



# NUGGET

## The Doorkeepers Tyler and the Inner Guard

**Summary:** An examination of the duties and origins of the Tyler and Inner Guard.

### The Tyler

For the Initiate, the impact and influence of the person who meets and greets him outside the door of the Lodge is significant. For he puts his trust in the *Keeper of the Door*, especially so, given the manner of his dress and that he is blindfolded. Hence, it is only right that he should have some understanding of the role of the Tyler.

The Tyler, or Outer Guard, is appointed to guard the door to the Lodge from the outside, to prevent unauthorised, malicious, or curious people from entering while the Lodge is at work. This was especially important at the time when Lodges used to meet in rooms within taverns and inns. Today, in the era of the Masonic Hall, the Tyler checks the eligibility of visitors and latecomers, and ensures that candidates for Ceremonies are properly prepared. In some Lodges, the Tyler is appointed by the Worshipful Master, whilst in others he is elected by the Brethren. In most Lodges, the Tyler is required to remain outside the closed Lodge door for large portions of the meeting. He can however usually listen to the proceedings through the 'speak-easy', a miniature door set high to give partial sight.

Often the Tyler is a highly experienced Past Master. However, some Lodges employ a Tyler who is a member of another Lodge, and pay him a fee for his services or offer him a free place at the Festive Board.

In some Lodges, the Tyler's duties also include preparing the Lodge room for meetings, supplying regalia and equipment, serving as a bar-steward, or acting as permanent (sometimes resident) caretaker. In the early days of Freemasonry, the position of Tyler was often given to a deserving Mason who had fallen on hard times; as was the case with the former Grand Master, Anthony Sayer.

In Lodges of the United Grand Lodge of England, on the rare occasions when the Tyler enters the Lodge room, another Lodge member, typically the Inner Guard, goes outside to take temporary responsibility for guarding the door. However, the Worshipful Master has the authority to permit, or direct the Tyler to '*tyl from within*', during non-ritualistic portions of a meeting, e.g. when presentations, demonstrations or discussions take place, especially those open to non-Masons. Thereby enabling him to participate in the business of the Lodge, voice his opinions, volunteer for committees, deliver reports, and receive instructions.



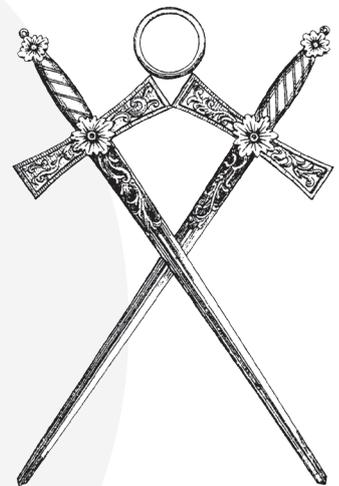
The origins of the word Tyler are uncertain and a number of suggestions have been made:

- Tyler is the Old English word for the keeper of an inn door, and many early Lodge meetings were held in inns and taverns.
- Tyler may be a corruption of the French word *Tailleur*, meaning cutter or shaper (of stone), that is also the root of the English word tailor.
- Tyler is the old spelling of the modern word tiler, i.e. a man who lays roof, floor and wall tiles.
- Tyler may be a reference to the use of tiles to seal masonry, and, by extension, to seal the Lodge
- Tyler may be a corruption of 'tether', a cord used to tie the door closed.

### The Inner Guard

The next Lodge Officer that the Initiate comes into contact with is the Inner-Guard, who points a sharp instrument to his naked breast. This office was created relatively recently, and was first mentioned in 1816. Before then, the Candidate would have been received inside the Lodge by the youngest Entered Apprentice, or a Brother appointed by the Junior Warden. In Lodges in the United States, there is no Inner Guard and Candidates are received by the Junior Deacon, under the direction of the Junior Warden.

The word guard shares its origin with guardian, warden and warder, all meaning 'a keeper or attender to the safety of that which he hath in charge'. The Inner Guard, then, is in effect the Door Warden, and in some early Lodges was a serving Brother under the control of the Outer Guard or Tyler. The first recorded use of *Door Keeper* in an English Lodge was in 1734, at the Old Kings Arms Lodge No. 28, where it was more than likely that he was the youngest Entered Apprentice, armed with a trowel. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Door Keeper began to be called the *Guarder* or *Guard*, but it was not until 1816, that the Office of *Inner Guard* was finally officially recognised.



*Inner Guard's Jewel*

In some old Minute Books, it is recorded that the Inner Guard was paid a fee for his duties. For example, the Lodge of Honour and Friendship, in Blandford, which closed in 1838, recorded the Tyler as paying a Brother:

*'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; as he had been admitted under a dispensation of the Provincial Grand Master and was Initiated without a fee.'*

Similarly the Royal Augustus Lodge, which closed in 1830, and the Loyal Monmouth Lodge, both recorded paying allowances to an *Outer Tyler* and a *Junior Tyler*.

It is hoped that today's Entered Apprentice will get the chance to experience the Offices of Inner Guard and Tyler and enhance their appreciation of the impact these Freemasons can have, all 'without emolument'.



## 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.

\*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation unless otherwise specified.

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## Acknowledgement:

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