



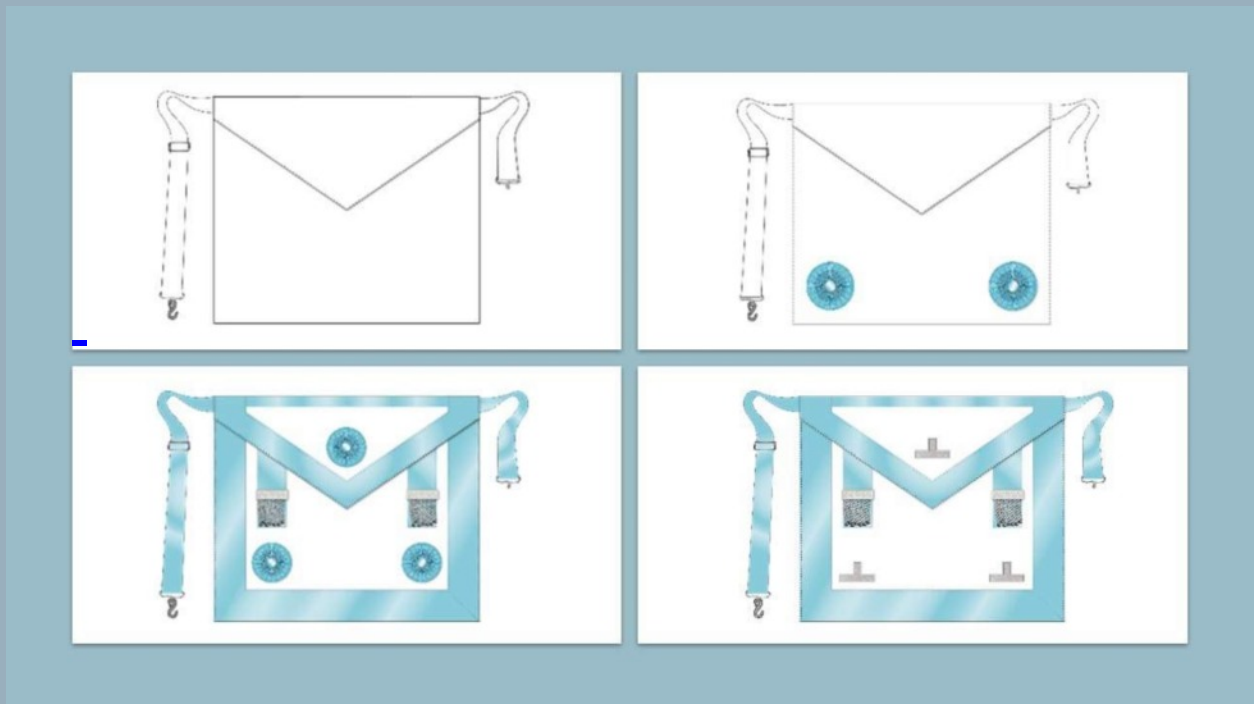
Wiltshire Freemasons

Attracting | Engaging | Growing

WORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

[A Glossary Of Terms]

2024



Integrity



Respect



Friendship



Charity

Introduction

Almost every organisation in the world uses words, terms and acronyms which require explanation. Therefore it should come as no surprise to discover that Freemasonry is as guilty as others in assuming its members will know the meaning and relevance of every term used in the Lodge or in the Ritual we all love so much.

Many of the words of our ritual were at one time in common usage and would have been recognised and understood as they were used in our beautiful ceremonies. In the 21st century the words 'excrescence' and 'avocations' are just two of the 'olde worlde' words which modern Freemasons might struggle to explain.,

With this in mind it seemed the perfect time to review the excellent 'Glossary Of Common Terms' produced by the 3Rs Team in October 2007 - some fifteen years ago.

This booklet does not profess to be the defining work on the 'words' used in ritual or by Freemasons. It would be impossible to produce a short version of Masonic words with an explanation which would meet the exacting demands of the Masonic critic.

What it does is provide a short compendium of popular words which may be of assistance to the new Freemason.

One of the favourite sayings of the Provincial Communication Team is "There is no such thing as a silly question" and this certainly applies to any question relating to words used in Freemasonry.

To discover more Masonic words and terms please visit:

<https://porchwaylodge7027.co.uk/masonic-glossary-of-terms/>

And remember, don't be afraid to ask the meaning of a word or words you hear in the Lodge. There will always be someone who can assist you and help you to understand what the word means.

A

Advance

Means (literally) to step forward as directed. As a general rule it is always 'step off with the left foot'.

Allegory

A story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral one.

Almoner

A member of the Lodge whose duty is to enquire after the health and well-being of the members of the Lodge, report to the Lodge and to organise assistance where necessary to help those brethren (and widows of brethren) in need either of financial or physical aid. There is also a Provincial Grand Almoner who has other responsibilities and duties.

Ashlar

A block of hewn stone either rough edges, hewn straight from the quarry (Rough Ashlar) or with smooth edges, having been worked on by the craftsmen, and thereby rendered fit for use in the building (Smooth or Perfect Ashlar).

Avocation

A word used to describe a hobby or other interest which is not 'work'

B

Badge

The insignia of an order, or in the case of a Freemason, the description given to the apron with which he has been invested.

Banner

Each Lodge has its own banner which is displayed at each Lodge meeting.

Book of Constitutions

The rules and regulations of Freemasonry by which Grand Lodge, Provincial Grand Lodge and every private Lodge operates. The first Book of Constitutions was written in 1815.

Bye-Laws

Every Lodge has its own individual rules and regulations by which it acts, within the Book of Constitutions, and which dictates, for example the level of the initiate's fee or the joining member's fee, and generally the internal running of the Lodge.

C

Cable Tow

The cable tow is a rope that a candidate wears during his initiation into the Entered Apprentice degree. A Cable Tow is also a rope or line for drawing or leading. The old writers define the length of a cable tow, which they sometimes called, "a cable's length," to be three miles for an Entered Apprentice. But the expression is really symbolic and really means the scope of a man's reasonable ability to attend a

Lodge meeting or duty. In our case this ranges from brethren living within 5 minutes drive, to some who travel close 1.5 hours such is the special bond the Lodge has with them.

Calling Off

A temporary cessation of the Lodge proceedings. Sometimes used when ladies and non-masons are to be admitted to, for example a Banner dedication.

Chaplain

The Office is not surprisingly, a devotional one. The Chaplain offers the prayers of the Lodge, but need not be a 'man of the cloth'. He is usually positioned to the left hand side of the Master and is quite often a very experienced Mason.

Charity

While commonly used to describe 'giving money' - to a Freemason charity means so much more. The principle of charity is that kindly state of mind which renders a person full of good-will and affectionately disposed toward others.

Charity Steward

Every Lodge has a Charity Steward whose role is to encourage the Brethren to support Masonic and non-masonic charitable giving.

Charter

The Charter or Warrant issued by Grand Lodge and which is the authority by which each Lodge is empowered to 'make' Masons, and which is symbolically transferred on Installation nights from the Master in office to his successor.

Closing Ode

The closing hymn sung by the brethren and during which alms are generally (but not always) collected.

Collar

The collar worn by an officer of the Lodge or by an officer of Provincial or Grand Lodge, for example the Senior Warden, Junior Warden, the Treasurer, the Secretary, the Director of Ceremonies or Standard Bearer from which is hung a jewel (a badge) depicting the office held by an individual, either active or past (A past rank is only applicable to Provincial and Grand Rank).

Compasses

In Operative Freemasonry, the compasses are used for the measurements of the architect's plans, and to enable him to give those just proportions which will ensure beauty as well as stability to his work. The compasses most prominent emblem is virtue, the true and only measure of a Freemason's life and conduct.

Cowan

A cowan is an individual who is an intruder, a non-mason, originally a dry stone waller.

Craft (the) T

The basic Three Degrees of Freemasonry. Sometimes referred to as 'Blue' Freemasonry.

D

Deacon

In every Lodge, there are two officers one called Senior and the other the Junior Deacon. Their duties concern escorting and assisting a candidate during a ceremony, contributing during the opening and closing of the Lodge.

Degree

One of three progressive stages of advancement in the Lodge, conferred using a ritual ceremony. The term is also used by some Orders beyond the Craft.

Director of Ceremonies

The single point of difference between Freemasonry and almost any other fraternal organisation is the ceremony accompanying Masonic ritual. The Lodge Director Ceremonies is responsible for making sure our beautiful ceremonies are conducted with care and performed with precision.

E

Entered Apprentice

The Entered Apprentice is the first degree and the single entry point to Freemasonry following initiation. Every Freemason is Initiated as an Entered Apprentice.

Excrescence

An unattractive or superfluous object or feature, a lump or knob which needs to be removed in order to improve the appearance of the object piece.

F

Fellowcraft

The ceremony of the second degree in Freemasonry passes the Entered Apprentice to the level of a Fellowcraft Freemason. Frequently you will see the term abbreviated to FC or FCF.

Festive Board

The festive board normally takes place following a formal Lodge meeting and includes speeches congratulating the candidate on his progression thanking the principle guest and visitors for their support. Sometimes referred to as the supper table, dining or the after proceedings.

Fraternity

One who has been initiated into the ancient mysteries of the fraternity of Freemasonry.

Furniture of the Lodge

Every well-regulated Lodge is furnished with the Volume of the Sacred Law (The Bible), the Square, and the Compasses. These constitute the furniture of the Lodge, being the three Great Lights of Freemasonry. The first is designed to be the guide of our faith; the second to regulate our actions; and the third to keep us within proper bounds with all mankind.

G

Grand Lodge Certificate

The Certificate presented to a Master Mason following his being raised to the Third Degree.

Grand Officer

A very senior Mason, an officer of the Grand Lodge of England, appointed for substantial contribution to Freemasonry by the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Grand Master

HRH The Duke of Kent, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Great Architect

The Great Architect of the Universe is used within Freemasonry to neutrally represent whatever Supreme Being each member individually holds in adherence.

Grip or Token

A special identifying 'hand grip' used by Freemasons to identify each other, different for each degree.

Hoodwink

The blindfold used at the Initiation of a candidate.

Immediate Past Master

The Immediate Past Master is the previous Master of the Lodge. No other member of the Lodge can claim to be the IPM.

Initiate

A candidate who is being Initiated into Freemasonry.

Inner Guard

An officer of the Lodge whose position is immediately inside the door of the Lodge, whose duty is to admit Masons on proper proof, receive candidates, and obey the commands of the Junior Warden.

Installation Meeting

The meeting when the new Master of the Lodge is installed in the Chair of the Lodge (sometimes referred to as the Chair of King Solomon) and he, in turn installs the officers of the Lodge. The officers of a Lodge, before they can proceed to discharge their functions, must be installed.

J

Jacob's Ladder

In Freemasonry, it symbolises progress. Its three principal rounds representing Faith, Hope and Charity, present us with the means of advancing from earth to heaven, from death to life and from mortal to immortality. Hence its foot is placed on the ground-floor of the Lodge, which is typical of the world, and its top rests on the covering of the Lodge, which is symbolic of heaven.

Joining Member

A Freemason who joins a Lodge as opposed to being Initiated into a Lodge.

Junior Warden

A Senior or Principal officer of the Lodge who sits in the South part of the Lodge, and who may progress to the position of Senior Warden.

K

King

The patron of Freemasonry in England and Wales, whose health is toasted at each meeting.

L

Lewis

The son of a Mason.

Lodge of Instruction

Differs from the normal rehearsal of a ceremony in that members take on different roles from their normal positions, or a step up to the next position they will occupy in the Lodge. Can also be used as an instructional vehicle to teach brethren about the history and the meaning behind ritual.

Lodge Room

That part of the Masonic Centre in which the various ceremonies are performed, sometimes referred to as the Temple.

M

Masonic Fire

A series of gestures made with the hands after particular toasts, generally as a symbolic mark of respect.

Master

The Master of the Lodge, addressed in the Lodge Room as Worshipful Master, occupies the Chair of King Solomon in the East of the Lodge Room.

Master Mason

A Freemason who has been Raised to the Third Degree.

Membership Officer

Freemasonry is a membership organisation and seeks to attract new members to join the fraternity.

Mentor

The Freemason's guide, leader and coach, responsible to engage with members and to explain not only the workings, traditions and organisation of our Institution, but also to lift the veil of allegory and

reveal the meaning behind the symbols so that the new Freemason can enjoy and understand the organisation that he has joined.

Mother Lodge

The Lodge in which a Freemason is Initiated.

O

Opening Ode

The hymn sung by the Brethren before the opening of the Lodge.

Operative Mason

A working stonemason who prepared stone for use in a building.

Orders beyond the Craft

There are a number of different orders within Freemasonry which can be joined once a Freemason has progressed through the initial three Craft Degrees.

P

Passing

The ceremony when an Entered Apprentice Freemason becomes a Fellowcraft Freemason

Past Master

A Freemason who has progressed through the Chair of a Lodge.

Poniard or Poignard

A slim dagger used as a 'symbol' in the ceremony of the First Degree

Preceptor

A senior and well qualified member of the Lodge who is able to instruct the Brethren in Masonic matters. In charge of instructing and directing the brethren, and organising and running the Lodge of Instruction.

Provincial Grand Lodge

A Province of Grand Lodge, for example, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire, usually but not necessarily following existing or historical County boundaries (in England and Wales)

Provincial Grand Officer

An officer of Provincial Grand Lodge, appointed by the Provincial Grand Master, usually a Past Master of a Lodge in the Province, but can be a Brother who has not progressed through the Chair of his Lodge who is appointed for meritorious service to the Province or Freemasonry in general. Can also be either an Active rank or a Past rank.

Q

Quarterly Communication

The quarterly meeting of the United Grand Lodge of England.

R

Raising

The ceremony by which a Fellowcraft Freemason becomes a Master Mason.

Risings (the)

The Master rises to enquire if any Brother has anything to propose for the good of Freemasonry. On the First rising, any notices from Grand Lodge are reported, on the Second Rising notifications from Provincial Grand Lodge, and on the Third anything from any other source relevant to the Lodge in general.

Royal Arch (or Chapter)

The Order which every Master Mason is encouraged to join when they become eligible. Brethren are referred to as Companions in this Order, and the Lodge is known as a Chapter.

S

Salutation

A salute given to senior officers. The Provincial Grand Master, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Grand Officers, and Provincial Grand Officers are saluted normally in the first degree, (according to their ranks) either seven, five or three times.

Senior Warden

A Senior or one of the principal officers of the Lodge, and who sits in the West. The Senior Warden who under normal circumstances will progress into the Chair of the Lodge at the next Installation Meeting.

Sign in

The Book of Constitutions requires that a Freemasons' Lodge record the name, rank and Lodge name and number of every attendee to a meeting. In modern society it is also necessary to record attendees in order to meet the requirements of Health and Safety legislation. The attendance register, open in every Lodge changing room is where a Freemason 'signs in'

Speculative Mason

A non-working mason, one whose ideals and philosophy are at one with those of the operative mason *vis a vis* the ideal of looking after, and supporting the members of the guild of masons.

Squaring the Lodge

Walking around the four corners of the Lodge carpet. Originally to avoid walking on the tracing board which was laid out in the middle of the Lodge room.

Step

The action taken before you perform a salute to a more senior Freemason, and the action taken before you salute the Worshipful Master. The step is not a stride

Steward

An officer of the Lodge. The Stewards assist the officers of the Lodge, are ready to step in and deputise in the absence of one of the officers, and generally contribute to the well running of the Lodge. It is an ideal position to get to know the other members of the Lodge and their guests.

Summons

This is sent out by the Secretary and gives notice of the date and time of the next meeting of the Lodge, and the ceremony that is to be performed. Make sure that you read it as dates and times can vary. It will also give dates and times of rehearsals.

T

Tyler or Tiler

In Symbolic Masonry, the Tiler or Tyler is a Master Mason whose duty it is to challenge all those who approach the Lodge Room door and verify that all who enter are Freemasons who are duly qualified.

V

Visiting

One of the great joys of Freemasonry is visiting other Lodges whether in the Province, country or overseas. Contrary to some commentators, visiting is not an entitlement, but it is a privilege. Every Master Mason is eligible to visit a Lodge, but always remember to take your Grand Lodge certificate with you - just in case.

Visiting Officer

A Visiting Officer is the representative of the Provincial Grand Master and is appointed under Rule 124 of the Book of Constitutions.

Volume of the Sacred Law (VSL)

The Volume of the Sacred Law often abbreviated to VSL, in a Freemasons Lodge in England and Wales is The Holy Bible, and is always open on the Master's pedestal when the Lodge is open. Candidates make their personal obligation on the Holy book they hold sacred, dependant on their faith.

W

White Table

A social event following a formal Lodge Meeting but one to which the ladies (and sometimes, non-masons) are invited.

Working Tools

Each Degree has a set of Working Tools, particular to it, and whose symbolic significance is unique to, and explained in each degree.

Worshipful

The word Worshipful is used to denote a Brother who has been elected Master of a Lodge.

Add any words you hear in the Lodge .

Don't be afraid to ask the meaning of a word or words you hear in the Lodge. There will always be someone who can assist you and help you to understand what the word means.

WILTSHIRE FREEMASONS



This booklet is one of a series produced and published by the Provincial Learning and Development Team as part of the MEMBERS' PATHWAY programme.

Each of the booklets is designed to help a Freemason understand the work of a Lodge Officer, and to answer a few of the many questions he may have. It does not claim or intend to be the definitive or absolute answer to every question. Freemasonry being a progressive science offers its members the opportunity to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

Errors and omissions are inevitable. If you spot a mistake or consider something of importance has been missed out, please contact the editor pcowiltshire@gmail.com