



PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF DEVONSHIRE

Explanation of the Second Degree

The Passing of a Fellow Craft

Introduction

It is important that you understand the symbolism of your Passing, and this is explained in general terms below. Your ceremony of Passing may appear to be different to those in other Devonshire Lodges and wider afield, however we all operate under a warrant of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE). As such, all ceremonies are based upon the same basic story and symbolism although their words may differ, and the sequence of the various parts may change, the fundamental message is always the same.

However, in coming to understand the meaning of our Ceremonies, we have a problem, for different Brethren will interpret them in different ways.

What is more, none of them will be wrong. After all, if we were all able to understand the Ceremonies in a uniform manner, there would be little point in coming to our Lodges to witness them time after time, as their significance could perhaps be explained in a single visit.

Over a period of time, the ritual you see, hear and learn, will prompt you to think about it more widely and more deeply.

This will lead you to consider the one constant that should be in our minds – How can we improve ourselves as building blocks for the Temple we are contemplating?

The Second Degree Ceremony (Ceremony of Passing)

The purpose of the Second Degree was firstly to acknowledge the progress you have made in the Craft and secondly, to impress on you the importance of developing your intellectual ability by studying the hidden mysteries of nature and science, namely Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy. In other words, be open to learning throughout your life.

Your Preparation

After the Lodge was opened and the Minutes read and confirmed, you were asked the **Questions** you were required to answer.

These reminded you of the way you were prepared for your initiation and the reasons for it, you still were in a state of poverty to remind you of the origins of Charity, namely in your heart. You agreed to persevere through the Second Degree Ceremony. The Worshipful Master then entrusted you with the **Pass Grip** and **Pass Word** leading to the Second Degree. You then retired from the Lodge Room to be prepared for the ceremony.



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Once again you were prepared to enter the Lodge in a special manner, entering the Lodge Room (without the now unnecessary hoodwink). This time you wore an apron of the Entered Apprentice, signifying your advancement in Masonic knowledge.

Your entry into the Lodge

1. This time you were admitted into the Lodge by the Inner Guard presenting a square to your breast. The square teaches and reminds you to square your actions with all men. The Senior Deacon escorted you to the Point of Address where you saluted the Worshipful Master as an Entered Apprentice Freemason and a prayer was made for the forthcoming proceedings.
2. You were then paraded around the Lodge to mimic the sun as it appears in the Northern Hemisphere and examined by the Junior Warden to prove you as an Entered Apprentice and you returned to the North West Corner. The Worshipful Master then announced to the Brethren that you would pass in view before them, as a Candidate properly prepared to be passed to the Second Degree.
3. On arriving at the Senior Warden, you gave him the **Pass Grip** and **Pass Word** leading to the Second Degree.
4. Your Masonic journey to the light of the East continued as you again approached the pedestal. The predominant number in this Degree is five, and so you advanced to the pedestal by five steps as though ascending a winding staircase. When you knelt to take your **Obligation**, the number five was again predominant, although perhaps obscure. When you took your obligation, you formed five squares with both of your arms, your hand, your foot and your knee, and promised to keep the Secrets of the Second Degree as those of the First.
5. As Freemasons we believe in a **Supreme Being**, in the second degree the Supreme Being is referred to as **The Grand Geometrician of the Universe** and it was in his presence that you took your Obligation.
6. You were then entrusted with the **Sign, Token and Word** a Fellow Craft Freemason with a detailed explanation of their origin and meaning. You were instructed how to take the second regular step in Freemasonry. Although it was the same movement, but additional to the step you had taken in the First Degree, details of the various *signs, tokens and words* were quite different. During the course of your instruction, you were told 'For it was in this position that Joshua prayed fervently to the Almighty'. This alludes to the time when an army of Israelites, under the command of Joshua, was engaged in a battle with the Amalekites. Although heavily outnumbered, the Almighty had assured Joshua that the Israelites would prevail as long as he held his hands in the position you were shown. It reminds us of the complete trust we should all place in our Supreme Being.
7. The word of the Degree is a Hebrew one, and when conjoined with the word in the First Degree forms the key to God's covenant with Israel. This is the real importance of the word. The fact that it bore the name of the Assistant High Priest at the dedication of King Solomon's Temple is merely a convenient coincidence.
8. The Worshipful Master then explained the variation in signs between Lodges and that when visiting you should execute the signs as you were taught in the Lodge in which you were **Passed**.
9. As in the First Degree, you were now examined by both the Junior and Senior Wardens, to ensure you could demonstrate the **Signs, Tokens and Words** of the degree.
10. Next you were invested with the **Badge** of a Fellow Craft Freemason, to mark the progress you had made, and the Worshipful Master addressed you about the same. Your new *apron* indicates that you have progressed from an Entered Apprentice to a

Fellow Craft as it is now adorned with two rosettes. These should serve to remind you that, as a Craftsman, you are expected to make a serious study of the seven liberal arts and sciences. You may remember that they are grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Perhaps this could be somewhat modernised by suggesting that this list represents the need to develop your faculties, abilities and talents through study and research for the benefit of yourself and society in general.

11. Moving then to the **South East Corner**, you were encouraged to continue in your fidelity as a Freemason and that Freemasonry is a progressive science. In this Degree, you move from the North East corner where you were challenged as an Entered Apprentice, to the **South East Corner**. In the Charge, you were told, "You are now placed in the South East part, to mark the progress you have made". This is the fifth time the word 'progress' has been used during the ceremony. Firstly, the Tyler used it at the door of the Lodge. The Inner Guard repeated it when he reported your presence to the Master. The third time was by the Master immediately after your obligation when the Volume of the Sacred Law and the square and compasses were presented to you. The fourth was when the Senior Warden presented you with your badge. Progress is the central theme of this Degree which is appropriate, for we progress from sunrise to sunset, from birth to death and from beginning to end.
12. The **Working Tools** and their Symbolism were presented to you in detail.
 - The Square, The Square teaches us to regulate our lives and actions according to the Masonic line and rule, and to harmonise our conduct in this life so as to render us acceptable to that Divine Being from whom all goodness springs, and to whom we must give an account of all our actions i.e. morality
 - The Level demonstrates that we are all sprung from the same stock, partakers of the same nature, and sharers in the same hope...yet ought no eminence of situation make us forget that we are Brothers i.e. equality.
 - The infallible Plumb Rule which, like Jacob's ladder, connects heaven and earth, is the criterion of rectitude and truth. It teaches us to walk justly and uprightly before God and man, neither turning to the right nor left from the paths of virtue i.e. upright intentions.
13. At this stage you then retired from the Lodge Room to restore yourself to your personal comfort. When ready, you re-entered the Lodge Room and an Explanation of the **Second Degree Tracing Board** was given to you. (This may be done at a future date in some Lodges.) This was principally about King Solomon's Temple and its building.
14. In some Lodges as part of the Fellowcraft Ceremony they also deliver the **Five Noble Orders of Architecture**.
15. You will recall at your Initiation a **Charge** was recited to you: recommending how you should behave in your life and actions. Some but by no means all Lodge recite a **Charge after Passing**. This Charge reinforces those given in the first degree that he will do his very best to support others and to develop his own skills to become a useful member of society and a skilful Brother whilst upholding the values of the Craft
16. The Worshipful Master then exchanged the **Questions and the Answers** of a Fellow Craft with the Deacons or Wardens for your instruction as you will be required to answer the questions prior to being raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason.
17. Finally, you took your seat in the Lodge when you witnessed the rest of the business and the closing of the Lodge.

Conclusion

In this degree (Fellow Craft), you were taught about man's relationship with the world in which we live and which was created by the *Grand Geometrician of the Universe*.

Prior to AD 1730 there were only two degrees in Freemasonry, those of Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft (Fellow of the Craft), and it was from the Fellow Craft of the Lodge that the Master of the Lodge was elected each year, provided that he had served at least one year as a Warden. These days we have three degrees, the third being that of Master Mason.

During the ceremony, you were told that you are now in the midway of Freemasonry, which is to imply that there is a further Degree beyond Fellow Craft. The next degree which you will take, is the Third Degree when you will be raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. There is no higher degree in Craft Freemasonry.

The aprons which you have worn up to now, have been the property of the Lodge. Your next apron however, will be your own property as you will be using it for some years to come, both in the Lodge and when you go out visiting other Lodges. You will need therefore, unless you have made other arrangements, to arrange with the Secretary of the Lodge, to purchase for you, a Master Mason's apron and a pair of white gloves. These will be at your own expense. A great deal happened to you during the ceremony, and it would not be surprising if you have difficulty recollecting them. Do not let this concern you, for your Mentor will go through them again with you, before the next Lodge meeting. Always remember **if in doubt ask**, it is likely that every other member has felt confused or unsure at some point. Remember Masonry should be FUN.

Solomon: Gaining Access

Solomon is the UGLE platform for your journey of Masonic Learning and Development which is accessed through the internet at <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk> or using the QR code at the bottom left of the page. If you require help, there is a special section (for which you do not need to register) entitled "Getting Started with Solomon" and is accessed from the above link or the QR code on the bottom right which includes help and instructional videos.

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Getting started
with Solomon



Solomon: Do not spoil your future enjoyment!

Solomon is split into many different areas (*modules*) to aid your learning and development in masonry. Each are clearly labelled, hence as a Fellow Craft only access those for the ceremonies you have undertaken i.e. The Second Degree [The Second Degree \(ugle.org.uk\)](https://ugle.org.uk) and [Welcome Fellowcraft \(ugle.org.uk\)](https://ugle.org.uk). If you access other areas, you will discover information on your future ceremonies that will lessen the impact (and potential enjoyment) of the future ceremonies through which you pass.

The module [Lodge Matters \(ugle.org.uk\)](https://ugle.org.uk) has a great deal of material, on such things as Masonic Etiquette, Offices, artefacts and the like. There is also another complimentary module [on Masonic History \(ugle.org.uk\)](https://ugle.org.uk) both should be looked at conjointly with this module.

Solomon: Welcome Modules

The module **Welcome Fellowcraft** is in four parts, which you can complete at your own pace, or explore individually as they take your interest. Badges can be earned for 100% successful completion.

Some of the activities may need to be undertaken a few times before they can be successfully completed. That is why we provide practice quizzes for you. It is intended to be a bit of fun, and not to catch you out. An important part of learning is experimentation, and we hope you will go back and have another go in order to earn your badge.