

SOME BASIC HELP IN COMPILING AND DELIVERING A 'MASONIC' TOAST

Toasts are *not* part of our everyday life and can generate some fear to many who have the honorable task of proposing one. So the purpose of this short paper is to give an insight into proposing a toast providing a few ideas as we go along and hopefully to alleviate some of those fears.

So why is it that some people have a natural ability to be able to stand and speak for whatever length of time and providing an interesting and humorous account of their subject/s? Yet others as implied above can sweat buckets and generally work themselves up into what amounts to be a stressful 30 seconds of dribble. Obviously, this doesn't help anyone either the speaker or the listener.

I suppose it's like anything in life some have the knack and others don't.... The real fact is more likely that they have performed umpteen toasts so are well skilled in the art but remember, they all had to start somewhere?

So let's take it in easy steps – first of all what do you consider a good toast should consist of? Is it: Interest? Humour? Serious? Long? Short?

Interest and an element of serious must always come first..... with confidence some added humour can come later.

In most cases a combination of both interest and humour over say a 2 to 5 minute period is the perfect formula for a good toast (in my opinion). However in some cases humour may not be appropriate or the speaker may not be a natural at conveying humour so it is then vital what you say is interesting to your listeners.

So, lets make it quite clear don't try and emulate a well groomed toast provider if you yourself are not skilled in the art, as the joke invariably will back fire on you...

STICK TO THE SCRIPT

Right, let's draft out a toast to the visitors – we need a beginning, a middle and an end:-

WORSHIPFUL MASTER, DISTINGUISHED BRETHREN, BRETHREN ALL...

Beginning:

- **Brethren, I have been given the pleasure of proposing the toast to our guests.**

Middle:

- **We trust that you all have enjoyed your visit with us today?**

End:

- **Brethren of the Albert Lucking Lodge please, rise and drink a toast to our guest's.**

OK – that's **the script**, but it doesn't take a genius to see that it is a) a bit short b) a bit blunt & c) not really expressing the Lodge's appreciation to our guests.

So let's think about improving **the Script**, by first concentrating on the Beginning...

The extra we can add to this section is for example –

How many Guest's are present? *do a bit of homework and ask the Secretary...*

Of that number, what is the percentage of regular & new guest's? *the Secretary again, should give you a good idea...*

Are there any visiting from a far distance? *Secretary again or possibly the brother who invited the guest...*

So let's now have a look at the beginning with this new found information...

- **Brethren, I have been given the pleasure of proposing the toast to our guest's.**
I've done a little homework and I can confirm that we have 16 guests, to whom all of which I bid you welcome.
I recognise quite a few regulars but I also can see that we have several attending for the first time.
I have also been made aware of a brother who has come all the way from Inverness in Scotland – although, I think the kilt was a bit of a give away?

You can see how this has now extended our beginning with some interest and 'wow and behold,' a little humour! – however, be a little careful with humour, especially if referring to someone who is not known to you, as they may be the type who could take offence.

Now let's do the same for our middle...

You can refer to the splendour of the Temple.

You can refer to the ceremony performed at the meeting *obviously, this must be generalised as there could be brethren who may not have attained the degree that was performed. There is nothing wrong however, in mentioning some of the officers involved, but check out first that there is not a toast to the Officers of the Lodge following otherwise you would be encroaching on their script!*

You can refer to the Festive Board.

Now lets move on to the end...

Guests are important to our meetings

Urge the guest to come again.

So let's put that all together...

- **Brethren, I have been given the pleasure of proposing the toast to our guest's.**
I've done a little homework and I can confirm that we have 16 guests, to whom all of which I bid you welcome.
I recognise quite a few regulars but I also can see that we have several attending for the first time.
I have also been made aware of a brother who has come all the way from Inverness in Scotland – although, I think the kilt was a bit of a give away?
- **We trust that you have all enjoyed your visit with us today?**
In particular, I hope our ceremony performed in the Temple was to your liking. No doubt it may differ slightly perhaps to your own lodge ceremonies but then that's part of what visiting is about, seeing variations in work.

Following our move here just 2 years ago, we are justly proud of the Centre and what it has to offer in particular our festive boards, where our Chef's are really beginning to fine tune our menu's.

To conclude Brethren, guests are an important part of our Masonic meetings therefore, I hope that you have seen enough to be tempted to return as I know you will be made warmly welcome.

- **Brethren of the Albert Lucking Lodge, please rise and drink a toast to our guest's**

So there you have it, a simple three line script expanded to an acceptable, but simple toast to our guests.

This principal can be used when compiling any toast – just scribble out your beginning, your middle and your end and then just add – I find if you are into computers – word processing is a great tool for this type of work.

I have deliberately avoided producing a series of different scripts for easy adapting to reflect a particular toast, as I am firm believer that something of the toast provider ie: **YOU** - must be in the script.

A few tips to consider when compiling and delivering a toast:

With Masonic toasts invariably they must be informative and have a serious side.

Do some homework on your subject – ask some questions.

Only bring in humour if you feel comfortable (and more to the point confident) but not just to get a laugh!

Try using a pause to emphasise a point or to allow the audience to react to a fact, anecdote or joke.

Keep within the limits of your toast – do not encroach on another persons toast.

Take your time in delivering the toast and make sure you speak to the whole audience and not just to one section.

Try to use your script as a prompt and to avoid just reading it like a book.

Finally:

Hold your head up, speak clearly and don't rush... and try to relax!!!

There is no *magic* formula to writing and delivering a toast – however, there is this *constructive* formula which I hope may provide some basic help and understanding.