there is no objection to qualified Brethren wearing the jewel of the order of the Royal Arch with Craft clothing and that they should be encouraged to do so.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 9 September 1981)

### **WOMEN AND FREEMASONRY**

There exist in England and Wales at least two Grand Lodges solely for women. Except that these bodies admit women, they are, so far as can be ascertained, otherwise regular in their practice. There is also one which admits both men and women to membership. They are not recognised by this Grand Lodge and intervisitation may not take place. There are, however, informal discussions from time to time with the women's Grand Lodges on matters of mutual concern. Brethren are therefore free to explain to non-Masons, if asked, that Freemasonry is not confined to men (even though this Grand Lodge does not itself admit women). Further information about these bodies may be obtained by writing to the Grand Secretary.

The Board is also aware that there exist other bodies not directly imitative of pure ancient Masonry, but which by implication introduce Freemasonry, such as the Order of the Eastern Star. Membership of such bodies, attendance at their meetings or participation in their ceremonies is incompatible with membership of this Grand Lodge.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 10 March 1999)

### **YORK RITE**

In June 2003 the Board drew attention to the York Rite College which exists to service the York Rite in the United States of America and elsewhere, as well as to work some additional ritual.

Despite the very precise wording in the Board's Report some have not understood the extent and scope of the prohibition which was then imposed on members of this Constitution participating in the York Rite in areas where we have jurisdiction either exclusively or jointly with one or both of the two Home Grand Lodges.

The Board affirms its previous recommendation that Grand Lodge regard as irregular the York Rite when worked in London, a Province, or any District or place in which the Grand Lodge has either exclusive jurisdiction or jurisdiction shared only with the Grand Lodge of Ireland or Scotland. This does not prevent members of Lodges under this Grand Lodge from participating in the activities of the York Rite or the York Rite College in places (e.g. Canada and the United States of America) outside the geographical area thus defined.

(Extract from Report of Board of General Purposes, adopted 14 September 2005)

# DECISIONS BY THE BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES 1917-2014

## ARMS OF GRAND LODGE

May a private Lodge use Grand Lodge's Arms?

Grand Lodge's Arms may be used only by Grand Lodge.

Provincial and District Grand Lodges may, however, apply to the College of Arms for a grant of Arms based on Grand Lodge's but with a bordure of local significance.

## ASSESSMENTS UPON MEMBERS

(i) Can the following be allowed in the By-Laws?

It shall be lawful for a majority of the Brethren in regular Lodge assembled to lay an equal assessment upon the Brethren to meet special expenses and, when confirmed at the subsequent regular Lodge, such assessment shall be binding upon all the Brethren.

A month's notice shall be given in open Lodge and must appear in the summons convening the regular Meeting.

(ii) May there be included in a Lodge subscription a definite amount to be devoted to qualifying each member as a subscriber to Masonic Institutions?

This is considered undesirable and it is recommended that no such By-Law be permitted.

This is an enforced subscription to charity and could not be approved.

## 'ASSOCIATE MEMBERS'

May the term 'Associate' Member be used?

This term is not approved, the terms 'Country' and 'Non-Dining' being deemed sufficiently comprehensive.

## BALLOT OF CANDIDATES

Must a Candidate, who has not been summoned to attend for initiation within the year of election, be subject to a second ballot?

Yes; the Lodge should not elect more than it can initiate within the time stipulated in Rule 159, B. of C.

## BALLOTING, COLLECTIVE

Is a Collective Ballot regular? If 'yes', would a sufficient number of black balls exclude all the Candidates, or should the ballot be retaken individually?

A Collective Ballot is regular, provided that, if there be a sufficient number of black balls to exclude a Candidate, each Candidate should be balloted for individually.

While Candidates for Initiation and joining can properly be balloted for together, it is inappropriate to ballot for both subscribing and Honorary Members.

## CESSATION OF MEMBERSHIP FOR NON-PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

In what circumstances does membership cease for non-payment of subscriptions?

Automatic cessation of membership of a Private Lodge takes place under Rule 148 at the expiration of two years unpaid subscription: it cannot be delayed or revoked by the Lodge.

Exclusion for non-payment of subscriptions may be effected before the expiry of two years, if the Lodge By-Laws permit, by a strict observance of the procedure set out in Rule 181.

In either case the name of the Brother concerned must be reported to the Masonic Authorities mentioned in the appropriate Rule.

Membership can be regained only by following the procedure laid down in Rules 148 and 163.

(N.B. Under Rule 4, the power of expulsion\* of a member from the Craft can be exercised only by the Grand Lodge.)

\*On 9 June, 1993, Rule 4 was amended so that the power of expulsion will ordinarily be delegated to Appeals Courts and the Panel for Clemency.

#### **CHARITY JEWEL**

Are Brethren of other Jurisdictions eligible for the Charity Jewel?

This is restricted to Brethren of the English Jurisdiction.

#### **DISABLED CANDIDATES**

How much variation is allowed to the ritual to accommodate a candidate's disability?

In cases where the nature of a candidate's disability is such that without extensive modifications execution of part or parts of the ritual would be difficult or impossible, advice and guidance is available from the Grand Secretary's Office (in Provinces and Districts, via the Provincial or District Grand Secretary).

#### **DISQUALIFICATION FROM HOLDING OFFICE**

Are all subscribing members of a Lodge eligible to hold office?

Yes: Under Rule 145, para. 2, no Lodge may disqualify any member from holding office so long as he is not in default in the payment of his subscriptions. This applies to whatever type of subscription under the Lodge's By-Laws he pays, but is subject to the freedom of choice belonging under Rule 104 to the Master Elect.

Thus every member is equally eligible for appointment to office irrespective of the rate of subscription payable by him.

No member is ineligible for election as Master or Treasurer by reason of his paying a lower rate of subscription.

### **DISTRICT BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES**

May members of other recognised Jurisdictions be co-opted upon Committees of the District Board of General Purposes?

Such Brethren may be co-opted for special purposes, but such purposes must be specifically defined.

### **FUND FOR LODGE MUSIC**

Would a By-Law be approved to provide that a proportion of the Lodge subscription be reserved to create a Musical Entertainment Fund?

Such a By-Law is considered undesirable, and it is recommended that it be not approved.

Also a By-Law providing an annual payment for Music.

As above.

### **HALL STONE LODGE JEWEL**

(i) Should some suitable formula be instituted for handing on the Hall Stone Lodge Jewel at Installations?

It should be transferred by the outgoing to the incoming Master in open Lodge, immediately before the investiture of Officers, with a few appropriate words.

There is no officially recognised form of words.

(ii) When may the Jewel be worn?

In accordance with Rule 251 it may be worn on any occasion when Craft Masonic regalia is being worn.

In no circumstances should it be worn on non-Masonic occasions such as Lodge Ladies' Nights.

### **HONORARY MEMBERS (SEE ALSO HONORARY MEMBERSHIP, P. 20)**

In the event of a Lodge electing as an Honorary Member a Brother from another Constitution, must he make a declaration in accordance with Rule 163?

A declaration is not necessary in the case of Brethren coming from a recognised Jurisdiction.

### **INITIATE**

(a) Where should the Initiate be seated in Lodge after the ceremony?

In the north-east immediately on the right of the Senior Deacon.

(b) Has the Initiate any precedence in an outgoing procession from the Lodge?

No

### **JOINING MEMBERS FROM A RECOGNISED CONSTITUTION**

(a) What is the position of Brethren of high Masonic rank joining from another Jurisdiction?

Any Master installed in a recognised Constitution has the right to the prefix 'Worshipful' and to wear the 'levels' on his apron.

(b) Do the 'other Lodges' to which the Brethren nominated have belonged extend to those in other Constitutions?

To Lodges in all Jurisdictions recognised by our own. All Lodges must be disclosed, but no Lodge can be responsible for any fees due to a Lodge in another Jurisdiction.

**LEWIS**

- (i) Description of
- (ii) Privileges of

A Lewis is the uninitiated son of a Mason and it matters not whether the son was born before or after his father became a Mason.

Where a Lewis is one of two candidates being initiated on the same day he would be the senior for the purpose of the ceremony. He cannot claim precedence over candidates proposed or elected previously to himself and he must take his place in the usual rotation on any waiting list. Being a Lewis is not grounds for dispensation to enable him to be initiated under the age of 21. (*see* Rule 157, B. of C.)

**MEMBERSHIP, LIMITATION OF**

(a) Can a By-Law be inserted limiting the number of members in a Lodge?

This can be effected only by honourable understanding, and no such By-Law would now be approved.

(b) Can a By-Law be inserted limiting the number of Initiates each year in a Lodge?

The number of Initiates in a Lodge cannot be limited by By-Law.

**PAST MASTER PERFORMING CEREMONY**

When a Master vacates the Chair for a Past Master to perform a ceremony does he invest him with his Collar for the time being?

No, but the Past Master must be clothed according to his rank.

**PAST MASTER, REJOINING**

What position does a P.M. take on rejoining a Lodge from which he resigned?

As Junior P.M., taking precedence from the date he rejoins.

**PAST MASTER'S DEGREE**

Is there a Past Master's Degree or Ceremony?

There is no such degree, or ceremony belonging to such degree, recognised by Grand Lodge.

**PAST MASTERS OF PRIVATE LODGES**

(i) Who are the Past Masters referred to in Rule 264, Book of Constitutions?

Those who have served a year as Master of a Lodge under the English Constitution and have not been promoted to Grand Rank, Provincial, District, London, or Overseas Grand Rank.

(ii) When such a Past Master serves as an Officer of a Lodge, should he wear his Past Master's collar as well as the collar of the Office to which he is appointed or elected?

When a Past Master is appointed or elected as an Officer of the year, he should wear the collar and jewel of his Office as well as the collar and jewel of his rank.

### **PAST MASTERS OF PRIVATE LODGES (continued)**

When an Officer of the year is absent and a Past Master is appointed by the Master (or on his behalf) to take that Office for the evening, he should wear the collar and jewel of that Office as well as the collar and jewel of his rank.

Any Brother who has been appointed as an 'additional' Officer of the year — as defined in Rule 104(a), B. of C. — and who has also been appointed, whether for one meeting or for the year, to hold a 'regular' office, should, to be correct, wear the collar and jewel, of his 'additional' office and also the collar and jewel of the 'regular' office concerned during the meeting or the year for which he has been appointed to it. If he is a Past Master, he should wear a Past Master's collar and jewel in addition.

However, a Brother who occupies an office in a Lodge (from that of the Master downwards) for whatever reason, when the regularly appointed or elected holder of that office is present, should not wear the collar and jewel of that office; in these circumstances they should be worn only by the regular holder of the office.

### **PAST PROVINCIAL OR DISTRICT GRAND OFFICERS**

Can a Past Provincial or District Grand Officer, who has ceased to be a member of his Provincial or District Grand Lodge under Rule 65, wear Provincial or District Clothing?

There is no regulation by which he can be prevented from so doing.

### **POSITION OF OFFICERS IN THE LODGE**

Where should (a) the Immediate Past Master, and (b) the Chaplain normally sit in Lodge?

The I.P.M. should sit on the immediate left of the Master and the Chaplain on the immediate left of the I.P.M.

Where should (a) the Master, (b) the I.P.M., (c) the Chaplain sit when some other qualified Brother is temporarily presiding?

The Master should sit on the immediate left of the Brother presiding, the I.P.M. on the immediate left of the Master, and the Chaplain on the immediate left of the I.P.M.



### **PRECEDENCE IN PROVINCIAL OR DISTRICT LODGES**

What is the precedence of Provincial or District Grand Officers and Grand Officers when visiting Private Provincial or District Lodges?

Officers appointed by the Grand Master take precedence of Officers appointed by a Provincial or District Grand Master, subject, however, in a Provincial or District Lodge, to the Deputy or Assistant Provincial or District Grand Master or a Provincial or District Officer specially sent by his Provincial or District Grand Master. Holders of London Grand Rank, although appointed by the Grand Master, are subject to Rule 60, Book of Constitutions. (see Rules 122 and 124, B. of C.)

### **PROCEDURE IN LODGE**

Is a Master entitled to decide what procedure shall be practised during his year of office?

Rule 155 Book of Constitutions lays it down that the majority of a Lodge shall regulate the proceedings.

### **PROPOSITIONS FROM THE CHAIR**

Does a proposition from the Chair require a seconder?

All propositions should be seconded.

### **QUORUM**

1. How many Brethren must be present before a Lodge can be opened or a degree worked?

Five (excluding the Tyler and the candidate for the degree in question); two must be members of the Lodge and one an Installed Master. (see Rule 119, B. of C.)

2. How many Installed Masters must be present before a Board can be opened?

Three (excluding the Master Elect and the Tyler).

### **REGISTRATION FORMS (SEE ALSO SERVING BROTHER, P. 54)**

1. Should they be filled up,

(a) By Founders of a New Lodge?

This is not necessary, as examination of the signatures is undertaken at Freemasons' Hall.

Yes

(b) By Joining Members of Installed Masters' Lodges?

Yes

(c) By rejoining Members?

Yes

(d) By a Serving Brother?

2. What is the correct time for reading registration forms?

Registration forms must be read immediately before the Ballot is taken. (see Rule 164, B. of C.) They must be handed to the Secretary before proposition is made. (see Rules 159, 163, and 164, B. of C.)

### **ROYAL ARCH RANKS ON CRAFT DOCUMENTS**

Is it permissible for Royal Arch Ranks to be shown on Craft documents?

Yes

**ROYAL ARCH REGALIA**

May Royal Arch Regalia be worn in a Craft Lodge?

No; but approved Royal Arch Jewels may be worn suspended by ribbons of the appropriate colour.

**SERVING BROTHER**

Should a Candidate for initiation as a Serving Brother under Rule 170, Book of Constitutions, sign.

(a) The Registration Form?

Yes

(b) The Declaration Book?

Yes

**SUMMONSES (SEE ALSO P. 41)**

Is it in order for a Lodge Summons to be sent out by post card?

No, nor should a post card be used as an invitation to any function with which Masonry is concerned.

## ROYAL ARCH INFORMATION

(See also Membership of the Royal Arch, p. 29, Royal Arch Chapters, p. 36,  
Royal Arch Collarettes, p. 36)

### **DELIVERY OF LECTURES AFTER EXALTATION**

The Committee is aware that constraints of time and other factors make it inadvisable for multiple lectures to be given at the same meeting that a candidate is exalted. It wishes to make it clear that on each occasion that an Exaltation takes place the signs of the degree must be communicated (either as a separate part of the relevant Lecture, or elsewhere in the ceremony, according to the particular working adopted by the Chapter). It also hopes that the Lectures will not be neglected and that every candidate will have an opportunity to hear all of the Lectures delivered in full within a reasonable time after Exaltation.

Whilst not wishing to encourage a widespread departure from the existing practice, the Committee considers that in some circumstances it may be desirable for any or all of the Lectures to be delivered by competent Companions below the rank of Installed First (or Second or Third) Principal in order that the dignity of the ceremony may be properly maintained.

(Extract from Report of Committee of General Purposes, adopted 27 April 2023)

### **QUORUM FOR CHAPTER CONVOCATIONS**

The Committee has been asked to give an opinion on the number of Companions required to open a Royal Arch Chapter and work any of the ceremonies.

After careful consideration of the requirements of the Royal Arch ritual and a comparison with the position in the Craft, the Committee recommends to Grand Chapter that no Chapter should be opened unless there are five, and no ceremony of Exaltation worked unless there are seven Companions present (excluding the Janitor and the candidate), of whom two must be members of the Chapter and three must be qualified to occupy the respective Principals' Chairs. Further, that no Conclave of Installed First or Second Principals should be opened unless at least two such Principals are present (excluding the Janitor and the Principal Elect).

(Extract from Report of Committee of General Purposes, adopted 8 November 2000)

### **SALUTING THE PEDESTAL**

*Supreme Grand Chapter on 10 November 2004 approved* “a recommendation that the R. or H. sign should no longer be given before addressing the Principals for the first time.”

*In consequence the R. or H. sign is only to be given when opening or closing a Chapter, or by Companions who arrive after the Chapter is opened or who leave before the Chapter is closed.*

## PAPERS FOR DELIVERY IN PRIVATE CHAPTERS

The list below shows topics, covered in papers given in Grand Chapter in recent years, which the Committee considers suitable for delivery in private Chapters. Copies of the papers, with, if appropriate, introductory notes, can be obtained from the Librarian in Freemasons' Hall.

<u>Lecturer</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
E Comp A.R. Hewitt, PGStB	The Supreme Grand Chapter of England. A brief history from Lord Blayney to the Duke of Sussex.	1 July 1966
E Comp A.R. Hewitt, PGStB	The First Bi-Centenaries of Royal Arch Chapters	12 February 1969
E Comp R.A. Wells, PAGDC	A short Study of the Symbols on the Principal Banners	12 November 1969
E Comp A.R. Hewitt, PGStB	Grand Chapter Ritual of the Late 18th Century	11 November 1970
E Comp A.R. Hewitt, PGStB	Early Royal Arch Regalia	9 February 1972
E Comp T.O. Haunch	The Royal Arch in England, Ireland and Scotland - Apparent differences within a Basic Identity	14 February 1973
E Comp A.R. Hewitt, PGStB	Looking Back 200 Years	13 February 1974
E Comp R.A. Wells, PAGDC	Concerning Royal Arch Installations	12 February 1975
E Comp T.O. Haunch, PGStB	The Royal Arch in Relation to the Scandinavian Rite	11 February 1976
E Comp C.N. Batham	Whence came the Royal Arch	8 February 1978
E Comp Surg Capt G.S. Irvine, CBE, PGSwdB	Variations in the Devices on Royal Arch Banners	14 February 1979
E Comp the Rev Canon R. Tydeman, PGSN	A new approach to Mystical Hebrew	14 November 1979
E Comp K.W.H. Hastwell, PGStB	The Enthusiasm of the Principal Sojourner	13 February 1980
E Comp I.H. Mendoza	The Pass-Words leading to the R.A.	11 February 1981

E Comp R.A. Wells, PGStB	Royal Arch in the United States of America	11 November 1981
E Comp A.R.W. Kent	Grand Originals – A Story behind a Legend	10 February 1982
E Comp I.H. Mendoza	The Five Signs in Royal Arch Masonry	10 November 1982
E Comp Sir James Stubbs, KCVO, PGSE	Changes in Grand Chapter, 1947–1980	9 November 1983
E Comp Sir James Stubbs, KCVO, PGSE	Changes in Grand Chapter, 1947–1980 (continued)	14 November 1984
E Comp W.W. Ruff, CBE, DL, PGSupt, Surrey	Reflections on the Royal Arch Jewel	13 February 1985
E Comp the Rev Canon R. Tydeman, GSupt, Suffolk	The Words on the Triangle - An Alternative View	13 November 1985
E Comp C.F.W. Dyer, ERD, PGStB	The Royal Arch Words	12 February 1986
E Comp R.A. Wells, PGStB	A Brief Study of the Pedestal	12 November 1986
E Comp I.H. Mendoza, PAGDC	The three epochs in the history of Freemasonry	11 February 1987
E Comp the Rev Canon R. Tydeman, PGSupt, Suffolk	History, Mystery and Geometry	11 November 1987
E Comp J.M. Hamill, PAGSoj	Pure Antient Masonry	14 November 1990
E Comp J.M. Hamill, PAGSoj	225 Years of Grand Chapter	13 November 1991
E Comp J.M. Hamill, PAGSoj	Royal First Grand Principals	11 November 1992
E Comp J.M. Hamill, PAGSoj	The Place of the Royal Arch in English Masonry	9 November 1994
ME Comp the Rev P. Hemingway, 3rdGPrin	The Volume of the Sacred Law and the Royal Arch	11 February 1995
E Comp J.M. Hamill, PAGSoj	The revision of the Royal Arch Ritual	11 September 1996

*Papers for Delivery in Private Chapters*

E Comp Y. Beresiner	A New Look at the Charter of Compact	11 February 1998
E Comp R.A. Crane, PGTreas	The Grand Sanhedrin that sits in the Hall of Hewn Stone	10 February 1999
E Comp S. Fernie, PAGSoj	Traditional History: The Biblical Background	10 November 1999
E Comp J.H. Hamill, PAGSoj	Some thoughts on the Origins of the Royal Arch	8 November 2000
E Comp the Rev E.D. Levy, PAGSoj	The Holy Royal Arch - Enjoyment, Recruitment, Retention	8 November 2006
ME Comp the Very Rev N. Collings, P3rdGPrin	Rebuilding the Temple	14 November 2007
E Comp J.M. Hamill, PGSwdB	Pure Antient Masonry Triumphant	16 October 2013