



## *The Overy Papers*

### **Number 15 The Rituals of British Columbia and Yukon**

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

Before my talk I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who was involved in me being presented with my Medal of Merit at the last Grand Lodge Communication. I don't know all your names but it was very much appreciated.

Thank you.

#### **The Rituals of British Columbia and Yukon**

This was prepared using an article provided by Edwin J Lockhart, Senior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia in June 1976.

*To help with the understanding I have used the term Ritual that is interchangeable with the term work throughout the talk.*

Visitors from other jurisdictions are usually surprised by the fact that British Columbia has four different Rituals authorized for use in their Lodges. This means we in the Frazer Valley have a gold mine of different rituals to draw on unlike England and the USA where all rituals are basically the same.

So how did this happen:

Well in 1858 a group of Freemasons mainly from England made a request to the Grand Lodge of England to open a lodge in the City of Victoria, in the Colony of Vancouver Island. As the mail went round Cape Horn it took a bit of time and as the Charter had to be returned once because of an error they did not receive their Charter until 1860. They became Victoria Lodge Number 1085 on the English Registry. They practiced the English or Emulation Ritual and today they are Victoria-Columbia Lodge Number 1 of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.

In 1860 many American arrived in Victoria searching for Gold. They found the English rituals very strange and wanted to carry out the American Ritual that was familiar to them.

The Grand Lodge of England refused their request. So they asked the Grand Lodge of Scotland who was pleased to grant them a charter and in 1862 they became Lodge Number 421 on the Scottish Registry and used the American ritual that is now known as the British Columbia Ancient Ritual. The one we use, well almost

Today they are Vancouver-Quadra Lodge Number 2 of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.

The years pass and in 1871 the Grand Lodge of British Columbia was Consecrated.

By 1887 Vancouver still only had one lodge Mount Herman # 7 that had been consecrated in 1869 at Moodyville on Burrard Inlet before it moved to Vancouver and they used the Ancient American Ritual.

Shortly afterwards railway workers with CP Rail arrived in Vancouver and many were Masons. They were used to the Canadian work used in Ontario and they applied to form a lodge using that ritual and it was accepted and Cascade Lodge #12 was formed. This now gave British Columbia, three Rituals

In 1906 a number of Australian Freemasons arrived in Vancouver and asked for permission to form a lodge to practice their Australian Ritual. It was approved and they became Southern Cross Number 44 and the Grand Lodge of British Columbia acquired its forth ritual.

This Australian Ritual had been produced by The Grand Lodge of New South Wales when it was formed in 1881. They decided that a ritual that was common to all their lodges was the most desirable. So they produced one from what they considered were the best features of the English, Irish and Scottish rituals that were, in use in Australia at the time

It should be noted that it was not difficult for the Grand Lodge of New South Wales to establish a common ritual as the English, Irish and Scottish lodges were all basically the same.

For British Columbia to do the same would be difficult as the Ancient Ritual was very different from the other three rituals in use.

This approval to the Australians must have been a special dispensation as in 1893 the Grand Lodge had decided all new lodges formed after 1893 should select one of the other three authorized rituals.

These were the English Ritual as practiced by Victoria-Columbia No 1 in Victoria, the Ancient Ritual as practiced by Ashlar Number 3 in Nanaimo or the Canadian Ritual practiced by Cascade Lodge #12 in Vancouver.

This does not seem to have been followed very closely as regards the Ancient Ritual. The lodges around Vancouver used the Ancient Rituals similar to those used by Mount Herman Lodge # 7 and others in the absence of any published ritual used Lester's book, "Look to the East" as a guide.

This ritual differs considerably from the Ritual of Ashlar Lodge # 3 and also of the other lodges on Vancouver Island.

This situation is probably due to the fact that in earlier years the brethren of Ashlar lodge # 3 believed the ritual should be communicated by word of mouth only and not put on paper.

With no printed ritual to follow, differences inevitably crept in and no two lodges on Vancouver Island have rituals with procedures or wording exactly the same.

You may feel that your lodge is the correct one but we must use tolerance and we should remember, some of the procedures we may disagree with, have been practiced by some old lodges for more than 100 years and thus they should have acquired some authority.

So get traveling there is a whole new world out there and finding the difference is a rewarding experience.

Thank you and whatever I say may we continue in peace and harmony.

Bro. Bill Overy

Member of the Education Committee of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.