



Nugget

Heart, Hand, Badge Sign

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An explanation of the origin of the Heart, Hand, Badge Sign.

Summary

This nugget provides a short explanation of the origin and form of that sign or salutation, known by some as 'Heart, hand and badge' and by others as 'Hand, breast, badge', together with many other variations; all determined by local custom and practice.

Keywords

Second-Degree, Fellow Craft, Sign, Salutation, Installation.



Heart, Hand, Badge Sign

This sign is usually given during the Installation ceremony by Fellowcrafts on their return to the Lodge, but, where does it come from and what is its significance?

Arguably it is not a 'sign', but rather a salutation. Harry Carr in *Freemason at Work* states, *'The sign was described in two old documents of 1700 and 1711. In those days it only partially resembled our present-day Fellow Craft sign which is a much-expanded version.'*¹

In the Masonic Exposure of 1760, 'Three Distinct Knocks'². it is described as: *'holding your left hand up, keeping it square; then clap with your right hand and left together, and from thence strike your left breast with your right hand; then strike your apron, and your right foot going at the same time. This is done together as one clap.'*

Harry Carr asks: *'Why in the Installation and not elsewhere?'* and answers: *'I suggest it is because the Fellowcraft, from time immemorial, was the essential degree during Installation. Masters were chosen from the Fellowcrafts in the days when only two degrees existed and long before the Installation Ceremony had come into practice, and to this day the Master Elect takes his Obligation in the Fellow Craft Degree.'*

Since Harry Carr wrote that, it has been discovered that at least one Lodge in the Province of West Lancashire uses it outside of the Installation ceremony as a salutation to a newly appointed Provincial Officer, if in the Second Degree.

Incidentally, the Installation ceremony did not exist in the Moderns' Grand Lodge before the Union, but it did exist in the Antients' Grand Lodge³ and therefore it is likely that the description in *'Three Distinct Knocks'* (above) was referring to the practice of an Ancients' Lodge.⁴

What is the correct sequence? Actually, it varies across the United Kingdom. For some it is Heart, Apron, Glove, in others it is known as the Breast, Hand, Badge. In Bristol it is given Hand, Breast, Badge and in Lancashire as the Hand, Heart, Badge sign.

The Duke of Sussex set up a special Lodge or Board of Installed Masters to revise and standardise the Installation ceremony, which had not been done at the time of the Union in 1813. A minute from this Lodge, which is the only official reference referring to the salutation, reads 'Sal: Br; ha; ba' (Salutation: Breast; Hand; Badge); obviously from the sequence described, and despite an attempt by this 'Board', it has never become standardised.



References

¹ Carr, H, (1984) 'Freemasonry at work', Lewis Masonic.

² Pritchard, Samuel (1760) 'Three Distinct Knocks'.

³ *Incidentally the 'Ancients' were apparently referred to as the 'Antients' by the 'Moderns', substituting a 't' for a 'c'; a usage which persists to this day.*

⁴ *'The 'Antients' refers to the 'Most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons' was established in 1751 as a rival to the 'Moderns', the earlier Premier Grand Lodge of England, established in 1717. The two reconciled in 1813 and joined together to form the United Grand Lodge of England.*

##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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