



Nugget

Tripod & Cramp

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An explanation of the workings and symbolism of the 'Tripod and the Cramp'.

Summary

An explanation of the workings and symbolism of the 'Tripod and the Cramp', and its association with the term 'Lewis'.

Keywords

Third-Degree, Lewis, Tripod, Cramp, Pulley

The Tripod and Cramp

The tripod is a symbol of the need to work together. Its three legs are the minimum number for it to stand, the mechanical device of pulleys reminds us that, with assistance from above, an individual is able to achieve more than he can on his own.

Specifically it enabled the operative mason to raise ashlar of great weight to the appropriate height, so that they can be fixed on their proper bases with cement. This figuratively represents the joining together of the individual into an association with others so that they can each fulfil their purpose, bound together by cement, which represents social union and charity.

However, before the ashlar could be attached to the pulleys, they needed to have a hook embedded in the surface. This was done by way of a cramp. Into a central cavity, formed in the stone, that was narrower at the surface, than below, the operative mason would drop the hook, with its base that was almost as wide as the hole. With this pushed down, two pieces of metal would be pushed in between the base of the hook and the side of the cavity wedging the base of the hook in place. When the hook is lifted up, it is firmly held and strong enough to take the weight of the ashlar.

In speculative terms, the ashlar represents a perfect mason, and, in conjunction with the cramp, this includes an aged mason who is in need of assistance and support. The mechanical device serves as a reminder of the duty owed by a man, especially a mason, to his aged parents. For them, he should bear the heat and burden of the day, assist them in time of need, and thereby render the close of their days happy and comfortable.

A Lewis, being the son of a mason, is given the privilege of being made a mason before any other person, however dignified. That is his reward for the responsibility he has to look after that special mason, who is both his father and his brother.

##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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