



The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland

# Scottish Freemasonry

## Introducing Men to the Craft

Guidelines for Members of the Craft  
to help the Enquiring Man and the New Mason



These guidelines are to assist Masters and Brethren to deal both with potential new Members and new Masons but are certainly not hard and fast “rules”. They should be used and adapted to deal effectively with those who express interest in the possibility of joining our Craft and those who have also recently joined us.

Some prospective Candidates may have an interest and an insight into the activities of “the Lodge” through family connections but others, while oblivious to who and what we are and do, might from curiosity have a real interest in the Craft. Each man who expresses interest in our Craft deserves our courtesy, sincerity, assistance - and friendship! As each Enquiring Man is a stranger to Freemasonry then, equally, Freemasonry is a stranger to him. If he pursues his interest he will join much more than just “the Lodge”. He will become a member of a wonderful and honourable fraternity with a long and proud history - an Order with a highly advanced system of morals, rules and laws, with rights as well as obligations, with many valuable privileges and corresponding duties and with long established customs, traditions and landmarks which are to be preserved by all those who join our number.

Without individual encouragement and development, no man will ever truly be at home in this Society which is Freemasonry. To participate fully, happily and effectively in the life of his Lodge and the joys and benefits of membership he needs meaningful guidance. Any man who continues his interest in Freemasonry through to membership is entitled to expect his Lodge to provide the assistance, encouragement and information which he will need as he progresses and develops as a Mason. Sadly, because some brethren who join us receive inadequate support they fall by the wayside - attendance becomes intermittent and then stops. Our lack of care for such brethren not only loses valuable members but seriously weakens our Lodges.

Those responsible for the leadership of the Craft are aware that shortcomings in the proper introduction and instruction of potential candidates, by the provision of information, knowledge and assistance, is a serious failure by the Craft itself to discharge fundamental responsibilities. As the years pass, and as the number of Initiates continues to fall, the whole Craft just becomes weaker. All Lodges therefore need to recognise and exercise that care and responsibility which is so obviously required for the ongoing development of our new members.

The member who is well taught, encouraged and made to feel that he is a valuable and important member of his Lodge will undoubtedly add real strength to the Lodge. He will become a strong link and will cheerfully play his part in forging the future of the Lodge to which he is proud to belong. Every Brother should willingly grasp the opportunity to assist new members. That will go a long way to safeguard the future of the Lodge.

It is strongly recommended that, from the very outset, every opportunity is afforded to the Enquiring Man to learn about the Craft. If that interest develops, which would become evident when an Application Form is requested or a member is asked a lot of serious questions by an interested gentleman, the Master might well consider the appointment of “Home Visitors” to represent the Lodge so that they can begin to provide meaningful assistance. A Past Master or senior member and an active but relatively new Brother could be identified to undertake this duty, perhaps along with the Sponsors if they are able to provide real assistance to the interested man. If possible, the young member should be about the same age as the interested man and his more senior colleague should be willing to continue as the “Mentor” if the interest leads to Initiation. The Home Visitors should meet with the man and, if appropriate, with his family and must be prepared to answer, quite openly and responsibly, questions put to them on all aspects of Freemasonry.

This informal exchange of views and information will provide an ideal opportunity to establish some important preliminary points such as:-

- Does the enquirer believe in a Supreme Being?
- Would his membership cause any financial, family or domestic problems?
- Why is he interested in joining the Craft and the Lodge?
- Do his morals and attitudes appear satisfactory?
- Would he be welcomed by the members of the Lodge?

While the interest of the enquirer may have arisen through Masons known to him, the most important first impressions he will receive of the Lodge and the Craft are likely to be gained from the approach, helpfulness and attitude of the Home Visitors and the assistance they provide.

Irrespective of whether the Lodge opts for Home Visitors, and without detracting in any way from the serious responsibilities of the Sponsors, the Mentor or buddy system is particularly commended. A Past Master or other experienced Brother, carefully chosen, should be well able to fulfil the role of Mentor to the considerable benefit of the potential new member and in the very best interests of the Lodge.

Assuming that the enquiry leads to the submission of an Application for Initiation, prior to the Enquiry Committee meeting, the Mentor should meet with the applicant to ensure he is comfortable with the procedure to be followed. The Mentor will reassure the applicant so that he will be at ease during the meeting. The Committee should also ensure that the meeting, while formal, remains friendly and offers a two-way exchange of information. The initial and continuing involvement should play an important part in the candidate's introduction and development.

The Mentor should keep in contact with his candidate and

advise him how the ballot will operate. He could informally advise his candidate of the outcome of the ballot, while the Secretary will convey the formal intimation. Assuming a favourable ballot, the Mentor might give an indication of the timetable for the Degrees and should begin to take steps to ensure the candidate is not unreasonably apprehensive about his forthcoming Degrees. Many candidates will have heard the usual "stories" and it is very important for the Mentor to allay unfounded fears, to emphasise that the Degrees are the means of instruction formally adopted by the Craft and that the members of "his" Lodge are privileged to have the opportunity to instruct the candidate in his Degrees. A relaxed, well-prepared candidate will learn infinitely more from his Degrees than an apprehensive candidate whose head has been filled with tall tales, nonsense and misleading information!

Lodge social functions can be very useful to introduce the prospective candidate, and his partner, to the social activities of the Lodge. The importance and enjoyment of such social activities should be highlighted - but must never be represented as the major focus of the life or function of the Lodge.

The Mentor should enquire from his candidate if he has any Masonic friends or relatives who might wish to attend his Initiation, or any of his other Degrees. If so, the Mentor should contact the relevant brethren to extend a warm invitation to visit the Lodge on these very special occasions for the Candidate.

After each Degree, the Mentor should spend time with the new Brother, go over the Degree which he has taken, explain anything which is not clear or may have been misunderstood, and generally gently prepare him for the next Degree. The Mentor should do everything possible to take the Brother to visit other Lodges between and after Degrees and, if the Mentor is unable so to do, he should certainly arrange for other brethren to accompany the new Brother on such visits.



After the Master Mason Degree the new Brother is a “full” member of his Lodge. He needs to know and understand his duties as a Master Mason and the traditional rights, customs and responsibilities which now devolve upon him as a member of the Lodge and the wider Craft. It is vital, after the Third Degree, that the instruction and encouragement of the new Brother should continue, so that he continues to feel he is important to his Lodge, that he is a welcome member and that the Lodge appreciates his support as a full, active Brother. In turn he will be better prepared to help other interested men and new members. The Lodge, perhaps in conjunction with neighbouring Lodges, or perhaps even the Provincial or District Grand Lodge, might usefully sponsor a semi-formal meeting for recently admitted members to share experiences, exchange views and effectively look to the future.

It is particularly important that his Lodge continues to support the new Mason so that he maintains and develops his interest during this most critical period of his Masonic career. With proper guidance and encouragement, he should develop into an active Mason. This has been shown to aid the retention of new members and is to be encouraged. The importance of an effective, continuing Introduction to the Craft cannot be over-emphasised.

Further information about Scottish Freemasonry is available from:

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