

MASONIC ETIQUETTE AND SCOTTISH USAGE

Masonic Etiquette

1 The word etiquette has been defined as the "established rule of procedure and ceremony in a court or in any official or other body". Perhaps for Masonic purposes it can be defined as "that set of convention, rules, customs and traditions by which Masons are expected to govern themselves when engaged in the rites and ceremonies of the Craft". Etymologically the word 'etiquette' means 'a la carte', that is 'according to the card'. It harks back to France when it was the custom to give each guest at court or formal reception a card bearing his name, rank and precedence. While this suggestion of a more or less arbitrary convention and formal ceremoniousness continues, even in our own use of the word, etiquette is by no means wholly a matter of formality. It is born out of the necessity of social contacts and has its roots in social realities.

2. Every society or group of human beings has its own code of etiquette. There is an etiquette of the streets as well as of the drawing-room. There is an etiquette of The Courts of Law, of clubs, of theatres, indeed of all manner of social and formal gatherings. In every form and degree of human intercourse there is this tacit reference to a code of manners without which human conduct would become unbearable. In having its own code of manners, its etiquette, Freemasonry is but following the example of other social groups.

Decorum

1. By etiquette Freemasons acknowledge and express their respect for the Craft. It makes pleasant their contacts with their fellows, smooths the path of duty, establish an equality of treatment for all Brethren, protects the good name of the Craft and greatly assists in establishing that harmony and unity which should exist between all Freemasons.

2. When Masons act as a unit, as in a Lodge meeting, or at a Communication of Grand Lodge or District Grand Lodge, etiquette takes the form of proper decorum.

3. All Masons present at Regular Meetings must act in a manner appropriate to the occasion.

4. Loud talk, restless moving about, coughing, laughter or private conversations during ceremonial work, giving no attention to the work in hand is indecorous behavior and it disturbs the harmony of the Lodge.

5. It is in such an atmosphere, that ill-will and hard feelings, not to mention the more serious menace of schism and feud are most likely to take root.

6. The Master of a Lodge Who permits such things is recusant, unwise and not as faithful as he should be in discharging the duties of his office.

7. Among the Old Charges, to which every candidate was required to swear obedience a prominent place was

given to the portions dealing with "Behaviour".

8. The oldest of known records - the Regius Manuscript, written about 1390 - emphasises the necessity of paying due respect to the Craft.

9. Anderson, in his Book of Constitutions, published by the Grand Lodge of England in 1723, says "*You are not to hold private Committees, or separate conversation, without leave from the Master, nor to talk at anything impertinent or unseemly. nor interrupt the Master or Wardens, or any Brother speaking to the Master, nor behave yourself ludicrously or jestingly while the Lodge is engaged in what is serious or solemn. but to pay due respect to your Master, Wardens, Fellows*".

10. Bearing this in mind the Master of a Lodge must be particular to see that nothing boisterous creeps into the ceremonial work of his Loge.

11. The Degrees must be conferred not only in as perfect a ritualistic form as is possible, but also with impressiveness.

12. The impression made upon a candidate in his First Degree will remain with him throughout his life.

13 In the conferring of the Master Mason Degree all crudity and ruffianism must be cut out.

14. A hum of conversation, restless moving about, have no place in the ceremonial work of any Lodge.

Regalia

1. The regalia to be worn by members of the Scottish Constitution shall be that described in the Eighth Schedule to C & L.

2. When mourning has been ordered, tassels, rosettes and levels on aprons and jewels shall be covered with black crepe.

3. No regalia or jewels other than those appertaining to Craft Masonry shall be worn at meetings of Grand Lodge or District Grand Lodges or Daughter Lodges.

4. A Brother may only wear levels on the apron of a Lodge of which he is or has been the Master. (Law 285)

5. Scottish Freemasons in common with The Irish, normally wear the Apron under the coat. Not so long ago this was actually the Law on the matter, but with the advent of double-breasted suits the Law now reads "Aprons shall be fastened preferably under the coat and worn so that the flap is visible".

6. In many Scottish Lodges the Office-bearers wear sashes over the right shoulder and under the left

arm. This is a relic of the days when all gentlemen wore swords suspended by a leather or cloth sash. On entering the Lodge the sword itself was removed but the sash was left in position. The sash is worn over the jacket, not, like the apron, under it.

7. In some Constitutions it is common for a Brother to wear at all times, the apron and regalia appropriate to the highest Masonic rank he holds. This is not so in the Scottish Constitution. However, all Office-bearers of District Grand Lodge and Daughter Lodges shall be entitled to wear the regalia of their rank at any regularly constituted Masonic meeting. On no account should two collars be worn at the same time.

8. It has been customary in Scotland for an Honorary Grand Lodge Office-bearer to wear his jewel of his Honorary Office on a thistle-green ribbon, one and a half inches broad, with his Lodge regalia.

Jewels

1. It is the custom in many Lodges to present to the retiring Master a Past Master's Jewel as a mark of appreciation for the work done by him while in the chair of the Lodge.

2. It is but fitting that Past Masters should wear these jewels when attending meetings of the Lodge which has awarded them.

3. It is not, however, the Scottish custom to wear jewels when wearing District Grand Lodge regalia.

4. However, if a District Grand Lodge Office-bearer is attending a Lodge in his official capacity he should wear the Past Master's jewel or the Lodge jewel if he is entitled to either of them as a mark of respect to the Lodge.

5. There is nothing to prevent a Brother who is a Past Master of more than one Lodge wearing two or three Past master's jewels at the same time.

6. A Brother may also be a Past Master of a Lodge under another Constitution and shall be entitled to wear a Past Master's jewel of a Lodge under that Constitution in a Scottish Lodge. It is entirely a matter for the Brother concerned, remembering that in the Lodge all Brethren are of equal standing and that as little distinction in regalia and jewels as is possible should be the case.

Dress

1. A Lodge may require its members to wear formal dress at its meetings although Grand Lodge lays down no ruling on this matter.
2. Before the Second World War many Lodges had the custom of wearing evening dress at all meetings. The advent of clothing coupons and rationing made the continuance of this custom difficult and, finally, impossible. Since the war some Lodges have returned to the old usage and there is something to be said for it - it is a mark of respect to the Craft.
3. A good criterion, if evening dress is not the custom of the Lodge, is to wear a dark suit and a dark tie.
4. There is nothing sombre about this, for the colourful Scottish regalia - which is unique in the world of masonry - looks much better against a dark background.
5. Attend your Lodge dressed soberly, for it is a sober meeting you are attending.
6. There is a philosophy in dress, as in so many other things, and the dress proper to Masonic meetings is no exception. Its principle is good taste, its practice is to wear such dress as shows respect to the Brotherhood and expresses the dignity of the Craft.

"Brother" is a Title

1. In the usage of the Scottish Craft "Brother" is neither a sentimental nor familiar form of address.
2. It is a title - as much as Right Worshipful Or Worshipful.
3. A man does not attend his Lodge in his capacity as a private individual; he is not John Frazer or Robert Anderson. He is there in his capacity as a Master Mason - A Brother. For this reason he should always be addressed in open lodge as "Brother Frazer" or "Brother Anderson".
4. It cannot be too strongly stressed that all Scottish Freemasons are Brethren - irrespective of their rank in the Craft.
5. The Scottish Craft knows no such form of address as "Right Worshipful Brother" or "Worshipful Brother", etc.
6. In the Scottish Craft the appellations "Right Worshipful" and "Worshipful" are appropriate only to the office, not to the person.
7. When addressing the Master of a Lodge it is correct to address him as "Right Worshipful Master" and to refer to him as "Right Worshipful Master, Brother Anderson".
8. It is incorrect and not in accordance with Scottish Custom to address him as "Right Worshipful Brother Anderson".
9. In the same way a Past Master is never, repeat never, addressed as Worshipful Brother John Brown. He is Brother John Brown, Past Master and on a "billet" - again a Scottish term - his name would be written as Brother John Brown, P.M.
10. A Past Master of a Lodge does not rank as such in any other Lodge of which he is a member but not a Past Master. He may be received in the last mentioned Lodge as a visiting Past Master only if he comes clothed as such.
11. Visiting Brethren from another Constitution will be addressed in accordance with the usage in that Constitution.

Entering and Leaving the Lodge

1. A Brother entering the Lodge after it has been opened should advance to a point about midway between the altar and the Senior Warden: salute the Master and quietly take his seat.
2. If the Lodge is working in a degree other than the first, only the sign of the degree in which the Lodge is working should be given. 'Working-up' is a custom under the English Constitution but is not Scottish usage.
3. If you are entering your own Lodge, and that the business of the Lodge has begun and you are late, go quietly to a seat after salutation.
4. Do not stop to exchange greetings on the way.
5. When visiting a Lodge and that the business of the Lodge has begun and you are late, after salutation you are to wait for the Director of Ceremonies to introduce you to the Master or conduct you to a seat.
6. If you are a visiting Master or Past Master you will probably be invited to take a seat in the East.
7. Accept this graciously if there is obviously room.
8. If the East seems a little crowded ask the Master's permission to take a seat on the floor of The Lodge.
9. If you must leave the Lodge before it is closed you should wait until you have an opportunity of rising in your place and asking the Master's permission to retire.
10. This given, you should go to mid-way point above referred to, salute the Master and retire quietly. In some Lodges it is customary on entering or retiring to salute the Wardens in addition to the Master. In this case salute the Master first, then the Senior Warden and last the Junior Warden.

Signs, Salutations and Risings

1. Grand Lodge has no legislation regarding signs, but there are some signs, or manner of giving signs, which might be regarded as intrinsically Scottish. For example, a great number of Lodges made use of the D... G... sign.
2. The Brethren stand in this position while the Lodge is being opened in the First Degree.
3. Many regard this as being more fundamental than standing with the P... sign, which is aim given.
4. Within Scotland itself, every Mason will automatically adopt the sign of F... when he stands in Lodge.
5. In other Constitu6ons, the Brethren only use this sign when a prayer is being offered or a candidate is taking his obligation.
6. If at the business part of a Meeting, a Brother addresses the Chair, he should rise, give the sign of the Degree, return to the sign of F make his address and before sitting down give again the sign of the Degree.
7. The Grand or Royal Sign with which is associated Grand Honours is always given three times.
8. The manner of doing this is absolutely uniform throughout Scotland and is always accompanied by the words "All Glory to the Most High".
9. There are no salutations given to The Most Worshipful Grand Master Mason, Grand Secretary or District Grand Master, etc., upon their entering a Lodge.

10. The only occasion when the Grand Master Mason is saluted - and once only as a Grand Master Mason is on the occasion of his Installation when he is proclaimed by the Grand Director of Ceremonies.

11. This point is stressed because in some Constitutions there is a specified number of salutes for a Brother with 'Most Worshipful', a lesser number for 'Right Worshipful' rank and so on.

12. After the usual business of the Lodge has been transacted, it is not the custom in Scotland to have 'risings' at the first of which the Master asks "I rise for the first time to ask if anyone in this Lodge has aught for the good of Freemasonry in general or this Lodge in particular."

13. The usual custom in Scotland is:-
R.W.M - Worshipful Junior Warden, have you any further business in the South ?

W.J.W - No further business in the South, Right Worshipful Master (or, if he has, he states this first.

R.W.M. - Worshipful Senior Warden, have you any further business in the West ?

W.S.W. - No further business in the West, Right Worshipful Master

R.W.M - I.P.M., any further business in the East?

I.P.M - No further business in the East, Right Worshipful Master except Distinguished Visitors may wish to give Greetings.

R.W.M. - Brethren, any further business on the floor of the Lodge (waits and may receive Reports, etc.).

R.W.M - There being no further business, be upstanding Brethren and assist me to close the Lodge.

Altar

1. The position of the altar varies from Lodge to Lodge. Symbolically it should be cubical in shape. On it are placed the three great Lights of Freemasonry.

2. Since the V.S.L with the square and compasses thereon really constitute the "point within a circle" it follows that the altar should be fairly centrally situated in the Lodge and ideally with the "G" over it.

3. The altar may be suitably painted or carved provided this is done with good taste.

4. It may be covered with a cloth of the Lodge colour or in the case of a lodge of sorrow draped with black crepe.

5. The three Great Lights, of course, are on top of the cloth.

6. It is interesting to observe in most Lodges in the District several different volumes of the Sacred Law depending upon the religion of the Brethren concerned are placed side by side on the altar, the candidate being obligated on the one peculiar to his religion.

7. The Ballot Box may be placed on a small table beside the altar or may be placed on a pull-out slide attached to the altar.

8. Since the three Great Lights constitute the focal point of any Degree, it is felt in Scotland that it is quite in order for a candidate and his conductor to perambulate round the Lodge passing between the altar and the Master. This is mentioned because some Constitutions, for example the Irish, prohibit any Brother from passing between the altar and the Master, the reason possibly being that the Master in the East is in the Place of Light and his vision should not be obscured from the three Great Lights which are his responsibility.

Lights

1. The position of the three candles or lamps varies from Lodge to Lodge. In some Lodges they are placed in tall candlesticks situated at three of the corners of the square pavement.
2. In others on a candelabra of three lights on the Master's dais whilst a third method is to see them displayed on the pedestals of the Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden.
3. In some Constitutions quite a feature is made of the lighting of the candles when the Lodge is being opened and indeed the act of lighting may be accompanied by the words Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.
4. In the Scottish Constitution all three candles are lit in the First Degree, one is extinguished in the Second Degree and two are extinguished, leaving only one alight, in the Third Degree.
5. A symbolism which has been suggested is that as the candidate progresses from Degree to Degree he acquires more spiritual light and there is less necessity for material light.

Tracing Boards

1. In Scottish Lodges the Tracing Board of the Degree does not lie on the floor. In some Lodges the Tracing Boards are placed on the wall, one being uncovered in each Degree.
2. Other Lodges place them in front of the pedestals of the Junior Warden, Senior Warden and Master respectively.
- 3- Others place them on an easel in some convenient part of the Lodge.
4. As some of the Tracing Board lectures are somewhat long, there is no objection to the candidate being seated during this lecture.