



Internet Lodge 9659
United Grand Lodge of England
Province of East Lancashire
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Short Papers Competition 2007

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Paper 42/2007

Title

Calling On and Calling Off

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Where does it come from? Well we have to rely on the exposure 'Three Distinct Knocks'.

The Master whispers to the Senior Deacon at his right-hand side, and says "'tis my will and pleasure that this Lodge is called off from work to refreshment during pleasure;" then the Deacon carries it to the Senior Warden and whispers the same Words in his ear and he whispers it in the ear of the Junior Deacon, and he carries it to the Junior Warden and whispers the same to him, who declares it with a loud voice and says; "it is our Master's Will and Pleasure, that this Lodge is called from Work to Refreshment during pleasure" then he sets up his column and the senior lays his down for the care of the Lodge is in the hands of the junior warden while they are at refreshment.

There is a practical reason why the columns are used in this way. During the early years of speculative Masonry, Lodge work was done at a table and the Tyler would serve drinks to the members during the time the Lodge was open. Toasts would be taken during a pause in the Ceremony, but for a meal which might be taken at the same table, the Lodge would be 'Called Off'

If the Lodge was called off, the Brethren remained in their seats, a signal recognisable by the Tyler to show that the Lodge had been Called Off would be necessary. How would this be done? Well by the use of the Wardens Columns of course and as we know they are raised and lowered at the Opening and Closing of the lodge and the same applies when Calling off and Calling On.(1)

These days, of course, the whole thing is said out loud by the Master and Junior Warden the single knock associated with it is done in **reverse**, i.e. the Junior Warden first then the Senior Warden and finally the Master as the Lodge is called off.

A Lodge may be 'Called Off' at the Master's discretion, but this would not be done in the middle of a ceremony and there is no particular degree associated with 'Calling Off'. The Board of General Purposes ruled on 8th March, 1961 that it 'recommends that the Master of a Lodge should be permitted to make a short break in the proceedings at a suitable time during a meeting provided that the Lodge is properly Called Off and Called On again.'

It is not uncommon in some Old Lodges for there to be a break at sometime during the Installation Ceremony, usually after the Inner Workings, when Brethren take a comfort break.

Finally, there is also a very practical purpose for 'Calling Off and On' In some countries where Freemasonry is practiced and where temperatures in a temple can get quite high, it makes common sense to have break in proceedings to allow Brethren to refresh themselves.

Harry Carr; Freemasonry at Work P20 –Colin Dyer

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