



## **SET PIECES THAT CAN BE USED TO GIVE LODGES SOMETHING DIFFERENT WHEN THEY CANNOT WORK A CEREMONY**

The Explanation of the Preparation (Short Version)	<i>page 2</i>
The Explanation of the Preparation (Long Version)	<i>pages 3-6</i>
The 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree Tracing Board	<i>page 7</i>
The 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree Lectures	<i>page 7</i>
The Walking Charge	<i>page 8</i>
The Forget-Me-Knot Flower	<i>page 9</i>
Presentation of a Grand Lodge Certificate	<i>pages 10-11</i>

## The Explanation of the Preparation (Short Version)

Your preparation before your initiation must have seemed strange to you. By command of the Worshipful Master, I am now permitted to explain it.

You were hoodwinked that your mind might conceive before your eyes were enabled to discover the beauties of Freemasonry. As you were received in a state of darkness, you were reminded to keep all the world so in respect of our masonic signs. Moreover, had you refused to go through the usual ceremony, you would have been led from the Lodge without observing its form.

The reason for a cable-tow with a running noose having been placed about your neck has already been explained. In ancient days, the entered apprentice wore a cable-tow to impress on his mind his duty to keep within hail, so as to come on in due time whenever summoned to his Lodge, unless prevented by sickness.

Your left breast was made bare in order to discover the sex, as none but freeborn men of mature age, can be made Freemasons.

Your right arm was made bare that the brethren might see that you had no weapon about you.

You were deprived of all money and received in a seeming state of poverty as a warning to your heart, that, should you meet a brother in distress, you should do to him as you would wish him to do to you. You were also deprived of all metallic substances that you might bring nothing offensive or defensive into Lodge to disturb its harmony, a further reason being, that at the building of King Solomon's Temple there was not heard the sound of a metallic tool.

Your left knee was made bare because it was on that upon which you took your great and solemn obligation. The left side of a man has always been considered his weaker side, and, although the obligation you have taken is sacred and binding, it is deemed imperfect without others which are to follow. You took it, therefore, on your left knee., but your inherent weakness was strengthened by placing your right hand on the Volume of the Sacred Law.

You were slipshod because that was the custom observed by our ancient brethren in the East, where they slip off a shoe as a pledge of fidelity. This originated at the time that the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush when he commanded him saying, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground" and our Lodges being consecrated are considered to stand on Holy Ground.

You gained admission into the Lodge this evening by three distinct knocks. They allude to ancient and venerable exhortations.

**(Knock)** "Seek and ye shall find";

**(Knock)** "Ask and ye shall receive";

**(Knock)** "Knock and it shall be opened unto you".

Having sought in your mind, you asked of your friend, he knocked, **(Knock, Knock, Knock)** and the door of Freemasonry became wide open to you.

And now, Brother, a hearty welcome to Freemasonry in general and this Lodge in particular.

## The Explanation of the Preparation (Long Version)

Freemasons' Lodges in some form or another have existed for eons, but Freemasonry as we know it today probably started in medieval times with guilds of skilled workers who built great houses and halls for the then gentry. The masons demanded a tithe for building such grand properties in that the landowner was to build at his expense houses for the common folk to live in as well; the gentry were then let in on our secrets and joined the guilds to prevent 'cowboy builders' but were treated as equals among men with no special privileges.

Lodges from the late 1700 to early 1800 met in rooms above public houses. The Entered Apprentice's job was to mark out the chequered floor in chalk before the meeting. This practice ended after the Victuallers Association expelled Freemasons as troublesome after a tyler took his job too seriously and stabbed a number of customers who maraudered up the stairs. This was caused when the apprentices used too much wine to remove the chequered floor and it dripped onto those below who mistook it for blood. Hence the rise of masonic halls.

Entry to Freemasonry is not something you can buy. If you are to be admitted to this fraternity the most important asset is yourself and not your bank balance, your jewellery or your gold watch. It is therefore essential that on your initial entry to a lodge you should be seen to be "without your normal possessions" and relying on your own character, as a man "of good report", for your acceptance.

Indeed, unless we again appreciate what is behind such a requirement as having an open shirt, a bared knee and a cord to retain our trousers if a metal belt or braces are denied, we might well think that this is a requirement too far.

What we are being asked to represent here is a working mason of the late middle ages. He came to work with an open shirt, knee breeches and a cord around his waist and it is that impression which the candidate is now to offer.

Next part is the preparation of a slipper on one foot. Surely that has nothing to do with the way in which working masons were dressed? It hasn't. This practice was begun in the days when there was a lodge attached to the masons' trade guild. This was from the time of Queen Elizabeth I when what we call 'symbolic ritual' was beginning to be created. All this early ritual was based on stories and events taken from the Bible which, let us remember, was now translated into what was then modern English and was available for families, schools and individuals to read.

The story from which this incident of a slipper comes is in the Book of Ruth which, by the way, was also the portion of the Bible at which it was eventually opened when a lodge met later in the apprentice degree. It was also the book that spoke about Boaz which was again appropriate as the eventual password for the first degree.

Ruth became the wife of Boaz, or probably one of his wives. A slipper given was the sign of joining another family. That is to symbolise what is about to happen to the candidate. The main reason for a blindfold is so that from the very outset we can both test and create the candidate's full reliance and trust in those whom he cannot see and almost certainly cannot know. The candidate is asked at the very start of his journey into the lodge in whom he puts his trust. The answer expected and should be able to be given freely and without prompting, is "In God" accepting that he agrees to become the member of this new family of the lodge.

The cable tow around the new mason's neck is to teach him that he is setting out on a journey into the unknown as Noah did and if he should fail then he will be lost at sea. The doves of Noah on the deacons' wands are meant to be messengers of hope to the members of a masonic lodge.

As the candidate enters the lodge room for the first time, he is gently prodded with the point of a sharp object. This is part of another ancient practice which required that any candidate for the trade of a mason had to have all his faculties. To test these, we still ask whether the candidate can see anything. We test his hearing by asking a question and making knocks. We know he can walk because he is asked to follow his leader and we know he can feel because we now touch his flesh. In older days, as in some Scottish lodges still, he would have smelt incense on the central pedestal. Thus is his preparation complete. He is a 'fit and proper person' to be admitted into a lodge of brother Masons whom he can trust and who can trust him.

This officer owes his title to his duty of protecting the Lodge from intrusion. The word tyle, like tile, is derived from the Old English word tigel, or tygel, meaning "cover," and hence "protect".

The duty of the Tyler is "to keep off all cowans and intruders." The word Cowan is cognate with the legal word covin, "a deceitful agreement," and with the slang cove. Its proper meaning is "imposter".

You entered the Lodge by a door in the West signifying the beginning of life. . . not the birth. It will also be your gateway from life. . . but that's for another time. Your first encounter was the Inner Guard. The office of Inner Guard is of comparatively recent origin with 1816 being the first recorded mention of that office. For nearly a hundred years preceding this date, the visitors would have been admitted and the candidates received in due form by the youngest entered apprentice or a brother appointed by the Junior Warden.

In the ritual of the first degree, in the charge after initiation, we hear "In every age monarchs themselves have ben promoters of the art; have not thought it derogatory to their dignity to exchange the sceptre for the trowel". This statement may be interpreted as referring to the ancient practice of arming the most recent initiate or junior entered apprentice with a trowel as a means of keeping off all cowans and intruders. The trowel has also been described as the implement of the Inner Guard, with which he is enabled to seal up the door of the lodge room when all qualified brethren seeking admission have been admitted.

You were hoodwinked or blind-folded or for three special reasons. Firstly, that your mind might conceive before your eyes were enabled to discover the beauties of Freemasonry. Secondly, as you were received in a state of darkness you were reminded to keep all the outside world so in respect of masonic secrets. Thirdly, had you refused to go through the usual ceremony, you might have been led from the Lodge without observing its form.

Your left breast was bare in order to discover your sex as none save free born men of mature age can be made Freemasons. Your right arm was bare so the brethren might see you had no weapon about you and you were willing to labour. You were divested of all monies and metallic substances as a warning to your own heart that should you meet a Brother in distress you would do to him as you would want him to do unto you. A second reason was that you might bring nothing offensive or defensive into the lodge to disturb its harmony and peace. Thirdly, at the building of King Solomon's Temple there was not heard the sound of a metallic tool.

Upon entry, you stood on the chequered pavement or floor of the lodge, this is to represent the joys and sorrows of life, as well as night and day. After due prayer and testing questions you are led around the lodge in darkness, but there were guards placed at the South, West, and East gates of the courts of King Solomon's Temple, to see that none passed but such as were duly and truly prepared and had permission. It was therefore necessary that the candidate should meet with these several obstructions, that he might be duly examined and verified before he could be made a mason. You arrived by the North side of the Lodge which is considered the side of darkness and took three distinct steps each with growing confidence into the light.

Your left knee was bare because it was on that you took your great and solemn obligation. The left side of man has always been considered the weaker side and, although the obligation you have taken is sacred and binding, it is deemed imperfect without others which are to follow. You took it therefore on your left knee, but your inherent weakness was strengthened by placing your right hand on the Volume of the Sacred Law.

You were slipshod because that was the custom observed by our ancient brethren in the East where they were shorn of a shoe as a pledge of fidelity; as our lodges are said to stand on Holy Ground, it alludes to a passage of Scripture when the Lord spoke to Moses from the Burning Bush saying "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground".

The reason for the cable-tow with a running noose placed around your neck has already been explained: In ancient days the entered apprentice wore the cable-tow to impress upon his mind his duty to keep within hail so as to come on in due time whenever summoned to his Lodge unless prevented by sickness.

Again, the entered apprentice salute has already been explained, but the first part means 'To reach into the unknown'.

During the obligation. you swore to "hele, conceal and never reveal" and concerning the proper pronounciation of which there has been a good deal of speculation, peculiar to Freemasonry. This is derived from the Old English word helan, "to conceal" or "cover," and preserves its original meaning. It should be pronounced 'heel'.

The great masonic festival is held on Midsummer Day when the sun, at the northern solstice, reaches the zenith of its prolific power and is at its greatest altitude. In all ages this day has for this reason been a festival, and the reason that masonic lodges were formerly dedicated to St. John is that, since Christian times, Midsummer Day has been observed as the feast of this saint.

In all northern latitudes the sun at this period rises in the North-East, and it was in this quarter that, in Egyptian mythology, the sun first rose on the day it was created. These are all reasons for laying a foundation stone in the North-East and for placing the newly-initiated Freemason there.

In Victorian times, an apprentice certificate was issued as, pre-1813, lodges issued their own certificates. This was an important document as it gave the entered apprentice the right to claim assistance from the Lodge if he or his family fell on hard times. Also, a fellow-craft certificate was issued which gave him greater access to lodge funds as he progressed through Freemasonry. This certificate is still available today if requested and is used to transfer a brother to another lodge if, for example, he being based in London is moved, say to Liverpool, due to work commitment.

You gained admission into the Lodge by three distinct knocks. They allude to an ancient and venerable exhortation: "Seek and ye shall find; ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened to you". You, having sought in your mind, asked of your friend, he knocked and the door of Freemasonry was opened unto you.

And now, Brother, a hearty welcome to Freemasonry in general and this Lodge in particular.

## The 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Tracing Board

*(Emulation working, using 2014 edition – the small, blue book – pages 245-256)*

TB divided up between 4 people as follows:

**Part 1:** page 245 (start) – page 248 (“of our lectures, which I hope you will have many opportunities of hearing”)

**Part 2:** page 248 (“Our Lodges are supported by three great pillars”) – page 250 (“neither can any candidate be legally initiated into the Order”)

**Part 3:** page 250 (“The interior of a Freemasons’ Lodge” – page 253 (“for the Brethren to moralise on”)

**Part 4:** page 253 (“As the Tracing Board is for the Master”) – page 256 (end)

## The 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Lectures

*(Emulation working, using 1997 edition – the small, green book – pages 19-92)*

1 person can ask the questions, while 2-3 can answer them.

Sections 4-7 are very much contained in the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Tracing Board.

There are no summaries as to what each section is about; the summaries below are my own!

**Section 1 (pages 19-25): Who are you? Why are you here?** This is a decent intro, despite one long answer about what ‘free-born’ means.

**Section 2 (pages 26-41): How were you made a mason? (part 1).** A bit dull as just going through the initiation ceremony. Not recommended.

**Section 3 (pages 42-52): How were you made a mason? (part 2).** A bit dull as just going through the initiation ceremony. Not recommended.

**Section 4 (pages 53-63): Lodges; 3 Great Pillars/Wisdom, Strength & Beauty; Jacob’s Ladder; Faith, Hope & Charity.** Nice piece of ritual, but long. Enough for one meeting!

**Section 5 (pages 64-74): Ornaments (Mosaic Pavement, Blazing Star & Tessellated Border); Furniture (VSL, Square & Compasses); Moveable & Immoveable Jewels (Square, Level & Plumb Rule; Tracing Board, Rough & Perfect Ashlars).** Nice piece of ritual, but long again. Enough for one meeting!

**Section 6 (pages 75-81): Points; Principles (Brotherly Love, Relief & Truth); 4 Cardinal Virtues (Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence & Justice).** A bit dull. Not dreadful, but not especially recommended, when there are more appealing sections.

**Section 7 (pages 19-25): Free v Operative Masons; the Lewis; Wind & Freemasonry (really!!); Distinguishing Characteristics (Virtue, Honour & Mercy).** Apart from the piece on ‘wind’ ref Israelites crossing the Red Sea, this is interesting and could be done. Enough for one meeting!

## The Walking Charge

Bro.....it must indeed be very gratifying for you to know that you are now a Master Mason and have sealed your allegiance with one of the grandest and noblest fraternities in existence, one that encircles the globe and whose influence for good is never ending.

Your particular reason for becoming a member of this grand and noble order is known only to yourself.

It may have been the prompting of idle curiosity, that being so, your curiosity is now satisfied, in part, for, should you choose Freemasonry has much more for you to discover.

It may have been for business reasons, that being so, be at once undeceived for Freemasonry offers no pecuniary advantages to any of its initiates.

It may have been for social aspirations, that being so, you are now afforded the opportunity to meet many knowledgeable and distinguished brethren whose acquaintance might be of benefit to you.

It may have been that your father was a Mason and expressed a wish for you to follow in his footsteps; that being so, it is an honour both to the fraternity and to yourself.

But be the reason what it may, this question now confronts you, "Will you be worth anything or nothing to Freemasonry, or will Freemasonry be worth anything or nothing to you?" The answer depends on you alone my brother, but I tell you this of truth, if you apply to your own life the teachings inculcated in the Three Degrees, you will become a more responsible citizen, a more compassionate father, a more dutiful son, a fonder husband and a more complete man.

On yonder book, that oath you took, and you should break it never, but stand by this (*take step*) and this (*show EA sign*) and this (*cut EA sign*) forever and forever.

On yonder book that oath you took, and you should break it never, but stand by this (*take step*) and this (*show FC sign*) and this (*cuts FC sign*) forever and forever.

On yonder book that oath you took, and you should break it never, but stand by this (*take step*) and this (*show MM sign*) and this (*discharge and recover*) forever and forever.

On this fair book these vows we took, and we should break them never, but stand by this (*place RH on VSL*) and this (*indicate Square and Compasses*) and this (*kneel and seal once on VSL*) forever and forever.



## The Forget-Me-Knot Flower

Just a few words on the relevance of the Forget Me Knot Flower.

As early as 1934 the 'Grand Lodge of the Sun' (one of the pre-war German Grand Lodges) realized the grave dangers involved in Freemasonry in Hitler's Germany, so they adopted the little blue Forget-Me-Not flower as a substitute for the traditional square and compasses. It was felt the flower would provide brethren with an outward means of identification - in public, in cities and in concentration camps throughout Europe - while lessening the risk of possible recognition in public by the Nazis, who were engaged in the wholesale confiscation of all masonic Lodge properties.

Hitler never quite understood that, although he could desecrate or destroy masonic temples, disperse masonic gatherings and imprison Freemasons, he was unable to invade the temple that is in man and which is invulnerable except to God.

Freemasonry went undercover and this delicate flower assumed its role as a symbol of Freemasonry surviving throughout the reign of darkness. At no time did the Nazis ever detect this or learn of its special significance.

When the 'Grand Lodge of the Sun' was reopened in 1947 by Past Grand Master Beyer, a little pin in the shape of a Forget-Me-Not was officially adopted as the emblem of that first annual convention of the brethren who had survived the bitter years of semi-darkness to rekindle the Masonic Light.

At the first Annual Convent of the new United Grand Lodge of Germany in 1948, the pin was adopted as an official Masonic emblem in honour of the thousands of valiant Brethren who carried on their masonic work under adverse conditions.

The following year, each delegate to the Conference of Grand Masters in Washington, DC, USA received one from Dr. Theodor Vogel, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Germany.

## Presentation of a Grand Lodge Certificate

Brother. . .

At the request of the Worshipful Master, I have much pleasure in presenting you with your Grand Lodge Certificate, which certifies that you have passed through the three degrees in Freemasonry and that your name is recorded in the register of the Grand Lodge of England in London. I will now explain its symbolism and significance.

Grand Lodge Certificates have been presented to Master Masons for over 250 years; but in the early days they were only presented to those who made a request for one and paid a special fee. Since 1819 they have been presented to all Master Masons, the necessary fee being incorporated into your registration payment to Grand Lodge.

There used to be many variations in the design of the certificate; but since 1819, when the current design came into use it has remained substantially unchanged. However, until a few years ago there was a declaration in English in the left-hand column and a translation in Latin in the right-hand column declaring that to whom it may concern that the Brother named has been regularly initiated Freemasonry, passed to the degree of a Fellowcraft and then raised to the sublime Degree of a Master Mason. As Latin is now a language understood by only a minority of the Brethren, the Latin version is now omitted.

The arms at the top of the certificate are those of the Grand Master for the time being. He is, of course, His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, a cousin of Her Majesty The Queen, who being a Prince of the Blood Royal, is entitled to bear the Royal Coat of Arms of the House of Windsor, with the heraldic label of a Prince emblazoned thereon.

The most outstanding feature of the Certificate is the engraving of the three pillars, and indeed it is known colloquially as "The Pillars Certificate". The pillar in the centre is of the Ionic Order, like that of the candlestick next to the Master's pedestal, and is adopted by Freemasons as a symbol of wisdom. This refers to the wisdom of dedicating the Temple at Jerusalem to God's service. It could also be taken as a reference to the wisdom of our current Worshipful Master!

The pillar on the left is of the Doric Order like that of the candlestick next to the Senior Warden's pedestal, and signifies strength, and refers to the strength of Hiram King of Tyre in supporting King Solomon with men money and materials to build the Temple. This also might symbolise the strength of character of our Senior Warden!

The pillar on the right is of the Corinthian Order, like that of the candlestick next to the Junior Warden's pedestal and is emblematical of beauty and indicates the curious masterly workmanship of Hiram Abif in decorating and adorning the Temple. Perhaps too we could consider that it refers to the physical beauty of our Junior Warden; but Brethren you win some and you lose some!

The base of these pillars rest on the black and white squared pavement of the Lodge, symbolising the light and darkness or the joys and sorrows of the chequered nature of man's life here on earth. On the pavement are depicted the Terrestrial and Celestial Globes pointing out the universal nature of Freemasonry. Such globes were, in olden days, placed each side of the Master's pedestal, and you may still see them so placed in venerable Lodges. Nowadays, in most Lodges, they are represented by the small globes on the Warden's

columns.

Also shown are the three great, though emblematical, lights in Freemasonry: the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and Compasses. There are also certain other of the Working Tools displayed, although one is missing and you should try to discover which one that is. The Square, Level and Plumb Rule are depicted as the Moveable Jewels of the Lodge. They are so called as they are the badges of the Master and the two Wardens and are transferred or "moved" from Brother to Brother at the Installation meeting. The Immovable Jewels are the Rough and Perfect Aslars and the Tracing Board, so called as they remain in place in the Lodge, for the Brethren to moralise upon.

You will see that Certificate notes your date of Initiation as Anno Lucis or the year of Masonic Light, which preceded the Christian Era by four millennia. In confirmation that your name has been recorded in the registers of Grand Lodge, the Grand Secretary has applied his signature and affixed the seal of Grand Lodge. If you look very closely you may be able to read the Latin motto thereon "Audi, Vide, Tace" which roughly translates as "Listen, Observe and be Silent", which is an excellent Masonic maxim.

A final clause states that the certificate shall not entitle a Brother to admission into a Lodge without due examination. So remember your words and signs!

To the Brother to whom this certificate is issued it is of unique value. It confirms that Grand Lodge consider that the foundation stone laid in the North-East corner of the Lodge at your Initiation was well and truly laid.

It is a form of masonic passport and proof of membership should you visit a Lodge, perhaps in another country where the signs may vary somewhat from our own, or wherein case of accident or misfortune your membership needs confirmation. This certificate must be produced should you wish to join another Lodge or be exalted into the Holy Royal Arch, which I hope you will consider in due course. Just as no Lodge can be considered 'regular' without the production of its Warrant, so no Master Mason should be at any Masonic occasion of importance without his Grand Lodge Certificate.

Finally, a word of warning, you should not frame or display this document in any public or private place, it should remain folded as you now receive it and be kept with your other Masonic documents and regalia.

This certificate is not complete it requires your signature in the place provided and it is customary for this to be done now in open Lodge at the Secretary's table, using a form of signature from which there should be no deviation in future for masonic purposes.

Congratulations Brother . . . I trust your Masonic career will be as rewarding as mine has been

