



## Nugget

### The Inner Guard

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Origins, symbolism and responsibilities of the Inner Guard.

#### **Summary**

A short nugget detailing the history, symbolism and responsibilities attached to the Inner Guard's role in a Craft Lodge. It also briefly touches on the interaction between the Inner Guard and the Junior Warden in ensuring the security of the Lodge and controlling the admission of Brethren and initiates.

#### **Keywords**

Junior-Warden, Tyler, Door-Keeper, Inner-Guard

## The Inner Guard

When the Worshipful Master wants to open a Lodge, the first thing he does is to ask the Junior Warden whether the Lodge is secure. But why ask a Warden, when the Inner Guard is stood next to the door? It does not make sense, unless you turn the clock back!

In the old days, in Operative and Guild Lodges, didn't have an Inner Guard, and it was the Junior Warden, who got out of his seat, left the table, and went see what the Tyler wanted. The word guard or guardian, has the same origin as the word Warden and means 'a keeper or attender'.<sup>1</sup>

The first recorded instance of the use of a 'Door Keeper' to keep out all cowans and intruders, was in 1734, at the Old Kings Arms Lodge No. 28.<sup>2</sup> More than likely, he was the most recent, or youngest Entered Apprentice, or a brother appointed by the Junior Warden, but under the control of the Outer Guard or Tyler. Hence the old minutes record him as an 'assistant to the Tyler', and like the Tyler, he was entitled to receive an allowance (Don't ask). In the minutes of the Lodge of Honour and Friendship, Blandford, (ceased 1838) it is recorded a Brother: 'Was made an allowance of one shilling for each Lodge night, and one shilling for every newly initiated Brother, to take on himself the office of Inner Guard and to assist the Tyler'.<sup>3</sup> He also had a dispensation from the Provincial Grand Master and was initiated without a fee; oh, how things change!

It was only at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the 'Door Keeper' or 'Inner Tyler', began to be called the Guarder or Guard; and it was only in 1814 that it was officially recognized as an Office; and five years later that he got a Jewel, 'The Crossed Swords'. With a new Office came a new Ritual, which continued the old practice of asking the Junior Warden to see that the Lodge was secure, but now he stayed in his place and used a 'go-between', the Inner Guard. Yet that same Inner Guard then reports direct to the Worshipful Master when a candidate is presented and has to be described. Another link to the old days it, when it was the last Initiate who manned the door, received the candidate, and reported directly to the Master.

Again, we see the ancient practices been kept; all part of the delight of Freemasonry.

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### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Bernard E. Jones (2003) 'Freemason's Guide and Compendium' explains that in Latin: "because their alphabet hath no acquaintance with the W at all, so to mend the matter, they used to put a G before a U, so of warden or wardian does make guardian, of ward. Hence it arises that we call him that waiteth at the Towre, 'one of the Guard". 'Freemasons' Guide and Compendium', Bernard E. Jones, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Smith (1988) 'The Origin & Duties of the Inner Guard', United Masters Lodge No. 167 (NZ), Sept. 1988

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

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##END##

## Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study.

Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

- Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; *though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.*
- Themed with the meeting or activity.
- Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.
- Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.
- Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

**For further nuggets and other learning materials visit “Solomon” at <http://solomon.ugle.org.uk>**

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