



Nugget

Intruders and cowans to Freemasonry

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Intruders and Cowans explored.

Summary

A short explanation of the terms 'Intruder' and Cowan', as used in Freemasonry.

Keywords

First-Degree, Intruders, Cowans

Intruders and Cowan's to Freemasonry

The Tyler's duties are to be armed with a drawn sword to keep off all intruders and cowans to Masonry. An intruder is one who thrusts himself in without right or leave, which seems straightforward, so what is a cowan?

In Scotland, in the year 1598 the first of the Schaw Statutes banned Masters and Fellows of the Craft from employing or working with cowans, or to be liable to a substantial fine. A cowan was Scots term for a working mason who had not been admitted as a fellow, having served his time as an apprentice. In Scotland, this would be someone without the 'mason word'.

Of course, a cowan would be an intruder, but it is presumably thought necessary to make it clear that especial care was required against someone who knew the techniques of the craft, and therefore would be able to pass himself off as a mason – if it were not for the lack of the mason word.

It is of particular relevance now, when rituals can be purchased and when so many have seen parts of masonic ceremonies on the television. There is more risk that such people can pass themselves off as masons, if we do not test them properly.

##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>

Acknowledgement:

UGLE gratefully acknowledges Dickon Sandbach as the author of this document, which is an extract from 'Interval Talks', and for his permission to publish it in this form.

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