



THE TYLER

Brother you have been elected (or appointed) Tyler of this Lodge, and I now invest you with the jewel of your office. (A sword is handed to the Tyler.) This Sword is placed in your hands to enable you to ward off all cowans and intruders to Freemasonry. It is also your duty to see that the candidates for admission come properly prepared, and it is your province to see that all Brethren and visitors have properly registered their names before entering the Lodge. The Tyler holds the sword in his left hand when saluting before being escorted to the door. The sword is held at the carry as the Tyler is escorted. It is permissible to allow the Tyler to tyle from within (with the inner door opened slightly) for the remainder of the ceremony.

Installation, Canadian Work, Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon

Origin of The Word 'Tyler'

Various dictionaries indicate that the spelling "Tyler" is simply an older form of the more modern "Tiler". Freemasonry with its leaning towards antiquity has merely adopted the older spelling. The word "tile" is derived from the Latin "Tegula" and became in Old English "Tigule". The word "hele" as used in our obligations is derived from the word "helan" in Old

English with the meaning “to cover”, and led to the common use of the word “helyer”, for a tradesman who thatched with reeds, heled with tiles or daubed with plaster to cover in a dwelling or other building. In London Ordinances of 1382 we find the word “Tylere”, from the Bristol Ordinances of 1450 - “tyler” and in 1475 - “tiler”. Workers at the St. Mary Redcliff Church between 1509 and 1534 were described as tilars, tilers or tylers. In 1753 a list of London Companies contained that of the “Tylours”.

Jewel of the Tyler



Back in the 1800's the blade of the **Tyler's or Sentinel's sword was wavy**, not straight like all our swords are today. Being snake-shaped, the sword didn't fit into a sheath very easily, so it always remained drawn and ready for use. It was made that way to remind us of the Fiery Sword that guarded the way back into the Garden of Eden.

Historical

Historically, we know that the medieval operative craft guilds jealously guarded their trade secrets. They would post a sentry outside the meeting place to protect it from inspection or intrusion by the uninitiated. He was known as an "outer guard", "guarder" or "doorkeeper" and often was the most junior apprentice, who was not eligible to attend the trade discussions.

From a Masonic perspective, the tyler continued this "guarding" tradition. In the 1723 "First Book of Constitutions", Dr. James Anderson mentioned "another brother to look after the door, but shall not be a member of it" and in Regulation XXVI charged the use of "porters or doorkeepers." The English Grand Lodge, in 1728, ascribed him more importance as an "officer who kept the door" and in its minutes of June 8, 1732, initially referred to his specific title as "the Tyler." In 1738 he was described as "brother the doorkeeper to lock up all aprons." The word "tyler" first appeared in print in new Regulation XXVI of the 1738 "Second Book of Constitutions." Here Anderson recalled "Old Regulation XIII" of the first Grand Lodge of 1717, which required that "another brother and Master Mason, should be appointed the Tyler, to look after the door." And so our ritual today tells us that he is "a brother without the door."

The early tylers wore very colorful clothing. The Grand Lodge Tyler of 1736, for example, was described as wearing a red waistcoat under a dark blue coat trimmed with gold lace, yellow trousers and a large triangular hat. He even wore this uniform in public, as when delivering summonses or in processions, and was often subject to ridicule.

The ritual tells us that he is "armed with the proper implement of his office", not only to ward off potential intruders but also to symbolically guard the Book of Constitutions from alteration. This

was described as 'a sharp instrument', initially a pointed trowel and later a sword. It gave him such great authority that even our military brethren of yesteryear were required to relinquish their swords before entering the lodge room. Today our tyler uses only an emblem of his position, a single unsheathed sword. However in other jurisdictions it may be crossed swords, right over left. Before opening some English lodges, a sword lies on the Master's pedestal. At the proper moment, the tyler is summoned into the lodge and must answer certain questions as to his place and duties. Then the Master hands him the sword, investing him with the power to ward off intruders and "suffer none to pass but such as were duly qualified." It is interesting that English, Irish and Scottish lodges have an "Inner Guard" posted within the lodge room door, under the direction of the Junior Warden. He shares responsibilities with the tyler, monitoring member's entry and exit, announcing visitors and advising entrants as to which degree the lodge is working on.

Who is this Tyler and what are his duties?

He is appointed to his office and compensated for his duties and "lonely position." He is a Master Mason, usually a Past Master, who is respected and well-informed in Masonic law and custom. His qualities must include a good memory, trustworthiness, dignity, geniality, understanding, sympathy, patience and dedication. He need not be a member of the lodge, but if so, has the right to debate and vote. He recognizes and greets the brethren, assuring that they are "duly qualified" by being clean, not inebriated and properly clothed with aprons. He is a "one-man welcoming committee" for visitors, giving them the first and most important impression of his lodge.

He assures that members and visitors sign the "Tyler's Register." In the old days, when taverns and other non-permanent places were used, it was the tyler's charge to "form" or "draw" the lodge with chalk and charcoal. Within a rectangle he displayed various Masonic emblems of the proper degree level. His classical duties included the preparation and service of notices and summonses. He had the key to the "apron box" and was in charge of the lodge's possessions, arranging them properly for upcoming meetings and securing them afterwards. He gave notice of the times of "calling on" and "calling off", oversaw the proper preparation of candidates and even collected visitor's dinner fees! The special "Tyler's Knock" signals the lodge already in-session that a qualified brother requests admission. He will refuse entry to anyone whom he does

not personally recognize or who cannot be "properly vouched for" by another brother. If this visitor is subsequently cleared by an ad-hoc examining committee, he will administer the "Tyler's Oath."

This will ascertain that the brother was "regularly" initiated, passed and raised in a "just and legally-constituted lodge", that he stands not suspended or expelled from his own lodge, and that there is no other reason why he cannot hold Masonic communication with the brethren of this lodge.

The Tyler and the Cowans

The tyler is specifically warned to "observe the approach of cowans and eavesdroppers" and not allow their entry into the lodge.

What is a "cowan"? Theories abound in the Masonic literature about the word's derivations from one of several languages, with diverse meanings such as "dog", "wretch" or "silly fellow." It probably was a sixteenth-century Scottish operative term of contempt, given to the ignorant or partially instructed laborer, who hadn't completed the proper period of apprenticeship and who was perhaps skilled in only one facet of masonry. He was also known as "rough mason" or "dry-diker", who built structures with unhewn stones and without mortar, the stones keeping in position only by their own weight. His exclusion from guild membership was a necessary means of trade protection from competition by unskilled laborers. Some "cowans", though, were Master Masons who had been expelled or moved to another area without joining the local lodge. The old Lodge of Kilwinning warned that, under penalty, a Master Mason should not employ a "cowan" unless a regular craftsman was not found within fifteen miles of the building site. In later times, though, they were employed by the guilds for their specific skills, at lower compensation rates. Speculatively, the term "cowan" refers to one who is not yet a Master Mason, a Master Mason dropped for cause, or one who has unlawful Masonic knowledge, having been initiated or having communication with an "irregular" or "clandestine" lodge. The "eavesdropper", however, is a more suspicious character. "Eaves" describes the space between a building's wall and the line where the rain-water "drops" of the roof. Here the surreptitious listener could position himself, monitoring conversations in the lodge from which he might learn

some of its secrets or gather material to create slanderous tales. 'The modern eavesdropper receives his information from various sources and then masquerades as a Mason in order to obtain charity or other means of help.

Tyler and Tiler

The spellings "tyler" and "tiler" are interchangeable, with the former an older usage. The Masonic application of the word, subject to much uncertainty and speculation as to its symbolism, may somehow derive from the interdependent working relationship of the operative masons and tilers. Indeed, their regulations and ordinances, called "poyntz", were quite similar (these survive today in such expressions as "arts, parts, and points", "points of entrance" and "five points of fellowship"). The most prominent etymologic theory is that "tile" was derived from the Latin 'tegula', meaning "to cover". With the Roman occupation of Britain, bricks and tiles were introduced as permanent building materials. But after the Romans' withdrawal, the style reverted to wooden buildings covered with reeds and straw. Unfortunately, these combustible buildings were set quite close together. After a series of devastating fires in London an ordinance was passed in 1212 requiring that roofs be covered with tiles, lead, shingles or plastered straw. The operative Tiler Guilds were formed at about that time (and existed until the mid-1800's). So, it was thought, that as the operative tiler covered the roof of a building with tiles to conceal its interior and protect it from the elements, so the Masonic tyler figuratively "covers" or protects the secrets of the lodge by guarding it from inspection or intrusion by the uninitiated. The strange Masonic word "hele" had a relation to the word "tile", in that the Latin 'helan' also meant "to cover or conceal." Tradesmen known as "helyers" (equivalent to "roofers") thatched with reeds, heled with tiles, or daubed with plaster to cover a building. To "heal" a wound, with modern spelling, is to "cover it". 'Hele' does not mean 'accost' or 'salute'.

Another theory comes from a book entitled "Proces de Templier", which discussed early French knighthood. While Chapter meetings were being held, a sentry known as the "Tuiller" was posted on the roof, on the tiles. From this lofty position he could easily observe the approach of any unauthorized person. It is thought that the English adopted this French custom for the craft

lodges. Although their functions are similar, it seems somewhat far-fetched that our "guarder of the door" was derived from the "sentry on the roof"!

The Tyler's (of Old) Duties

Unlike the Tyler of today who keeps off all cowans and intruders and sees that the candidates are properly prepared, the Tyler of old had in many Lodges the job of "Drawing the Lodge"; the delivery of the summonses, now better known as the notice and was also often in charge of the various assets of the Lodge.

The drawing of the Lodge stems from the days when the speculative Masons were meeting in taverns. The rooms available in those inns were usually pretty sparsely furnished and with bare floorboards. On a clear space in front of the Master's pedestal the Tyler would draw with chalk and char-coal a rectangle and therein various Masonic emblems, such as the Pillars, the Tesselated Pavement, the various Working Tools and many others. The Tyler was also paid for the delivery of the summonses. In the second half of the 18th century the delivery of a note in an envelope by the postal service would cost 4 pence, where the Tyler was usually paid about 12 pence for delivering all the summonses, so obviously a good money-saver for the Lodge.

Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry -summary

An officer of a Symbolic Lodge, whose duty is to guard the door of the Lodge, and to permit no one to pass in who is not duly qualified, and who has not the permission of the Master. A necessary qualification of a Tiler is, therefore, that he should be a Master Mason. Although the Lodge may be opened in an inferior Degree, no one who has not advanced to the Third Degree can legally discharge the functions of Tiler.

As the Tiler is always compensated for his services, he is considered, in some sense, as the servant of the Lodge. It is, therefore, his duty to prepare the Lodge for its meetings, to arrange the furniture in its proper place, and to make all other arrangements for the convenience of the

Lodge. The Tiler need not be a member of the Lodge which he tiles; and in fact, in large cities, one Brother very often performs the duties of Tiler of several Lodges.

This is a very important office, and, like that of the Master and Wardens, owes its existence, not to any conventional regulations, but to the very landmarks of the order; for, from the peculiar nature of our Institution, it is evident that there never could have been a meeting of Freemasons for Masonic purposes, unless a Tiler had been present to guard the Lodge from intrusion. The title is derived from the Operative Art; for as in Operative Masonry the Tiler, when the edifice is erected, finishes and covers it with the roof of tiles, so in Speculative Masonry, when the Lodge is duly organized, the Tiler closes the door and covers the sacred precincts from all intrusion.

The Masonic poet, Rob Morris, romanticized the tyler in his immortal poem:

God bless the Old Tyler! How long has he trudged
Through sunshine and storm with his "summonses due"
No pain nor fatigue the Old Tyler has grudged
To serve the great Order, Freemasonry, and you.

God bless the Old Tyler! How oft he was led
The funeral procession from Lodge door to grave!
How grandly his weapon has guarded the dead
To their last quiet home where Acacia boughs wave.

God bless the Old Tyler! How oft he has knocked
When, vigilant, strangers craved welcome and rest!
How widely your portals though guarded and locked,
Have swung to the signal the Tyler knows best!

There's a lodge where the door is not guarded or tyled,
There's a land without graves, without mourners or sin,
There's a Master most gracious, paternal and mild
And he waits the Old Tyler and bids him come in!

And there the Old Tyler no longer outside,
No longer with weapon of war in his hand,
A glorified spirit, shall grandly abide
And close by the Master high-honored, shall stand.

Since we learn the value of proper preparation and the virtue of caution from him, then each of us should, in a way, be our own tyler. Let us tyle ourselves when recommending and investigating candidates. Let us tyle our discussions about the ritual. Let us tyle the business discussed in lodge, especially that which relates to our members and candidates. Let us tyle our words and actions to foster harmony, as this will not only preserve our own integrities and reputations, but also that of our beloved Fraternity.

The Tyler and the Festive Board

The Tyler performs important functions within the lodge and also at the festive board. Festive Boards have always been concluded by the Tylers Toast. The following is a short version and the longer Rudyard Kipling version. There exist many versions of this toast.

Tylers Toast

Short Version(typical)

To all poor and distressed brethren,
Wheresoever they may be,
On the land, the sea or in the air.
A speedy relief from their suffering,
And a safe return to their native land, If they so desire.

(Response)

To all poor and distressed brethren.

Tyler's Toast

Long Version by Rudyard Kipling

Are your glasses all charged in the West and the South?' the Worshipful Master cried!
'All charged in the West'
'All charged in the South'
Came the Wardens' prompt reply.

Then to our final toast tonight, our glasses freely drain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

The mason's social brotherhood around the festive board,
Reveals a truth more precious far, than any miser's hoard.
We freely share the bounteous gifts, that generous hearts contain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

We meet as masons free and true, and when our work is done,
The merry song and social glass is not unduly won.
And only at our farewell pledge is pleasure mixed with pain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Amidst our mirth we drink to all poor masons o'er the Earth,
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled.
We prize each Brother, fair or dark, who bears no moral stain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

We Masons prize that noble truth, the Scottish peasant told,
That rank is but a guinea stamp: The man himself the gold.
We meet the rich and poor alike, the equal rights maintain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Dear brethren of the mystic tie, the night is waning fast,
Our work is done, our feast is o'er, this toast must be the last.
Good night to all, once more good night,
again that farewell strain,
(Response)
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Pocket, heart, hand

(Repeat 3 times with gestures)

Here's to the sons of the widow

Whenever, wherever they roam

A speedy relief to their afflictions

And if they desire,

a speedy return to their home.

To all poor and distressed Masons, wherever dispersed over the face of Earth and Water, wishing them a speedy relief from all their sufferings, and a safe return to their native country; should they so desire it.

Assignment

The historical origins and adaptations of the Tyler's position within the lodge are significant. Describe the Tyler's position, in your own words, past, present and future (what changes can you foresee)

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7. **THE TYLER by Auri Spigelman**

The Inner Guard

“I hereby invest you with the Jewel of your Office. Your duty is to answer all reports of the Tyler, admit Freemasons on proof, receive Candidates in due form and obey the commands of the Worshipful Master. I also present to you this Sword, for the proper discharge of your duties.”

Installation, Canadian Work, Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon

The Word “Guard”

The name guard or guardian is evolved from the same origin as the word Warden. In Bernard E. Jones book “Freemason’s Guide and Compendium” we are informed that the word Wardian and Guardian were one and the same, and a scholar noted in 1605 that the French, Italians and others whose language comes from the Latin turned the “W” of such words as wardian into a single “U”.

I quote further quote from Bernard E. Jones book *“because their alphabet hath no acquaintance with the W at all, but then to mend the matter - they use before the U to put a G, and so of warden or wardian doe make guardian, of ward, guard-. Hence it arise that we call him that waiteth at the Towre, ‘one of the guard or ‘Guard’.”*

Thus it was explained that the Wardian, Warden and Guardian are all one, ‘ a keeper or attender to the safety of that which he hath in charge’.

The Inner Guard, then is in effect the Door Warden, and in some early lodges, he was at first a serving Brother under the control of the Outer Guard or Tyler, who was also a serving Brother.

The Origin And Duties Of The Inner Guard

There is very little written about the Inner Guard when compared to other officers in the Lodge. One reason that could be considered is that **masonically-speaking** the office of Inner Guard is of comparatively recent origin - 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. It is interesting to note that the rank of Inner Guard is unknown in most American Lodges, where the Junior Deacon, under the command of the Junior Warden admits the visitors and receives the candidate. The office of Inner Guard is **recognized** in the English, Scottish and Irish lodges as well as most lodges overseas whose Masonic traditions are descended from these constitutions.

Inner Guard Jewel



Inner Guard Ceremonial Sword



The first recorded instance in an English lodge where the use was made of a “Door Keeper” was in 1734 at the Old Kings Arms Lodge No. 28, where more than likely he was the youngest Entered Apprentice, and he would use a Trowel as his weapon. It was about the beginning of the 19th, century when the “Door Keeper” or “Inner Tyler” began to be called the Guarder or Guard and it was not until about 1814 when there was official recognition of the actual office of Inner Guard.

The Tyler’s Assistant

There are a number of old minutes where it is recorded that the Inner Guard or Inner Tyler was in fact regarded as an assistant to the Tyler, and as a serving Brother he was, like the Tyler, entitled to receive an allowance for his duties. In the minutes of the Lodge of Honour and Friendship, **Blandford**, (ceased 1838) it is recorded a Brother was made an

“allowance of one shilling for each lodge night and one shilling for every newly initiated Brother to take on himself the office of Inner Guard and to assist the Tyler - as he had been admitted under a dispensation of the Provincial Grand Master and was initiated without a fee”.

The Royal Augustus Lodge of Monmouth (erased 1830), it is recorded, had the office of an Outer Tyler, and a Junior Tyler. The office of Inner Guard is recorded in the 1816 records of the Lodge Love and Honour, No. 75

Falmouth. The United Grand Lodge of England authorised the Inner Guard's **Jewel - The Crossed Swords** - in 1819.

The weapon with which the Inner Guard as traditionally armed was in fact the pointed trowel and it would appear there is ample evidence to support a valid argument that the Inner Guard should continue to be so equipped today, particularly as the sword has traditionally been the weapon of the Outer Guard or Tyler. It would appear to be a rather strange decision that the United Grand Lodge of England made nearly 170 years ago when it seemed it broke away from the tradition when the crossed swords were adopted in the place of the Trowel for the Inner Guard.

The Trowel -The Inner Guard's Traditional Weapon

It would appear strange that in spite of standing tradition, our Craft appears to have overlooked the trowel in its ceremonial workings. Bernard E Jones suggests that the operative mason of old was largely a cutter and shaper of stone, whereas the trowel is a stone layers tool. There is no doubt at all that in the eighteenth century the use of the trowel was much more in evidence than it is now.

In 1754 a Lodge Carmathen has recorded the purchase of five trowels and the mending of twelve others, which seems to suggest that in the old lodge, trowels had a **considerable part** to play, but what part masonically we do not know. In the present day the trowel is used for the purpose of laying a foundation stone with masonic ceremonial where it is appropriate, as the as the only surviving link with operative masonry. The towels used for this purpose are usually of silver, highly decorated and preserved as a memento for posterity, and are often to be found in a masonic museum. The trowel is still in use to this day in a few old English lodges, particularly in the **cities of Bristol and Bath, where it has a place in the First and Third Degrees**. Particularly in the Third Degree we are informed "*the trowel is used for the*

noble and glorious purpose of spreading the cement of Brotherhood and affection which unites us in a sacred bond as a Society of Brethren, amongst whom no contention should ever exist”.

In the ritual of the First Degree, in the charge after **initiation** we hear **“In** every age monarchs themselves have been 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 Grand Lodge of Ireland, in 1769, decreed “that the design for lodge seals shall consist of a Hand and a Trowel. An Irish Masonic crest of 1738 showing a hand holding a pointed trowel as a stabbing weapon, provides a key to the use to which the tool was put in the early speculative lodges and possibly in the old Operative lodges which preceded them; it was the Tyler’s or the inner Doorkeeper’s weapon.

In Some Irish lodges a flat of the trowel is extended to the Candidate to receive his gift when inviting him **(i**n the Second degree) to give to the cause of Masonic charity. The hand and the trowel are found on some of the earliest known jewels used by the ‘Modern’ Lodges.

There are some lodges in England where the trowel is used as the weapon of the Inner Guard or Tyler. In the Royal Sussex Lodge, now extinct, a silver trowel was presented to the Inner Guard or Tyler. In the Lodge of Love and Honour No. **75, in** Falmouth it is recorded in 1808 “that there should be two Tylers, Williamson to act on the door inside and Symons outside, Williamson should wear his badge of office, consisting of a Trowel”. That trowel is still worn by the Inner Guard of that lodge today.

There are some lodges in New Zealand where, **reputedly, the** trowel is a working tool of the Third Degree, and there are some lodges where it is also the Jewel of the Junior Deacon.

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.

To Quote Harry Carr “The Freemason at Work” under the heading ‘Symbolism of the Inner Guard’ 1989 page 333: “

Q. A question was asked some time ago — *‘What in life does the Inner Guard represent when he admits a candidate?’*

’ I made a somewhat hazardous guess, suggesting that he may represent humanity and its resistance to revolutionary change. The lesson to be learned is ‘not to rush in with an idea that would change an established way of living’. I hope this does not sound too far-fetched and would appreciate your guidance on this question. A. There can be no objection to your interpretation of the admission of the Candidate by the I.G., as quoted above, but the question seems to be a good example of trying to find symbolism where none was originally intended. You start from the assumption that the mere presence of the I.G. represents something in our daily life, and I doubt if that was ever intended, more especially because the I.G., as such, is of comparatively late introduction. There was a time when the Candidate at the door would have been received by the Warden, or by the most junior member of the degree that was going to be conferred. They discharged the duties of the present-day I.G. This, and my views on the subject generally, leads me to the conclusion that the symbolism attaches NOT to the I.G., but to the particular task which he performs each of the degrees conferred. Thus, the point of a shar.. instr.... is usually explained as a warning ‘.....never improperly to reveal’.

To Quote the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M. of British Columbia & Yukon “The Lodge Officers Guide” under the heading ‘The Inner Guard’ page 11: “...to suffer none to pass or repass except such as are duly qualified...” Your duties are set forth in the charge at installation,

which can be found in the 'Book of Forms and Ceremonies'. Situated immediately inside the entrance to the Lodge, you should take your place in good time before the Lodge is opened, so that you can meet the Brethren as they enter the Lodge, and at the time see that they are properly clothed, and vouched for. Introduce yourself to anyone you do not recognize, find out who he is, and , if he is a first-time visitor, introduce him to the Senior Warden or Director of Ceremonies. When the Lodge is in session it is then your duty to report any alarms and to obey the commands of the Junior Warden (in the Canadian Work) or the Worshipful Master (in the Ancient or American Work). You should make a point of familiarizing yourself with the duties of the office above you in order that will be able to perform those duties with ease in due course. As an Officer of the Lodge it is your duty to aid and support the Worshipful Master and Senior Officers wherever possible, and by your regular attendance and attention to the duties of your office, evince your interest in the Lodge and your desire to advance in office. If your Lodge has a manual of Officers' duties, familiarize yourself with it

Assignment

1. After having observed the duties and responsibilities of the Inner Guard in your lodge how would you characterize his role and importance in the running of the lodge?
2. Do you feel that the role and duties of the Inner Guard could be expanded and made more significant in the modern Masonic Lodge?

References

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United Masters Lodge No. 167 (NZ), Sept. 1988

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