



Nugget

Masonic Dress

Index

Sartorial advice on Freemasons' Dress.

Summary

A series of advice and hints about Masonic dress, in all its forms.

Keywords

Masonic Dress, Ties, Lapel-Pins

Masonic Dress, Ties and Lapel-Pins

Masonic dress and ties can sometimes be an emotive thing. Pride in one's Province and the desire to show that you are a member of it is understandable; however, incorrect use can also occasionally cause offence.

Let us take a look at what the Board of General Purposes has to say on the matter: *'Brethren will no doubt have noticed that instructions for Masonic functions held under the auspices of the Grand Lodge indicate that dark clothing, black tie and white collar should be worn... etc'*.

Today, in Lodges of the English Constitution, the norm is a dark coloured lounge suit. Black, charcoal or grey suit are usual with dark jacket and striped trousers for Provincial and Grand Officers, if they wish, complimented with a white shirt and black tie. Whilst this is acceptable for most Lodges, others require their officers to wear a tailcoat at all meetings, whilst others wear an evening-suit at all meetings or at Installations only. There are also other modes of dress which I will come to later.

As Graham Redman, the Deputy Grand Secretary, in his book *Masonic Etiquette Today* advises: *'It goes, or should go without saying, that a member of a Lodge should be careful to conform to the dress code it has adopted. A visitor also should, as a part of the courtesy that is one of the reciprocal obligations of hospitality, conform if he is able, and if he is not, should at least show sensitivity to the customs of his hosts'*.

There are some university Lodges where it is the custom to wear gowns over their regalia, and there are at least two that wear court dress (i.e. knee breeches, black silk stockings and buckled shoes, white tie and waistcoat, with evening tailcoat) or a variant of that dress. In some military Lodges it is the norm for the members to wear mess kit or full uniform (instead of morning dress).

Highland dress, however, can be more of a problem and it normally requires the permission of the Provincial Grand Master to allow the wearing of this type of attire by expatriate Scots, or those of Scots descent. It should not be assumed, however, that it is acceptable when visiting another Lodge.

In respect of ties, this is a controversial area and often Brethren are confused as to what they may or may not wear in a Craft Lodge. Let us take a look:

- Plain black tie - always acceptable.
- Craft tie - likewise, always acceptable.
- Black ties bearing an emblem, whether in the weave or printed, are not acceptable.
- An absolute 'no-no' is a tie associated with another Order.

But what about Provincial ties? Members of a particular Province are encouraged to wear their Provincial tie within their area. However, they should not be worn when visiting a Lodge in another area, unless the Provincial Grand Master of that area has given his permission. A visitor to another area should not presume that such permission has been given, and it is courtesy to avoid the wearing of such ties in these circumstances.

Certain ties are acceptable, however, when associated with a regiment, college, school or livery, but only within those Associations. There are also various groupings of Lodges such as the Kindred Lodges Association or the Athol Lodges Association who have particular ties which may be worn only at meetings of those Associations.

If in doubt, always wear either a plain black tie or the Craft tie and you won't go wrong. However, wearing a tie half undone, as is frequently seen these days, is also unacceptable. What we do outside Freemasonry as a fashion statement is not necessarily acceptable inside.

With regard to lapel pins, the answer is simple. Those associated with other Orders should not be worn in a Craft Lodge under any circumstances.

##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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