

Emblems and Jewels of Office

With the installation of the new Worshipful Master and investiture of the new officers, I thought it would be of interest to newer Brethren to understand the symbols related to the jewels of office.

Each Officer of the Lodge wears a collar, to which is attached the jewel of his office. The emblems and the jewels of the various offices are set forth in the Book of Constitution.

The **Worshipful Master**, who rules the Lodge, wears the right-angled **Square**, a stonemason's tool used for checking the angles of cut and smoothed stones. It used to make certain an angle is "true" and symbolizes virtue. It is the jewel which belongs to the whole Craft. In a sense, he is obligated to act on the square, and to regulate the Masonic lives and actions of his Brethren.

On his **apron**, in place of three rosettes, the W. Master wears **three levels**. They serve to remind him that, in dealing with his Brethren of the three degrees, he is to be scrupulously fair, and to hold the scales of justice with an equal poise.

The **Past Master's** jewel of office consists of the **Master's square** to which is attached **Pythagorean triangle**. In ancient Egypt it had been known that a triangle with sides of three, four, and five units would be right-angled. This knowledge was employed by ancient surveyors and builders, in order to mark out and construct square corners. Two and a half centuries after Pythagoras, the renowned geometer, Euclid, included the Pythagorean Theorem as the 47th problem of his first book. Its diagram is attached to the Past Master's jewel.

The **Senior Warden's** jewel is the **level**, a stonemason's instrument used to check the level of horizontal surfaces. It symbolizes that all Masons meet on the level, without regard to social, political, or religious status. As the emblem of equality it marks the equal measures he is bound to pursue in conjunction with the W. Master in the well ruling and governing of the Lodge.

The emblem of the **Junior Warden** is the **plumb rule**, a stonemason's instrument used for checking the alignment of a vertical surface. Being the emblem of uprightness, it points out the integrity of the measures that he is bound to pursue in conjunction with the senior rulers in the well-ruling and governing of the Lodge.

The duty of the **Deacons** is to carry the messages and commands of the Master to the other officers. Before 1813, only the Grand Lodge of the "Antients" had Deacons. At that time their emblem was Mercury, the ancient Roman messenger of the gods. After the union of the two Grand Lodges, the emblem was changed to the **dove bearing an olive branch**. This has an allusion to the dove sent forth from the ark by Noah. It returned to him in the evening with an olive leaf plucked off in its beak. This conveyed to him the message that the waters of the flood were abated from the earth. The dove is a symbol of peace and good fortune.

Both the Senior Deacon and the Junior Deacon carry long staffs, or **wands**. Because they are messengers of the lodge, the wands they carry are symbolic of the *caduceus* that the Roman winged god and messenger Mercury carried. The wands are topped by their jewels of office, to match the ones on their collars.

The **cornucopia**, or horn of plenty, is the sign of the **Stewards**. The emblem has an allusion to the ancient Greek legend of Amalthea, a she-goat who nursed the god Zeus as a baby. Her horns were magical: from one of them flowed nectar, and from the other ambrosia. At one time, she broke her horn off on a tree. Someone picked it up, filled it with fruit, and brought it to the baby god. According to the story, it continued to replenish itself miraculously. The cornucopia is appropriated to the Stewards as their emblem because of their function in ministering to the Brethren at the hours of refreshment.

The Stewards, like the Deacons, also carry **wands**, in imitation of England's Lord High Steward's rod in the House of Lords. The wands are also topped with the jewels of their offices.

The first mention of an Inner Guard dates to 1814. Prior to this there were two Tylers. The **Inner Guard** and **Tyler** have as their jewels the **sword** and the **crossed swords**, in evident allusion to the instruments of their office. The sword of the Outer Guard, or Tyler, who is charged to keep off all cowans and intruders from Masonry, recalls the flaming sword placed after Adam's fall, at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, to keep all intruders away from the tree of life.

According to W. Bro. Barry D. Thom, Past Master, Lodge McLeod No. 27, Bay Roberts, Grand Lodge of Newfoundland and Labrador, who is also a Past Master of St. Clair Lodge No. 577 G.R.C., Toronto Don Valley District, and a former member of William James Dunlop Lodge No. 675 G.R.C.:

In the Middle Ages, Lodges had three guards, one inside the door, one outside and one on the roof or tiles. The two outside were known as the "Guarder" or "Doorkeeper" and the Tyler. The job was filled by the most junior of the Entered Apprentices. This was quite practical, as he could be spared from trade discussion and, as he would be of the younger generation, could easily run and catch any intruders. The first recorded account of the use of the word Tyler as a title appears in 1732 after the formation of the first Grand Lodge in England. Part of the Tyler's duty was to set out on the floor of the Lodge Room designs and symbols appropriate to the degree being conferred. In the early period they were drawn with chalk. The Brethren would not be permitted to walk across the Floor Drawing, thus the reason for squaring the Lodge which is still carried out today.

The **Chaplain** is distinguished by a **Book on a triangle**. The Book is, of course, the V.O.S.L., and the triangle is the well-known symbol of Divinity. It is not required that the Chaplain be a clergyman, as prayers are non-denominational.

The **Treasurer** was originally known, in days gone by, as the Box Master. Money and treasure was kept in a locked strong-box. The symbol of his office is the **crossed keys**, which emblematically secures the coffer or strong-box in which the resources of the Lodge are kept.

The **Secretary** wears the **crossed goose quills**. In earlier days their predecessors would record the proceedings with quill and ink.

The **crossed rods** of the **Director of Ceremonies** reflect the mediaeval Marshal's baton. The Marshal was originally the officer in charge of the well-being of the king's horses but he came to have certain ceremonial functions in the marshalling of processions. The rod, staff, or scepter, has always been the sign of authority, and the wands now borne by the Deacons and Stewards of the Lodge preserve vestiges of this function.

Most of the emblems of **Grand Lodge Officers** are enclosed within a **wreath of wheat and acacia**. The olive is very similar to the acacia. The true acacia is tree that grows abundantly in the near east and Africa. From it the ancient Jews made the Ark of the Covenant. It is very tenacious, and is said that, when planted as a door-post, it will sometimes take root and shoot out, growing boughs over the threshold. It is therefore recognized as an emblem of immortality and is worn at times of mourning in testimony to our faith in the survival of the soul.