

# The Initiate's Guide



## Building Friendships, Shaping Lives, Supporting Communities, through Timeless Traditions



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## Welcome

Now that you have been Initiated into Freemasonry you will undoubtedly have further, more in-depth questions about Freemasonry, our ceremonies and your onward journey.

This booklet has been written to answer some of those questions and help you discover more of what Freemasonry offers.

*Our members are, and have been for three centuries, drawn from all walks of life. From captains of industry and chief executives to manual labourers and forklift truck drivers, so you will find people with a wealth of different outlooks from all races, religions, social classes and backgrounds.*



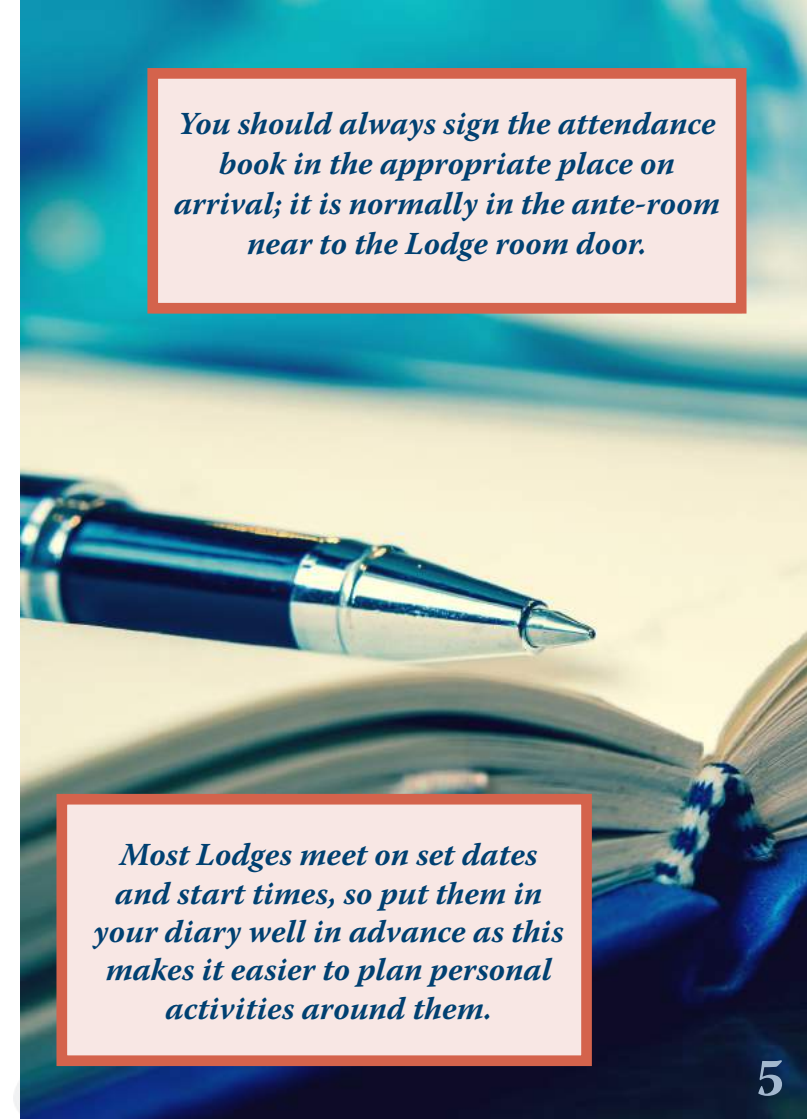
## Attending Lodge

The meetings are in two parts – the Lodge Meeting and the Festive Board (lunch or dinner). You should do your best to attend all meetings, informing the Secretary at the earliest opportunity as to whether you will or will not be attending or dining.

If you are running late and the meeting has started, it's not a problem, simply report to the Tyler outside the Lodge room who will help you prepare and assist your admission at an appropriate break in proceedings. The Lodge Director of Ceremonies (DC) will collect you at the door and take you into the Lodge. Give a brief apology to the Master for your lateness, after which the DC will conduct you to your seat. Before each meeting you will receive a notification (Summons), which includes an agenda – bring this along to that meeting. All Officers have a designated seat and there are often seating places for Grand Officers, Lodge members and guests. Please check with your mentor where you should sit if you are at all unsure.

As in any association there is a certain amount of administrative procedure: minutes of the last meeting, discussion and voting on financial matters, news and correspondence, proposing and balloting

*You should always sign the attendance book in the appropriate place on arrival; it is normally in the ante-room near to the Lodge room door.*



*Most Lodges meet on set dates and start times, so put them in your diary well in advance as this makes it easier to plan personal activities around them.*

for new members. Part of the meeting will usually include collecting alms, when you will be invited to donate a small sum to charity. There are four ceremonies which form the core of the formal Lodge meeting:

- ♦ **First Degree or Ceremony of Initiation.**
- ♦ **Second Degree or Ceremony of Passing.**
- ♦ **Third Degree or Ceremony of Raising.**
- ♦ **The Ceremony of Installation:** *This annual ceremony installs the new Worshipful Master who then appoints his officers for the year ahead.*

For more information about the ceremony you have just gone through, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/3o0VodQ>



## Visiting other Lodges

It is recommended that you visit a Lodge and see someone else being initiated as soon as possible so that you gain a greater understanding of your own initiation. Your personal mentor or any other senior member of your Lodge will be able to assist in arranging this. Much of the enjoyment that Freemasonry offers comes from visiting other Lodges. Meeting and making connections with people you would not normally have the opportunity to meet is something that is unique to Freemasonry. Whether you travel for work or leisure, we have plenty of Lodges for you to visit.

## Dinner

The Lodge meetings are usually followed by a lunch or dinner – often referred to as the ‘Festive Board’ – which is the best opportunity to meet and mix with fellow and visiting members. Whilst the business of the Lodge is quite formal, the Festive Board is more relaxed. You must book-in yourself together with any Masonic guests you may wish to invite along, it will be shown on the summons how and by when to book and pay. If you bring guests, they will be seated with you.

## Toasts

It is usual that the experienced members of the Lodge propose the toasts but occasionally you may be called upon for a Toast to help build your experience. As a guideline, Toasts can be introduced as follows: “*Worshipful Master, Brother Wardens, Distinguished Brethren, Brethren all.*” If in any doubt please consult your mentor or any other senior member of your Lodge. No-one expects a Candidate (or even a more experienced Mason) to be the best after dinner speaker – simply do your best. Never say anything that is likely to cause offence and short speeches are often appreciated more.

## Masonic Fire

After the toasts there is, in some Lodges, what is known as ‘Fire’, a custom peculiar to Masonic dinners. You may find it intriguing and probably a little confusing at your first encounter. However, it is quickly and easily learned. There are a number of theories about the origins of Masonic fire. Some Lodges still employ the use of firing glasses, which are a shaped glass with a heavy base suitable for knocking on the table.

*On your first evening you were seated next to the Master but from now on you will be seated with the other brethren of the Lodge.*

*When the Master sounds his gavel during the Festive Board, it is expected that the Brethren should fall silent.*





# The Lodge Room

This is where a Lodge holds its regular meetings. If you start visiting other Lodges you will find they vary as some premises are purpose-built, whilst others are converted or shared with other functions.

Here are some common features that you may find with your own Lodge room and with those you visit:

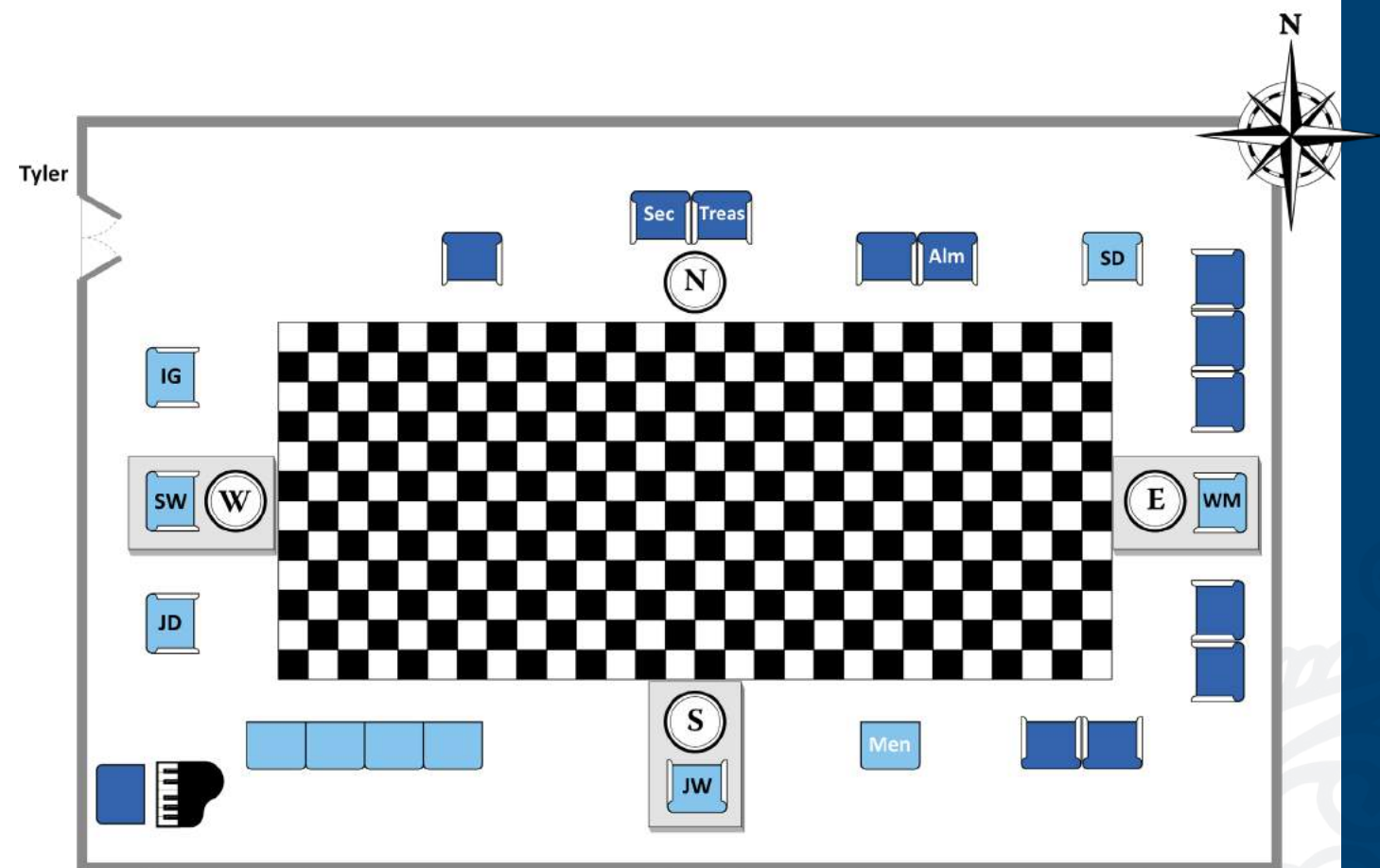
- ♦ The point of entry is in the West and facing East
- ♦ The WM sits in the East, the SW in the West and the JW in the South
- ♦ The Secretary and Treasurer are normally located on the North side
- ♦ The other Junior Officers vary somewhat in location from Lodge to Lodge, but generally are in the positions shown
- ♦ The Lodge Banner and Warrant are displayed in the room

You will notice that your Lodge room contained particular items, or furniture. They have a variety of uses – some are symbolic, and some practical. Some Lodges will differ from the following example.

*One of the delights of Masonry is the Festive Board and the camaraderie and relaxed atmosphere in which it is conducted.*

For more information and helpful diagrams on Lodge items please visit:

<https://bit.ly/3nX7cxT>



Key:

WM - Worshipful Master, SW - Senior Warden, JW - Junior Warden, Treas - Treasurer, Sec - Secretary, SD - Senior Deacon, JD - Junior Deacon, IG - Inner Guard, Alm - Almoner, Men - Mentor.

## Lodge officers

As there are so many Lodge officers that have different responsibilities it is completely normal for one to find it daunting trying to remember them all. Solomon has an extremely useful information on this subject and we highly recommend that you enrol on the *Welcome Apprentice* module:

<https://bit.ly/3nWsL1I>



### Worshipful Master

He is the most senior officer of the Lodge. A Worshipful Master is elected each year. He is in charge of the Lodge for his year, acts as its Chairman and normally conducts most of the ceremonies. On becoming Master for the first time a Mason is then referred to as a Worshipful Brother. He is seated in the East of the Temple which is symbolic of the rising sun.



### Senior and Junior Wardens

The Wardens assist to open and close the Lodge, and conduct the rituals. The year's Junior Warden will be next year's Senior Warden, and the Senior Warden will be next year's Worshipful Master. The Senior Warden sits opposite the Master in the West of the Lodge which is symbolic of the setting sun. The Junior Warden ensures that no unqualified person enters the Lodge and sits in the South of the Lodge which is symbolic of the position of the sun at midday.



### Treasurer

The role of the Treasurer is to maintain Lodge accounts, collect annual dues from the members and make payments to creditors. He settles any debts incurred by the Lodge, such as the Lodge rent for the building where meetings are held, the various levies imposed by Grand Lodge and Metropolitan Grand Lodge, and dining expenditure.

### Secretary

He is the administrator of the Lodge and advises WM on matters of administrative procedures. He deals with the day-to-day affairs of the Lodge, receives the mail, maintains membership details, organises summonses and submits the Annual Returns. Normally a Secretary holds the post for a number of years, providing continuity and experience for successive Masters.

### Senior and Junior Deacons

The Deacons look after and guide the Candidates during ceremonies. The enjoyment and understanding of a candidate can be greatly enhanced by the role of the Deacons.

### Inner Guard

Seated within the entrance of the Lodge and is tasked with guarding the door and is armed with a ceremonial poignard or short dagger. He receives candidates and ensures they are properly prepared before entry.



## Tyler

The Tyler guards the outside of the door to the Lodge. This is an elected office. It is often carried out by a senior and experienced member of the fraternity, as he is the officer who prepares the candidate for the ceremonies, and should make sure that he can correctly give the specific salutes in which he has been instructed. The Tyler is not necessarily a member of the Lodge.

## Almoner

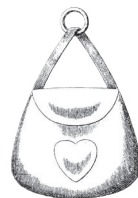
Acts as the Lodge Welfare Officer, as he maintains contact with the Brethren who, through age or infirmity, are unable to attend meetings; with Lodge widows; and with members suffering from illness. He should have knowledge of the variety of resources that exist in time of need. The Almoner would organise petitions for assistance in cases of extreme need, and generally be on the lookout for signs of distress or loneliness among the members of the Lodge or their dependants.

## Mentor

The Lodge Mentor is an experienced member of the Lodge whose role is to look after each new initiate like yourself. He is available to answer any questions you have to ensure you fully understand all that is happening and guide you through the process of progression through the various offices. By the time you read this you should know who yours is.

## Membership Officer

The Membership Officer heads up the Lodge membership team and will be happy to assist you in introducing new potential members to the Lodge.

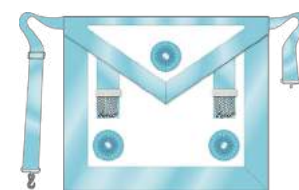


## Regalia explained

You will notice some of the Brethren wearing different aprons and collars. If they have time they will be happy to explain the significance to you. However, please use this helpful Solomon link where you will find all the information you need:

<https://bit.ly/3k5QB8>

Note: For the First and Second Degrees you will normally be supplied with your regalia. However, by the time you reach your Third Degree you are expected to purchase a Master Mason's Apron.



## Jewels

You will doubtless have noticed that many of the brethren in the Lodge were wearing medals, or breast jewels as we call them. These jewels fall into various categories, including: Royal Arch Jewels, Past Masters' jewels, Centenary Jewels, Founders' Jewels and Charity Jewels. For a more in-depth look at each jewel please look under the section *Roles and Responsibilities in a Lodge* through the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2YeB6oq>



## Charge after Initiation

This part of the ceremony, the 'First Degree Charge', is both beautiful and meaningful, being designed to encourage the newly admitted Mason to contemplate and think about the deeper implications of being a Freemason, which encompass a daily striving to be a better man.

*As a Freemason let me recommend to your most serious contemplation the Volume of the Sacred Law, charging you to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice and to regulate your actions by the divine precepts it contains.*

*Therein you will be taught the important duties you owe to God, to your neighbour and to yourself.*

*To God, by never mentioning his name but with that awe and reverence which are due from the creature to his Creator, by imploring his aid in all lawful undertakings, and by looking up to Him in every emergency for comfort and support.*

*To your neighbour, by acting with him on the square, by rendering him every kind office which justice or mercy may require, by relieving his necessities and soothing his afflictions, and by doing to him as in similar cases you would wish he would do to you.*

*And to yourself, by such a prudent and well regulated course of discipline as may best conduce to the preservation of your corporeal and mental faculties in their fullest energy, thereby enabling you to exert those talents wherewith God has blessed you, as well to His glory as the welfare of your fellow creatures.*

*As a citizen of the world, I am to enjoin you to be exemplary in the discharge of your civil duties, by never proposing or at all countenancing any act that may have a tendency to subvert the peace and good order of society, by paying due obedience to the laws of any State which may for a time become the place of your residence or afford you its protection, and above all by never losing sight of the allegiance due to the sovereign of your native land, ever remembering that nature has implanted in your breast a sacred and indissoluble attachment towards that country whence you derived your birth and infant nurture.*

*As an individual, let me recommend the practice of every domestic as well as public virtue: let Prudence direct you, Temperance chasten you, Fortitude support you, and Justice be the guide of all your actions. Be especially careful to maintain in their fullest splendour those truly Masonic ornaments which have already been amply illustrated - Benevolence and Charity.*

*Still, as a Freemason, there are other excellences of character to which your attention may be peculiarly and forcibly directed: amongst the foremost of these are Secrecy, Fidelity and Obedience.*

*Secrecy consists in an inviolable adherence to the Obligation you have entered into - never improperly to disclose any of the Masonic secrets which have now been, or may at any future period be, entrusted to your keeping, and cautiously to avoid all occasions which may inadvertently lead you so to do.*

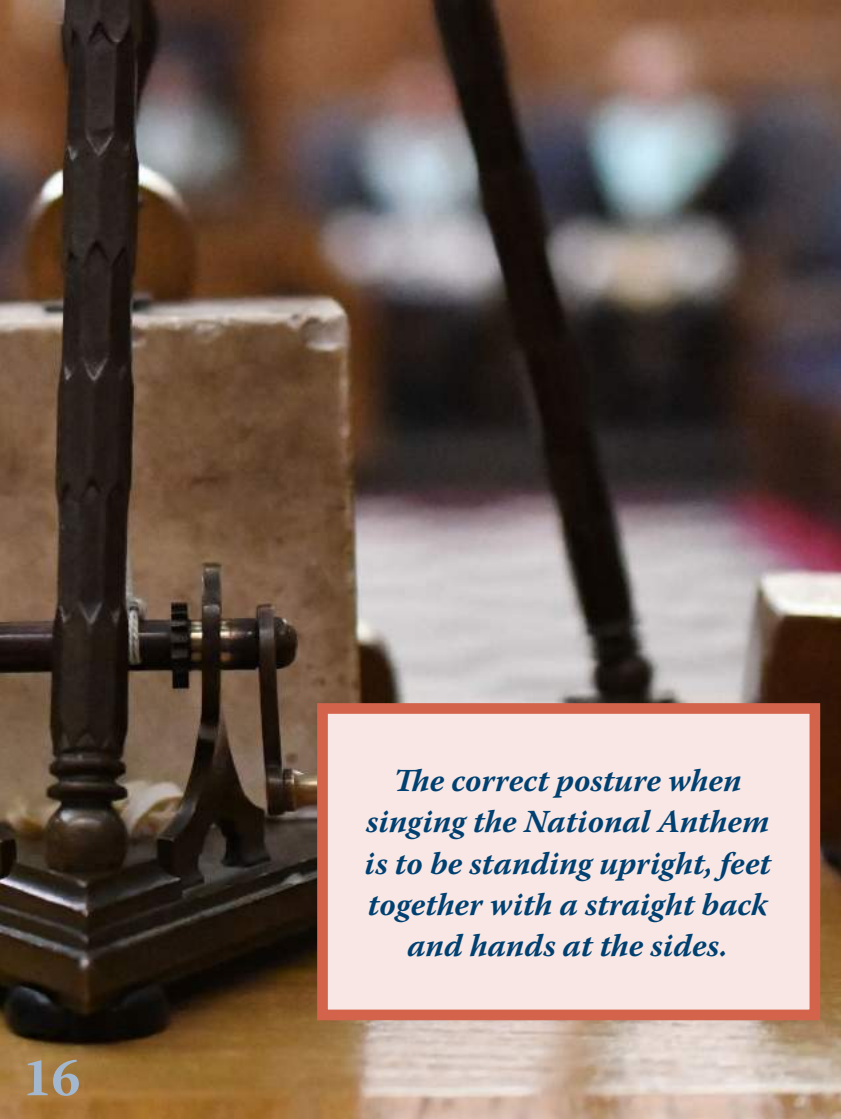
*Your Fidelity must be exemplified by a strict observance of the Constitution of the fraternity, by adhering to the ancient landmarks of the Order, by never attempting to extort or otherwise unduly obtain the secrets of a superior degree, and by refraining from recommending anyone to a participation of our secrets unless you have strong grounds to believe that by a similar fidelity he will ultimately reflect honour on your choice.*

*Your Obedience must be proved by a strict observance of our laws and regulations, by prompt attention to all signs and summonses, by modest and correct demeanour in the Lodge, by abstaining from every topic of political or religious discussion, by a ready acquiescence in all votes and resolutions duly passed by a majority of the brethren, and by perfect submission to the Master and his Wardens whilst acting in the discharge of their respective offices.*

*And as a last and general recommendation, let me exhort you to dedicate yourself to such pursuits as may at once enable you to be respectable in life, useful to mankind, and an ornament to the society of which you have this day become a member; to study more especially such of the Liberal Arts and Sciences as may lie within the compass of your attainment, and without neglecting the ordinary duties of your station, to endeavour to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.*

*From the very commendable attention you appear to have given to this charge, I am led to hope you will duly appreciate the value of Freemasonry, and indelibly imprint on your heart the sacred dictates of Truth, of Honour and of Virtue.*





## Customs and protocol

There are many different versions of the ceremony in use with major and minor variations between them. Customs also vary enormously from Lodge to Lodge, but in general the following are used throughout Craft Masonry.

Salutes and signs are used throughout Lodge meetings and change depending on what degree is being worked. Each degree has a different sign or signs. You have already seen and been given the First Degree Sign. You will be taught the others when you go through the subsequent degrees.

Whenever a Brother speaks to the Worshipful Master or to the Wardens in the Lodge Room (nowhere else), a salute is given.

The phrase 'So mote it be' is used in Masonry instead of the word 'Amen'. If an organist is present the words are invariably sung at the end of hymns and prayers. Sometimes, for example, after a spoken Grace at the Festive Board, it is simpler just to say 'Amen'. The literal meaning of the phrase is 'May it be so!', or 'So be it!'

*The correct posture when singing the National Anthem is to be standing upright, feet together with a straight back and hands at the sides.*

Brethren do not salute one another, but by way of acknowledgement, perhaps as thanks for a courtesy, the Court Bow is given. This consists of standing upright, and simply bowing the head slightly.

The custom in a Lodge for moving about the Lodge Room in 'open' Lodge depends entirely on which ritual the Lodge uses. Some versions of the ceremony demand clockwise 'squaring' at all times; others allow more freedom of movement. 'Stepping-off with the left foot' is standard practice.

At a Lodge meeting, when addressing or referring to a Brother by name, the format is 'Brother (name)' or 'Worshipful Brother'. Whether first names or surnames are used will depend on how formal the proceedings are at the time.

When addressing or referring to Brethren by their Office, the correct form is 'Worshipful Master', 'Brother Secretary', 'Brother Treasurer', 'Brother Immediate Past Master', etc., even if the Officer happens to be a Worshipful Brother by rank.

If you write a letter to a Mason, never include a Masonic rank or other Masonic references such as Lodge details etc., in the address on the envelope. Inside, it may be appropriate and polite to include the full Masonic rank and title.

*As in any formal meeting, all remarks are addressed to the Chairman, who in our case is the Worshipful Master.*

You should respond to the Summons promptly, especially if you have to miss a Lodge meeting. The Secretary will need to have accurate numbers of those attending, particularly for the dining arrangements. He will record apologies in the Minutes. If you happen to be in Office, then the DC will need to know well in advance to organise a substitute.

*The salute is the sign of the degree in which the Lodge is working at the time.*

## Light Blues

Light Blue clubs exist in many Provinces and Districts. Their name may vary but their objective remains the same. To engage and support new Freemasons in a relaxed environment and engage with them at regular social events.

They do this by offering many exciting events which members can choose to attend. Experience learning focused events including, trips to Masonic landmarks, tours, talks with guest speakers and discussions on all aspects of Freemasonry.

Aside from social functions, the club acts as a representative body for the views of the newer and younger generation of Freemasons, ensuring they are properly represented at all levels.

## What happens next?

You are now an Entered Apprentice, a member of 'The Craft' – which is a term used to describe the three degrees of Freemasonry. Having completed the First Degree, your next step is to progress through the two remaining degrees: Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Before you progress to the Second Degree (Fellow Craft), you will be asked to learn the answers to questions leading to this Degree, based upon your Initiation into Freemasonry. Your Lodge Committee will usually decide the workings for the year ahead, which includes when the time is right for your progression.



## Solomon

Solomon is a Virtual Learning Environment designed by members for members. It provides a wealth of interesting Masonic material in various modules, to read, print or download.

To find out more and to register visit:

<https://solomon.ugle.org.uk>



We hope you enjoy this facility.

## Publications

*Freemasonry Today* (FMT) is a quarterly magazine published on behalf of United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) featuring Freemasons' news, interviews, and articles. The magazine is posted direct to all Freemasons, free of charge. It is also free to view online:

<https://www.ugle.org.uk/discover-freemasonry/freemasonry-today-magazine>

*First Rising* - The official newsletter for members of the United Grand Lodge of England. Issued every three weeks to give you the latest news from UGLE and keep you informed.



# Stay connected



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