

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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LODGE OF PEACE & GOODWILL No.6010.

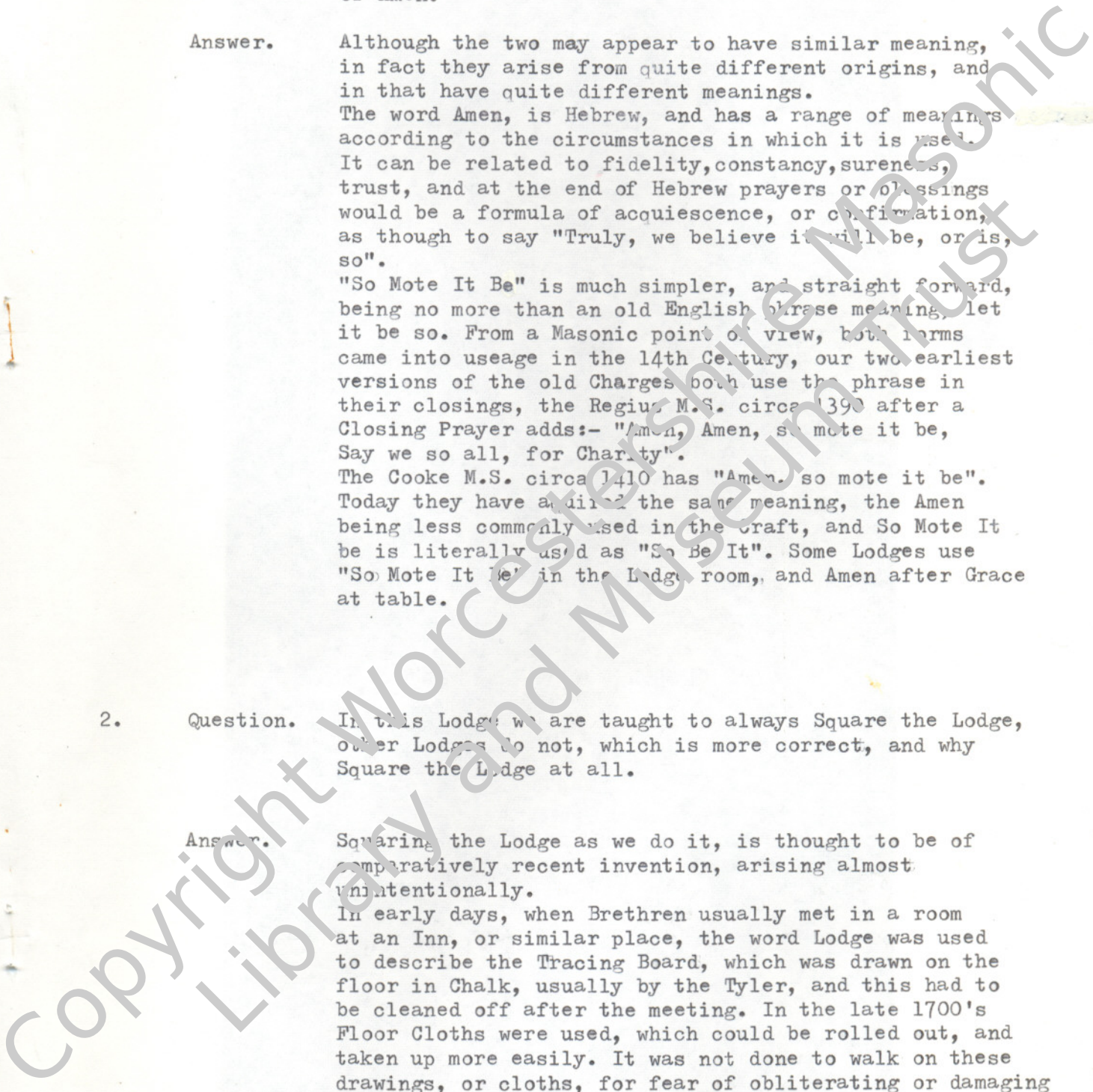
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR MEETING 16th
DECEMBER 1988.

1. Question. Why do we use the phrase "So Mote It Be" ? instead of Amen.

Answer. Although the two may appear to have similar meaning, in fact they arise from quite different origins, and in that have quite different meanings. The word Amen, is Hebrew, and has a range of meanings according to the circumstances in which it is used. It can be related to fidelity, constancy, sureness, trust, and at the end of Hebrew prayers or blessings would be a formula of acquiescence, or confirmation, as though to say "Truly, we believe it will be, or is, so". "So Mote It Be" is much simpler, and straight forward, being no more than an old English phrase meaning, let it be so. From a Masonic point of view, both terms came into useage in the 14th Century, our two earliest versions of the old Charges both use the phrase in their closings, the Regius M.S. circa 1390 after a Closing Prayer adds:- "Amen, Amen, so mote it be, Say we so all, for Charity". The Cooke M.S. circa 1410 has "Amen. so mote it be". Today they have acquired the same meaning, the Amen being less commonly used in the Craft, and So Mote It be is literally used as "So Be It". Some Lodges use "So Mote It Be" in the Lodge room, and Amen after Grace at table.

2. Question. In this Lodge we are taught to always Square the Lodge, other Lodges do not, which is more correct, and why Square the Lodge at all.

Answer. Squaring the Lodge as we do it, is thought to be of comparatively recent invention, arising almost unintentionally. In early days, when Brethren usually met in a room at an Inn, or similar place, the word Lodge was used to describe the Tracing Board, which was drawn on the floor in Chalk, usually by the Tyler, and this had to be cleaned off after the meeting. In the late 1700's Floor Cloths were used, which could be rolled out, and taken up more easily. It was not done to walk on these drawings, or cloths, for fear of obliterating or damaging them, and so Brethren were obliged to walk round the edges and Squaring would follow without conscious thought. It would probably become second nature in time, and when proper Lodge Rooms started to be used, and floor mounted Tracing Boards became unnecessary, Brethren used to Squaring presumeably continued the practice without really making a special effort. It is not obligatory, except in certain parts of Ceremonies, and can be exaggerated, it is not unknown for a Senior Deacon on leaving the Pedestal, to proceed right round this large room to get back to his own seat.



2 Cont:- It probably does help to make work in Lodge look tidier, Brethren criss-crossing the room, specially if two or three are perambulating, can look rather sloppy, and in this Lodge we obey the wishes of our Founders, who in their wisdom, stipulated it in the Honorable Understandings.

3. Question.

Must the 9.00 Toast to Absent Brethren be exactly at 9.00 p.m.

Answer.

No - the practice of making this at 9.00 p.m. is simply a convention. No Toasts can precede the Loyal Toast, and no Fire given until after that Toast, so if proceedings are running late, the Toast to Absent Brethren must wait until the Loyal Toast is finished.

In this Lodge we do not use the title Toast, we prefer to simply announce remembrance of Absent Brethren, possibly coupling with it the names of Brethren absent through illness. Neither do we follow with Fire, only the Hymn being sung. There are some fanciful theories for the magic time of 9.00 p.m., the most common being that the hands of the Clock are at that time at an angle of 90 degrees, i.e. the Square, but if we accept that logic, we would not have much rest, the 90 degree angle occurs 48 times in the 24 hours. So 9.00 p.m. is a commonly accepted convenient time, but no Masonic rules are broken by departing from it.

4. Question.

What are Dues Cards, and when used.

A Dues Card is a form of Masonic Lodge Certificate, much used in America, and on the Continent, but not in England. It usually takes the form of a small Booklet, including identification details of the holder, dates of Initiation, Passing, Raising etc., and a Page on which the Lodge Treasurer, or Secretary, endorses the fact that the Holder has paid his Lodge dues each year, and so is in good standing. In Jurisdictions where Dues Cards are used, a Visitor to a strange Lodge usually has to produce his Card as evidence that he is in good standing, before he is allowed to enter. Obviously they also serve as a form of Masonic Identity Card, but can be easily abused.

In England every Brother on being Raised to the Degree of Master Mason, becomes entitled to a Certificate from United Grand Lodge, and, should he leave his Lodge, a Certificate confirming the circumstances under which he left, and that all his dues are paid, he cannot join another Lodge without producing this.

These are the only Certificates permitted by the Book of Constitutions, no others could be legal, and that is why Dues Cards are banned under the English Constitution.

5. Question. I have heard reference to a Due Guard, what is this?
Answer.

Well first of all it is nothing to do with Dues Cards, and indeed the usual English spelling of DUE GUARD is not strictly speaking correct.

In Lodges in the Scottish Constitution, and certain other Jurisdictions abroad, the Candidate, when taking an Obligation at Initiation, holds the V.O.S.L. so, one hand supporting it from below, the other resting on top as we do., when cutting the Sign his movements are the same as ours. After taking the Obligation, when being entrusted with the Secrets, he is told that the First Sign - is called the DIEU GARDE, and his hands are placed as when taking the Obligation. However in this context the words are spelled DIEU GARDE, being the French for God Keep, or God Protect, and so whenever used Due Guard, or Dieu Garde, is a reference to the words of the Obligation.

It also appears in the Irish Workings, some brethren here attended a demonstration recently of an Irish Third Degree working by Lodge Glittering Star, and may have noticed the use then.

6. Question. We hear the phrase "Duly Constituted, Regularly Assembled, and Properly Dedicated, do these terms have any special significance?".

Answer.

Yes, if you care to exercise your right to inspect the Warrant of the Lodge, you will see these words - used by the Consecrating Officer - "Do hereby constitute the said Brethren into a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, under the title or denomination of The Lodge of Peace & Goodwill" the Brethren he refers to are those Seven Founders whose names are inscribed in the Warrant. This then is the Act of Constitution, and without it the Lodge does not exist.

The Articles of Union, created when United Grand Lodge was formed, state that when the Members of a Lodge have taken the requisite Obligation, and conformed to the uniform Clothing, and Working etc., then the Most Worshipful Grand Master shall direct that the Great Seal be affixed to the Warrant, and the Lodge shall be judged to be Regular. Thus a Lodge is made Regular by the Seal of Grand Lodge on it's Warrant. The word Assembled involves several points governed by the Book of Constitutions, but the main requirement is that a Lodge meets with a proper Quorum, on the dates, and at the place specified, in it's By-Laws, thus under these terms the Lodge is Regularly Assembled.

A Lodge is properly Dedicated in the Consecration Ceremony, when it is dedicated to GOD and HIS SERVICE - and also to the memory of the Royal Solomon. In effect we repeat this at every Opening.

Without it's Warrant present, a Lodge cannot conduct it's Masonic Business, thus it is most important that the D.C. satisfies himself that the Warrant is in the room before a meeting opens, it should not be simply presumed that the Tyler has put it out, but should be independently checked

7. Question.

In the Questions before Passing, reference is made to the "Perfect Points of my Entrance" what are these Points?.

Answer.

A rather involved question this, with more than one possible answer. the earliest reference to Points of Entrance occurs in the oldest surviving Texts describing Ritual of their day, these being the Edinburgh Register House M.S. dated 1696, the Chetwode Crawley M.S. of 1700 and the Kevan M.S. of 1714.

In each instance the words appear as part of Sets of questions, used both inside, and outside a Lodge when testing a Stranger, these three are all of Scottish origin, the earliest English being the Sloane M.S. of 1700.

In the earliest texts the Points appeared to relate to actual parts of Initiation Ceremonies, typical being the Edinburgh Register House M.S. in which the question is asked...

Are you a Mason. - Yes.

How will I know it. - You will know it in a time and place convenient - for the answer may only be made when the company is Masons, when you should be answered by Signs, Tokens, and other points of my entry.

What is the first point - You tell me the first point, and I'll tell you the second.

The first is to heil and conceal. - The second under no less a pain than the cutting your throat, for you must make that sign when you say it.

The phrase Points of Entrance continued to appear in various M.S.S. and other documents until about 1760, when, probably due to a number of so called exposures, the Term seems to have disappeared.

It re-appeared towards the end of the 18th Century, at a time when the great Ritualists began their interpretations, typical being William Prescott, who in his Lecture of the First Degree, produces what appears to be the first attempt to formally enumerate and explain the Points of Entrance.

The question is asked.. give the Perfect Points of Entrance.

Answer, these are Secrets I must conceal, but three are generally known.

Name them. - OFF - AT - ON , and they include the whole Ceremony of Initiation.

What does the first include. The Ceremony of Preparation.

What the Second. The Ceremony of Admission.

And the Third. The Ceremony of the Obligation.

Explain further.

OFF. In respect of apparel.

AT. The Door of the Lodge.

ON. My Left Knee Bared.

Thus up until this time the Points appeared to apply to either the whole Ceremony, or parts only inside the Lodge , but from about this time changes appear to have been made, until in 1798 in John Browne's work "Master Key" his interpretation was given

7. Cont:-

was given as:- OF - AT - ON

explained as:-

OF - my own free will.

AT - the door of the Lodge.

ON - the point of a sharp implement, presented to my naked left breast.

Thus a distinct change occurs, the Points obviously now referring to events outside, before the Candidate enters the Room.

This is the explanation still accepted and in use in the Lectures, but OF - AT and ON have disappeared from the Questions a pity in the sense that the Candidate says something without really, or usually knowing what he means.

Question.

8. When a Candidate is announced at the Door, three distinct knocks are heard, have these any special significance.

Answer.

Whilst the three distinct knocks are today regarded simply as notice that it is a Candidate, rather than an ordinary Masonic Visitor at the door, in fact they are of considerable antiquity, and can certainly be traced back before the 18th Century. It is popularly believed that they have allusion to the Trinity, as Freemasonry was a Christian Trinitarian Institution in its earliest days. Some believe there is also allusion to a text in Scripture.... the following Catechism appearing in a number of old M.S.S.

What do three distinct knocks signify.

A certain text in Scripture

What text.

Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and the door shall be opened unto thee.

9.

Question.

Brothers from other Constitutions visiting our Lodge, wear their own Regalia, which often differs very much from ours, if such a Brother joined this Lodge, would he continue to wear that Regalia.

Answer.

No - he must wear English Regalia, whether in this Lodge, or visiting another English Lodge. Neither is he entitled to any Grand, or Provincial Grand Rank privileges he may enjoy in another Constitution, if however he is an Installed Master, then he may wear an English Installed Master's Apron, but not a Past Master's Collar, unless and until he has taken the Chair of an English Lodge.

10.

Question.

If the Master is absent, and the I.P.M. occupies the Chair, has some other Brother the right to act for him.

It must be understood that the status of I.P.M. is not an Office,

10 Cont:-

not an Office, and no-one can therefore occupy and act in Office for him.

There is no specific rule as such dealing with this, but Rule 119 (b) Book of Constitutions makes the obviously sensible suggestion that some form of Seniority should prevail. It is not necessary to be rigid in this, for practical reasons the Lodge should choose a Brother who can be relied on to discharge the duty most effectively.

11.

Question.

In this Lodge we seat the Initiate at the side of the Worshipful Master at the end of the Initiation Ceremony. Other Lodges do not, is there any specific ruling on this.

Answer.

Yes. In reply to this question, under the Heading of Points of Procedure, the Board of General Purposes gave the decision and I quote:-

In the North-East, immediately on the right of the Senior Deacon.

Why do other Lodges not do this

I dont know why, the information appears in the Booklet "Information for Guidance of Members of the Craft" which should be given to every new Initiate at the same time as he is given the Book of Constitutions, and Lodge By-Laws, and should be given to each Master at Installation. Certainly every Brother should have, and read the Booklet. These recommendations were made by the Board, whose Report was adopted in September 1974, and thereby becomes an edict binding on the Craft. As Secretary I consider it, together with the Provincial Year Book, as my Bible. Every Initiate and Master since I took this Office some 5 years ago has been given their due copies, if any other Brother does not have accoy I can supply on request.

12. Why in the First Degree is the Candidate told to place his feet... L.F. across the Lodge R.F. down the Lodge, but in the Second Degree the reverse positions, and why are both used when they are in fact awkward.

Ans.

Like so many other points in Freemasonry, a completely positive answer cannot be given, it is believed to be a survival from the days, probably pre-1800's when it was the custom to have the Rough and Perfect Ashlars on the floor of the Lodge in the N.W. and S.E. corners respectively, not on the Wardens Pedestals as now. The Candidate was then required to place his feet forming a square on two sides of the Ashlar, and the custom has like so many other old practices simply carried over to the present day, even though the Ashlars are no longer there. I understand that in fact they are still placed so in some old, specially Northern Lodges. There is no explanation as far as I can trace, for the awkward posture, which could be largely avoided if the feet had been placed on the opposite corners.

13. Are the Five Points of Fellowship of old, or recent origin.

They make their first appearance in Masonic documents in 1696, ~~long~~ 20 years before formation of the first Grand Lodge, and in fact long before any real evidence of speculative Masonry, following this first appearance they appeared during the next 35 years in a number of documents from different parts of England, suggesting that they were widely known among Operative Masons long before 1696.

It is strange that whilst reference to them appears, no explanation of them, or their significance appears until the 1760's, the first known explanation appearing in 1760 in the so called Exposure Three Distinct Knocks, the explanation being very similar to that we use today.

14. Why in the Signs of the Second Degree do we refer to the second part of the sign of perseverance.

The source to which the sign is most commonly attributed occurs Exodus XVII verses 8 - 13. The story tells of the battle of the Israelites with the Amalekites on route to the promised land. Moses climbed to the top of the hill overlooking the battle and it is said "When Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand... Amalek prevailed", later his hands were supported until victory was won.

Whilst the above is the most universally accepted, there are in fact many other Biblical references, and probably as many Masonic Scholars to argue in favour of them.

15. What is a Cowan and why to be kept away from us.

Cowan is essentially a Scottish trade term, dating back to the times when Lodges, as trade controlling bodies put restrictions against their employment, they being ^{men} who carried out Masons work, but had not served a proper Apprenticeship to a Master Mason. The Oxford English Dictionary definition gives a clue to this, being one who builds dry stone walls, i.e. without Mortar, a dry-Dyker, the term being used in a derogatory sense. It is appreciated that such a man, having probably picked up some

15 Cont:

Masons trade knowledge, but being unable to obtain work as a Mason, would be anxious to try and learn the Masons Secrets of recognition, but being excluded from the Lodges, would have to try and get the information by spying, or eavesdropping on the skilled Masons, thus the word Intruder becomes coupled in our useage, the word Intruder being used to describe such a person as long ago as Laws enacted by Henry VIII in 1534, and even earlier, in old Borough Records of 1487.

16. Why is the 47th Proposition used as one of the features of a P.M. Jewel.

The 47th Proposition was included in the official prescription for a Past Masters Jewel in the first B of C following the Union as follows....

Jewel-Past Masters.... The Square and the diagram of the 47th proposition of the first book of Euclid, engraved on a silver plate pendent within it.

There is ample evidence of the popularity of the 47th Proposition in the Speculative Craft long before this time Anderson using it in the frontspiece of his 1723 and 1730 Constitutions, but it's use as part of a Masonic Jewel did not occur until the last years of the 18th Century.

No official explanation has ever been given for it's selection, but there is plenty of room for speculation.

Geometry has always been closely linked to the Masons trade, the Old Charges constantly re-iterate this link, even to the extent of outright declarations that Geometry is called Masonry.

Dr. Anderson in his 1723 Constitution averred that the 47th proposition of Euclids first book, is the foundation of all Masonry, Sacred, Civil and Military, he used the 47th Proposition as the Symbol of all Geometry, and proclaimed the links between that science and the Craft.

There have been many papers and theories published on this subject, and all will have some basis for the truth of the matter, but perhaps one of the most telling explanations comes from words of the late Bro. Speth, first Secretary of the Quatuor Coronatuor Lodge, he concluded "For the Symbolism I suggest we concentrate on the 47th Proposition, which is universally acclaimed by experts in the field, as the quintessence of perfection and truth.

W.M. I hope that these few questions, and more particularly the answers, may have been of interest, I must stress that it would be most unwise for anyone to be too dogmatic on any of these subjects, there will almost certainly be some other expert ready, and willing to argue most strongly in opposition.

Should any of the younger Brethren be sufficiently interested to wish to make greater study of such Masonic subjects, then may I suggest that they become Members of the Correspondence Circle of Quatuor Coronati Lodge of Research, it costs very little, and offers many privileges, apart from anything else one receives each year a copy of Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, being the Transactions of the Lodge, in itself well worth the Subscription. If anyone wishes to have further details they can speak to me later.