

# Notes on Book of Constitutions.

The only Book issued by Grand Lodge.

Masonic Year  
Book

Present Edition, 1916. ?

1. First. Ancient Charges & Regulations of Master Elect. <sup>Spirit & Intention.</sup>
2. Charges of Freemason. To be read at the making of New Brethren. Copy of Andersons. 170 pages. The Ancient Charges about 90 copies known, mostly 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries but dating back to Regius Poem circa. 1390. Wood & Co. Lechmere 2<sup>nd</sup> half. 17<sup>th</sup> Cent. Quips Jones. ditto.

History. Oath or Book Duty to God, King & Legendam.

Brother Masons. Rules in carrying on work & moral injunctions. Some of the Ancient Charges describe as Constitutions.

History see Legendam. It is abandoned in 1847. Some date it back to Grand Master Adam & one even considers it so wide & universal that it must have existed before the creation but does not suggest how it was handed on. The first printed copy Anderson 1723 is described as digested & compiled from many old records of lodges Beyond the Seas as well as England Scotland & Ireland.

General Regulations first compiled by George Payne G.M in 1720. Rep. 5. Not under 25 years. VI.

Unanimous vote of Brethren required. XI. Members to visit other lodges to cultivate a good understanding & to observe the same usages as much as possible XIII Apprentices to be admitted Fellow Crafts & Masters only in Grand Lodge. Chiefly Regs for Lodge Entered Apprentices Song.

1788 List. List of 106 Lodges in London  
47 in Country. Warwick Wolverhampton  
Stombridge 1733. at the D of every Week.  
Shrewsbury. Birmingham. (2.) Hereford  
Gloucester.

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173 Minutes. Every Lodge shall keep a book to be called the Minute Book in which the Master or the Brother appointed by him as Sec. shall regularly enter from time to time names & particulars of candidates & ceremonies names of all Brethren present also visitors & their rank & Lodges. Minutes of all transactions proper to be written. Resolutions or Election of Master Grants of Money Alteration of By-Laws only valid after confirmation but notice of non confirmation to be given. If not confirmed but approved.

W.M. must give casting vote.

Resignations must be in writing to the Sec or orally in Lodge are effective when read or approved in Lodge hence it is wrong to accept a resignation as there is no power to not accept. It has been held that a Brother whose letter has been read cannot withdraw his resignation & must be re-elected if.

Three years in arrears automatic.

A vote of a majority present & voting may require a member to withdraw his resignation.

1916. Edition of Constitutions sanctioned  
by G. H. & signed by Sir Ed Lechworth. G. S.

They are laws & regulations for administration  
not laying down ritual of which there is no  
officially approved standard. One little Blue  
Book purports to be Linalion but is not even  
authorised by that Lodge. Ritual still handed  
down in theory by word of mouth although Grand Master  
is final court of appeal in disputes. So long as kept  
within the Ancient Landmarks no interference.

The modes of recognition, the fundamental  
principles the legends the rituals the duties  
& obligations of Masons as defined by Ancient  
charges are all out side G. S. What is aimed  
at is Unity not cast iron uniformity. The

Landmarks themselves nowhere defined but  
the G. M. by Article 65 is made the judge. What  
is a landmark The P. A. is adjured to prove  
his Fidelity by adhering to the ancient landmarks  
of the order. The Master Elect ought to be well  
skilled in the Ancient Charges Regulations &

Landmarks of the Order & must not permit any  
deviation from the established landmarks of the  
order. The term "landmark" is one well known to the  
conveyancing lawyer & is held to refer only to such  
features of the country as are entirely natural. Thus  
a wall is not a landmark or indeed any building  
or anything erected by human hands but a water  
course, a ravine or a hill would be admitted

This may be considered an operative def  
The speculative definition deduced from  
this may landmarks in the Craft are certain  
outstanding & essential characteristics  
which have existed from time immemorial  
& are of universal application. Some  
Brethren & in particular our American Brethren  
have been indefatigable in discovering landmarks  
but while it is certain that in one way every  
inch of the boundaries between 2 properties are in  
essence landmarks yet as a matter of practice  
it is usual to refer only to those outstanding.  
I will mention but a few -

1. The belief in a Supreme Being.
2. The volume of the Sacred Law is dispensable  
in Lodge.
3. The equality of all Freemasons.
4. The secrecy of the modes of recognition
5. The Moles themselves.
6. The qualifications of candidates.
7. The right of every Mason in good standing  
to visit & sit in every regular lodge.
8. The 3 Degrees.

The Book of Cox is arranged under 6 headings  
The G.M. The G.L. H.P. Two Dist for Lodges  
Private Lodges, The Boards of Grand Lodge - The  
Regalia. Fees.

To consider first the G.M. He has first four  
merogatives under the landmarks. 1. The power to  
preside at all meetings, to make Masons at sight  
to grant dispensations for conferring degrees at  
irregular intervals to warrant new lodges

Some of his other powers under B. C. are the granting of Grand Lodge honours within the office level down except the G. Treas. The prerogative of mercy he may reinstate suspended or expelled Brethren on due submission being made if he think fit. If he considers any resolution brought forward in G. L. as contrary to Ant. Law. he may refuse to allow it to be brought forward. It is the G. M. not G. L. that approves Byelaws. The power to make masons at sight is inherent in power to issue warrants. A lodge is warranted for a particular purpose & when the work for which it is warranted is performed it is dissolved.

G. L. is composed of Masters Wardsmen & subs P. Ms of private lodges the Grand Stewards of the Year the present & past Grand Officers with the G. M. at the head some 50,000. average attendance less than 1000. The members of G. L. operate as checks on the othermost almost boundless prerogative of the G. M. Thus the G. M. being the fountain of honour appoints his own officers but cannot take away rights & privileges once granted and he cannot be taken away by G. L. He issues warrants & approves byelaws but no lodge can be erased from the register without consent of G. L. He cannot create new offices but may appoint as many officers as he likes to Past Masters but the greatest check is the power of the purse & the whole of the 50000 are entitled to vote for G. Treas. The highest courts of J. M. are outside the reach of any disturbing influences & under wise & unobtrusive guidance the Craft does

a perfect & unquesting belief in the wisdom  
& impartiality of S. C. decisions. S. C. is the  
final court of appeal for any aggrieved brother.  
decisions of law are given on the advice of the  
two Registrars in practice a prominent lawyer.  
Mr Justice Chitty practically always adopted  
by S. C. except to err on side of mercy. The S. C.  
being dissatisfied with a S. O. S. C. decision  
Orient of France establishes Lodge in New Zealand.  
~~The Committee of S. C. include Board of General~~  
~~Proprietors. S. C. is Parliament Judges & Sheriff~~  
rolled into one it makes the laws sees they  
are obeyed judges sentences & punishes  
any culprits. The highest penalty a private  
Lodge can inflict is exclusion from its meetings  
only S. C. can erase Lodges & expel Brethren from  
the Craft. Article 17. For the S. M. should abuse  
his power & render himself unworthy of the obedience  
of the Lodges he shall be subjected to some new  
regulation to be dictated by the occasion because  
with the Grand Fraternity have had no reason to  
provide for an event they have presumed would  
never happen. Article 28. Perhaps to offer us  
prayer in Quarterly Convocations. Art. 33 S. S. to  
receive all petitions memorials etc. Art 39  
Nineteen Grand Stewards. Red Appon Lodges 100  
1 to 259 Annual Fort June each lodge recommends  
a W. M. who is presented by his predecessor expenses  
considerable. Notice of Motion required. Any  
motion the substance of which has already been considered  
& decided upon shall not be again brought forward

except by the G. M. for 12 months. except appeals from judgements by Prov. P. M. or Bd. offer Purpos agenda & Printed Minutes circulated so that every Wor. Master may or shall communicate to his lodge 72. Whoever shall be so unmassive as to hiss at a Brother shall forthwith be solemnly excluded.

74. Resolutions requiring confirmation. Grant of money or new law or regulation. No motion of nonconfirmation to be considered without notice given in time for Bd. offer Purpose & for printing on agenda.

75. Voting by holding up one hand manner usual among Masons. Majority of Votes P. M. to have second or casting vote

London Rank equal to Prov. & District  
Prov. P. M. holds emanate from Prov. P. Ms & meets by his objection he may or may not appoint officers. P. M. appointed by G. M. to any Brother of eminence & ability in the Craft he may think worthy. Complaints in the Province to be considered by the Prov. P. M. who may consult the P. M. lodge if he likes but it has no power of decision. It is an allowable assumption that a course of procedure laid down in the B. C. for G. M. applies with the necessary alterations to Prov. G. M. and



to private lodges, Admonition Fine or  
suspension, a report to be sent to P. M.  
Prov. Stewards are members of Prov P. L. only for year  
but may wear clothing as Post or  
= Private lodges. 116. 7 shall make a lodge  
perfect & sufficient to form a new Lodge  
W. M. is responsible for safe custody of Warrant  
& must produce it at each meeting & if not  
forthcoming all proceeding at such meeting  
are null & void except Antiquity No. 2 &  
Royal Somerset House & Devonshire Lodge No 4 under  
Time Immemorial. Every lodge must have a  
name or title as well as Member which cannot  
be altered with consent. 129. Gives list of regular  
Officers and extra officers. The foregoing order  
of appointment & investiture gives no Brother  
the right to claim advancement by rotation  
promotion by merit & ability in sole discretion  
& power of W. M. 130. W. M. elects by Ballot  
very strict. P. Lodge is very strict in maintaining  
absolute secrecy of ballot to protect voter. & no  
attempt to find out the way in which any Brother  
has voted must be made. Thus in a case where the

W.M. after a ballot in which sufficient black  
balls had been cast & had directed a fresh  
ballot & instructed those who had voted in  
favour on first occasion not to vote on second  
Blank paper was because obvious who goes  
was very severely dealt with. Brethren have  
been expelled for transgressing. The Board of  
Genl. has laid it down that there may be no  
nomination by proposition in open Lodge of  
either W.M. or Treas. as such proposition is  
calculated to hardly influence Brethren votes  
The Master elect is considered elected when the  
minutes of such election are confirmed should he  
die or be incapacitated by removal or any other way  
from acting the then Master continues for the period  
for which the Master elect was elected  
140. If W.M. dissatisfied with any of his officers he  
may lay the complaint before the Lodge after notice to  
the culprit & if a majority of the Brethren present  
vote in favour he may replace him. Note that  
a majority of those voting  
Note also: 209. A Brother after admonition by W.M.  
& persisting in offending can be temporarily  
excluded for disorderly conduct by a bare  
majority of those present but permanent  
exclusion requires a majority of  $\frac{2}{3}$  <sup>res. present</sup>  
& notice in writing to the offender & to the  
members of the Lodge

149. The Master & Wardens of a Lodge are enjoined to visit other Lodges as often as they conveniently can in order that the same usages & customs may be observed throughout the Craft & a good understanding cultivated amongst Freemasons. 150 Visitation. No Brother shall be admitted into a Lodge unless he be personally known to & vouched for by one of the Brethren present unless he shall be well vouched for after due examination. This entails proof by examination, production of G. L. Certificate & proof of identity by way of signature or other  
152. Limits visits by an unattached brother once to each Lodge, apparently on supposition he is looking for a Masonic home.  
By Laws. Each Lodge may make its own providing they are not inconsistent with the regulations of G. L. - To be approved by Prov. G. M. & G. M. & are not valid until so submitted & approved  
Emergency Meetings at any time by Authority of W. M. the business to be transacted to be stated & announced, no other business to be entered on hence no minutes & W. M. does not rise to enquire if any to propose.