



**Internet Lodge 9659**  
**United Grand Lodge of England**  
**Province of East Lancashire**  
<http://internet.lodge.org.uk>

**Short Papers Competition 2007**

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**Paper 17/2007**

**Title**  
**Author**

**The Tyler and His Origins**  
**Bro William Roberts – England**

“The Tyler or Outer Guard” was the Prestonian Lecture for 1977 given by Bro R A Wells. The relevant lecture gives us an insight into the duties of this essential office in freemasonry

The origin of the word Tyler is not thoroughly known but records prove that in 1732 the first official use of the word Tyler appears in Grand Lodge Minutes dated 8<sup>th</sup> June 1732 (vol 90 AQS). When a complaint was made by the Grand Steward against a Brother who was engaged as an attendant for the grand feast his involvement caused the loss of 30 dishes of meat. When questioned he was insolent and in due course was called before Grand Lodge.

It was observed by the committee that the Brother was Tyler for several lodges and, after a lot more detail was made, the Brother asked for a pardon which was granted.

In 1738 the Rev. Dr Anderson published his new book of Constitutions dealing with the position of an experienced Brother or master mason who should be appointed Tyler.

So the word Tyler became more commonly used in lodges, but his duties were varied and time consuming for which he was paid a fair sum. However if he failed in his duties fines or disqualification from office would happen.

Before 1738 the position of the office was known as Outer Guard, guarder, and beadle, beadle being more commonly used in Trade guilds.

Several of the early Trade guilds used the word Tyler e.g., tilers, carpenters, and masons as a means of guarding their secret crafts. Posting a sentinel was also indeed an established custom. As mentioned, in early freemasonry a junior apprentice or fellow craft was employed to guard the door but problems were continually arising when higher degrees were worked so perhaps after the experience of the incidents in 1732 the mentioned improvements were adopted.

The duties of the Tyler as mentioned were numerous not only had he to guard the door but set out the lodge, chalk the floor, prepare candlesticks, and deliver summons and hold the key to the apron box. For this he was paid varying amounts usually coupled with refreshments. From the Minutes of Antiquities Lodge No 23 July 1844, we note at the lodge meeting the Tyler be paid one shilling extra for Tying the lodge. The payment was raised to two shillings the following year. However six years later the great expense of the Tyler was noted and it was ordered he only be paid one shilling for delivering the summonses and Tying the lodge.

To end this small Paper I have to mention Hogarths painting “Night” this shows the Master of the lodge being escorted home from the “Rummer and Grapes” tavern by a brother who has a drawn sword and a key suspended from his waist. This brother is thought to be the Tyler by the fact of the key to the apron box and the drawn sword.

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