



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



### The Tyler and His Duties.



The Tyler of a Masonic Lodge is an appointed officer of the Lodge and is sometimes known as the "Outer Guard". His Collar Jewel is the Sword, and he sits outside the closed door of the lodge, armed with a drawn sword ready for the defence of his post.

The Tyler's duties and principal role is to ensure that only those who are duly qualified are allowed to enter the Lodge Room. He guards against cowans and intruders to Freemasonry and he symbolically refuses entrance to anyone who is uninitiated in the Craft.

During the Middle Ages, a cowan was a man who built stone walls of poor quality. He was an uninitiated or non-apprenticed stonemason...a "jackleg" if you will.

While the Tyler is sometimes called upon to assist in the preparation of candidates, his chief duty is to (symbolically) keep unskilled workmen from overhearing the conversation within the Lodge.



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



After the lodge members are inside the Lodge Room, the door is closed, and it is the Tyler's duty to decide whether late arrivals may enter. It is also his duty to make sure that each visitor is "properly clothed", which means they must be wearing their Masonic regalia.

To be fully and properly dressed before entrance into the Lodge Room, the visitor must be wearing their apron before the Tyler will allow the visitor entrance. Some jurisdictions call this position the Outer Guard.

### **The Importance of a Tyler.**

While a Tyler misses out in the ceremonial in the Lodge his is a very important Office and his duties in olden days were much more extensive than today with much more attention being paid to the importance of the role than we tend to do today.

It was said

"Bro. Tyler's should always be selected from those who have the greatest knowledge and the highest rank." Says a French work published in 1828. Another publication circa 1750 "The greatest honour the Master can confer on a Brother is to make him Tyler, because not only is his own secrets known but those of the Lodge are dependent on him.

The Rev. A.F.A. Woodford author of "Kennings Masonic Cyclopaedia" says that the word is a derivation of "tegulator" the Latin for a man who lays tiles.

So whence comes his name?"

The first time we see the name Tyler in print, in England, is in 1738, before this the title used was Guarder, then Guard and later Outer Guard.

This was when the Office of Tyler was mentioned, in writing, in England, and appeared in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Book of Constitutions (1738) of the Grand Lodge of England.

Various other reasons have been put forward but none worth considering.

Aberdeen Lodge in a nineteenth-century list of officer holders list Tyler's from 1698. Tylers appear in Masonic Lodges from the middle 18th century acting as guards at the door to make sure that no person who had not been initiated entered while ritual was being performed. If this record is true, it is the earliest reference to a Tyler.

"THE DOORWAY TO FREEMASONRY" written in 1921 by Bro. William Harvey a well-known Dundee Freemason who wrote extensively on the symbolism in Freemasonry.

In this article he states "In olden Scots the word Tile had a wider meaning than that of merely referring to roofing of a house. To Tile a thing was to cover, or hide, or keep it a secret and in this sense – without reference whatever to the covering of the roof – it quite appropriately applies to the intention of Freemasons to guard their secrets from the uninitiated.

If this is correct, the Freemasons would find the most direct way to secure secrecy would be to keep the Lodge guarded or tiled by the Guarder or Outer Guard and he eventually became to be called the Tyler.

This appears to be a logical explanation of the reason for calling the Outer Guard a Tyler.



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



### The Tyler's Duties.

We know that the Tyler was responsible for laying out the lodge in days gone by and he also drew out the layout and Tracing Boards in chalk on the floor. In those days the floors were mainly quarry tiles or slate tiles and it was on these the Tyler made his drawings.

Hence derived his nickname – Tyler. Spelt with a Y as they did in those days.

The old-time Tyler was paid a special fee for preparing the Lodge. It is recorded in the minutes of Jerusalem Lodge, no 197, that the Tyler who received two shillings and sixpence for forming either the Fellow Craft's or a Master's Lodge.

The delivery of the summons was frequently part of the Tyler's duties; not only did he deliver the summons but in some Lodges, it was his duty to add into the summons any urgent notice.

Whether he was paid extra for this duty is open to conjecture.

In other Lodges he would be paid a nominal sum for every Candidate initiated a fee for each passing and again for a raising.

The Tyler was given great discretion in refusing admission when he thought he had good grounds to do so.

In the Lodge of Probity, no. 61, in the 1730's the Tyler was empowered "to refuse admission to any member of the Lodge who is not clean and decently clad in clean white neckcloth.

In the days when catechisms were popular and formed such a large part of the Lodge working, we may reasonably assume that the Tyler would be called into some Lodges to answer questions and answers to his place and duties during the Ceremony of opening the Lodge.

Today the Tyler is the last Officer to be invested by the Worshipful Master and is informed of his duties.

In some Lodges, before the Lodge is opened the Master summonses the Tyler to the pedestal where he is handed his sword and informed that he is

"Armed with a drawn sword to keep of all Cowan's and Intruders to Freemasonry and to see that Candidates are properly prepared."

This part of the Ritual is possibly a throwback to the olden days when the Tyler was questioned about his duties. The Lodge who brings in the Tyler before the Lodge is opened to emphasise the importance of the duties of the Tyler is a preferable procedure rather than letting the Tyler take his position outside the Lodge without initially acknowledging his presence.

In previous times the Tyler also prepared the Candidate for the ceremony and after the Meeting stripped the Lodge and was responsible for the safe storage of the Lodge's portable fittings along with Officers' collars etc. This Worshipful Brother was often a Tyler to several Lodges. As a Tyler can be a Serving Brother and a paid officer, it is for this reason when electing the Master and Treasurer we must also, on the summons, to show the item "To elect the Tyler"

Rule 113 of the Book of Constitutions states

The Tyler shall be elected on the date of election of the Master. A Lodge, however, may resolve that a subscribing member of the Lodge shall be Tyler without emolument, in which case the Master will appoint him with the other Officers.



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



In olden days it was custom to appoint a senior Brother who may have fallen on hard times as Tyler of the Lodge. It was therefore a method of giving assistance to a Brother suffering hard times and was quite a common practice in England and Scotland.

In Scotland in 1745 the Brethren of the Lodge of Scoon and Perth lamented that their Tyler being a “poor man” frequently attended in torn clothes, and instructed the Treasurer to procure him a new coat. Thus, making him respectable whilst on Masonic duties. Gradually the dress of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Tyler or Outer Guard became more impressive, possibly to make a striking impression on the new aspirant for Freemasonry and to create the proper atmosphere when in public procession as was common in those days. This is not referring to the hat and coat supplied to many Tyler’s to go about the Lodge business of delivering messages or summonses.

The Grand Lodge Tyler of 1736 was rather imposing as he was dressed in a red waistcoat under a dark blue coat, trimmed with gold lace.

The Lodge of St John, no. 279, of Leicester, resolved in 1791 that the Tyler be clothed at the expense of the Lodge with a blue coat and waistcoat and corduroy breeches, the whole with yellow buttons, a pair of white stockings, and a three-cornered hat. Also, that he be furnished with a hairy cap to wear on public occasions, the latter to remain the property of the Lodge.

There are numerous descriptions of the dress of a Tyler. A Lodge in Preston in the 1790’s was dressed in Scarlet with a hairy cap. This hairy cap conjures up various images, was it like a beaver hat worn by the old Wild West hunters or a bearskin, as worn by the military? Unless we happen to find an engraving or woodcut of a Tyler of the period, wearing a hairy cap, we can only guess.

In Scotland the position of the Tyler was very similar to that in England, for example from the records of Mary’s Chapel Lodge No 1, that in 1770, the Lodge decided that the Tyler should get a suite of Light Blue Clothes suitable to the colour of the Lodge Ribbons, with a silver lace round the neck and cuffs; also a hat with silver lace, button and loop, therefore this uniform must have added a touch of colour to the Masonic processions.

In 1813 the question of the renewal of the Tyler’s dress came before the Lodge and it was agreed that a blue coat and cocked hat, richly trimmed with gold lace should be purchased for the Tyler to be worn at the procession on St Andrew’s Day.

In the Lodge of Scoon and Perth, they yearned for something more distinctive for their Tyler and nothing less than the style of a Grand Turk would satisfy them. The Treasurer and a committee were appointed “to get the dress done in a masterly fashion.” It consisted of white trousers – which were washed from time to time at a cost of 6<sup>d</sup> - a royal blue velvet tunic with a light blue vest on which was embroidered the Lodge name and number in white. There was also a royal blue cloak trimmed with ermine, and the headgear was a feathered turban, And to add to the ferocity of the appearance of the Tyler’s appearance a moustache was supplied, and later a beard was added. Armed with a sword of ample proportions the Tyler was meant to appear a very formidable person.

In the book of inventory of the Lodge Ancient, Dundee, the inventory of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1812, included a suit of Tyler’s clothing consisting of a coat vest, kilt, and bonnet. There is no mention of the tartan or style but on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1816 a bonnet was purchased for the Tyler. This must have



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



been quite a bonnet as the committee agreed to pay thirteen shillings sterling for its purchase so one may deduce this must have been an exceptional piece of headgear.

The dressing of the Tyler, at Lodge expense, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries must have been fairly common practice in most Lodges, particularly in the home counties, as there are numerous mentions of the purchase of Tyler's clothing in old Lodge records.

### **Tyler's Remuneration.**

When Thistle Operative Lodge No 158 came into existence in 1758, it introduced a new feature into Masonry in Dundee, and added to the duties of the Tyler. It set up a benefit section and undertook to see deceased Brethren properly and decently interred. One of the byelaws provided that the Brethren in town and suburbs were to "attend the funeral in clean clothes," under the penalty of sixpence if they could not give a proper excuse. The Tyler's duty was to summon the Brethren to attend, and for this "he was paid his day's wages from the Lodge."

Part of the remuneration the Tyler was that he was allowed to attend the Festive Board but was not expected to pay. The comfortable burgesses and country gentlemen would never dream of asking their humble officer to be out of pocket.

The Brethren of St David's Lodge No 78 in Dundee whose member were mainly business and professional men contributed one shilling each per annum to the Tyler plus he had a recognised scale of perks from every new member, and he got a dram with the others. The expenditure for 1776 includes one shilling, for a bottle of punch for the Tyler, on eight different occasions.

Again, there are plenty of examples of payment to Tyler's for their duties from olden times to the present day.

We have looked at the duties of the Tyler from a material point of view but is there a symbolic lesson to be learnt from the Tyler.

Bro. William Harvey states

"The Tyler at the door of the Lodge armed with his sword should impress the postulant who seeks admission and when, later, that admission is gained, the Candidate should learn just what The Tyler's sword and Office mean. They mark, as it were, the dividing line between the Lodge and the world. In a moral and spiritual sense, they constitute the barrier between right and wrong. It is our common hope that the day will come when the light of truth shall gladden the whole earth, and our constant aim is towards the diffusion of that light. But so long as the Light of Masonry is not shared in the hearts of all men there will be a need for a Tyler with a drawn sword to guard the threshold of our beliefs and secrets.

At the end of the ceremony the IG opens the door. Tyler walks in smartly with the sword and goes to the centre of the lodge (some Lodges salute with the sword) and turns round facing the door and awaits further instructions.



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



### Tyler 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Ceremony.

Respond with the knocks that are given by the **Inner Guard** during the openings and closings.

The candidate is prepared as follows.

Right arm bare

Right breast bare

Left knee bare

Right heel slipshod

Divest of Money/Metal. Cover Rings with Sticking Plaster if they cannot be removed.

No apron

Hoodwink.

After Hoodwinking fit the cable tow

When the candidate is ready give three spaced knocks on the door.

The dialogue is as follows

**IG** Whom have you there?

**Tyler** Mr XXX a poor Candidate in a state of darkness who has been well and worthily recommended, regularly proposed in open Lodge and now comes of his own free will and accord, properly prepared, humbly soliciting to be admitted to the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry

**IG** How does he hope to obtain those privileges?

**Tyler** By the help of God, being Free and of good report.

**IG** Halt While I report to the WM.

**IG** Closes the door, Tyler quietly reassures the Candidate and reminds him that the JD will guide him and to answer only when prompted by him.

**IG** Opens door, after applying Poignard, "Do you feel anything?"

**Tyler** Prompts the Candidate to say "I Can"

When the Candidate returns to restore himself to his personal comforts

It may be useful for the **Tyler** to briefly rehearse the EA sign with the Candidate.

When the Candidate is ready (In some Lodges the **DC/ADC** comes out and instructs the Candidate)

Give the EA knock (3 x K) then when the **IG** asks, respond & say "The candidate on his return".



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



### Tyler 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Ceremony.

The Candidate retires from the Lodge in the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, the Lodge will open in the 2<sup>nd</sup> before the Candidate is admitted, The **Tyler** will be expected to respond with the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree knocks (1K 2K)

The candidate is prepared as follows.

- Left arm bare
- Left breast bare
- Right knee bare
- Left heel slipshod
- Entered apprentice apron

When the candidate is ready give three knocks on the door (3xK). (Not the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree)

The dialogue is as follows

**IG** Whom have you there?

**Tyler** Brother XXX who has been regularly initiated into Freemasonry and has made such progress as he hopes will recommend him to be passed to the Degree of a Fellowcraft, for which ceremony he is properly prepared.

**IG** How does he hope to obtain the privileges of the second degree?

**Tyler** By the help of God, the assistance of the square and the benefit of a Password

**IG** Is he in possession of the Password?

**Tyler** Will you prove him?

Ensure the candidate gives the pass grip (between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) and the password (Shibboleth)

**IG** Halt while I report to the WM

When the Candidate returns to restore himself to his personal comforts

It may be useful for the **Tyler** to briefly rehearse the FC sign with the Candidate.

When the Candidate is ready (In some Lodges the **DC/ADC** comes out and instructs the Candidate

Ensure that he has the apron on when he goes back into the Lodge.

Give the FC knock (1K and 2K) then when the **IG** asks, respond & say "The candidate on his return".

The Lodge will close in the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, The **Tyler** responds to the **IG** knocks with the same knocks.



## Staffordshire Provincial Vault



### Tyler 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Ceremony.

The Candidate retires from the Lodge in the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, the Lodge will open in the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree before the Candidate is admitted. The Tyler will be expected to respond with the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree knocks (1K 2K)

The candidate is prepared as follows.

- Both arms bare
- Both breasts bare
- Both knees bare
- Both heels slipshod
- FC's apron

Whilst the Candidate is being prepared the Lodge will be opened in the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree. The Tyler will respond with the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree knocks (2k 1K) Remember that the Lodge must be prepared for the ceremony so it may take a little time.

When the candidate is ready give 2<sup>nd</sup> degree knocks on the door (1K 2K). (Not the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree)

The dialogue is as follows

**IG** Whom have you there?

**Tyler** Brother XXX who has been regularly initiated into Freemasonry, passed to the degree of a Fellowcraft and has made such further progress as he hopes will entitle him to be raised to the sublime Degree of a Master Mason, for which ceremony he is properly prepared.

**IG** How does he hope to obtain the privileges of the third degree?

**Tyler** By the help of God, the United Aid of the Square and Compasses and the benefit of a Password

**IG** Is he in possession of the Password?

**Tyler** Will you prove him?

Ensure the candidate gives the pass grip (between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>) and the password (Tubal Cain)

**IG** Halt while I report to the WM

Shortly the **IG** will open the door, Candidate will be tested with the compasses and led in by the **SD**

When the Candidate returns to restore himself to his personal comforts, it may be useful for the **Tyler** to briefly rehearse the MM signs with the Candidate.

When the Candidate is ready (In some Lodges the **DC/ADC** comes out and instructs the Candidate. Ensure that he has the FC apron on when he goes back into the Lodge.

Give the MM knock (2K and 1K) when the **IG** asks, respond & say "The candidate on his return".

The Lodge will close in the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree, The **Tyler** responds to the **IG** knocks with the same knocks.