



## *The Overy Papers*

### **Number 17 - Why should we visit other lodges?**

My Mother lodge was under the United Grand Lodge of England and when I visited other lodges the rituals were the all the same and the only difference appeared to be the quality of wine at the 5 course festive board that followed lodge.

Nearly everyone had the same small case and you were dropped off at lodge by your wife. If you could not be present at lodge you always phoned the secretary with an apology.

We did not advertise anything but there must have been a word of mouth system because as soon as I became a Master Mason the Chairman of the company took me aside and said welcome to the craft and take off any time you need for Masonic duties and any questions refer them to me.

I never discovered his Lodge or joined him in lodge and nothing was ever said again but that was the world of English Masons.

Then one day I was invited to join Canadair in Montreal, Quebec and me and my family moved to pastures new.

I found it was easy to meet other masons in this new world as many displayed Masonic rings and even had car badges.

Of course I had to have a Board of Trial before I was allowed to join them in lodge but it was a relaxed affair with two brothers and was held in a local brasserie over a beer, they are very informal in Quebec.

"Before we start" I said "What does the G stand for inside the square and compasses."

They looked at each other in disbelief and they told me afterwards they suddenly had serious doubts about me. I showed them my certificate and the ring that I had put on for the occasion and I think we all suddenly realized there was a whole different world out there.

I was invited to their Lodge, which was Transportation Lodge No 103 in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Quebec and meets in Montreal.

My first Lodge meeting was their railway degree and they celebrated the starting of the Lodge when members of the local railway company carried in a silver plated section of railway track using original rail tongs and were dressed as railway workers. They did not use a gavel but a railway engine bell, which I found quite unique.

Apart from that the core part of the ritual was almost the same as far as I could tell, mind you memory dims after more than 37 years.

Work already prevented me joining a lodge but did not stop me visiting other lodges.

Another Lodge of interest was Golden Rule Lodge. It is one of the oldest Masonic lodges in Quebec, and originally it was Lively Stone Lodge that was composed of Masons from both sides of the border, and met in a building situated half in Canada and half in the United States.

The war of 1812 caused the lodge to separate and the Canadian one was re-named Golden Rule Lodge.

For more than 150 years they have held an open-air Master Mason lodge meeting in June in a natural cleft in the rock at the summit of the 2,400 ft. Owl's Head Mountain.

The MM candidate has to climb the mountain carrying a heavy 60 pound basket backpack that contains the Lodge furniture and regalia including the flags of Canada, the United States.

The climb which was steep but very easy, started in Quebec and as you climbed you crossed the border into Vermont and it was at this meeting I was introduced of the Ancient American ritual, which opens in the third degree.

Everyone was in shorts and short-sleeved shirts that looked out of place with some of the highly decorative aprons.

There was a ski lift for those of advancing years that took you almost to the top but I was told the first time visitors had to walk all the way and also had to carry the beer. As I said it was a fairly easy walk up but not with a 24 pack and I tried to encourage them to start drinking early to lighten the load but they still made sure there was enough for the return walk.

I did get my own back the next year by telling them that they must now join in an English tradition and despite warm weather we always wear a tuxedo in lodge. Our suits went up on the ski lift and we changed in the wood arriving in style only to find the local TV station was there outside lodge making a documentary.

There are so many example like this and our even our own VWBro Secretary remarked to me one day that when he was living on the Rock, or Newfoundland to those who are not Nufees. He visited a Scottish lodge with two other Past Masters in their Blue Aprons. Everyone else was in Red

aprons and at first thought they were all Grand Stewards. As they observed the ritual, they would keep looking at each other with a surprised look and say "do you do that in your Lodge"? They realized that the Scots are definitely quite different but although living in another world were still defiantly Brothers.

One of the others at that those meetings was VWB Barry Thom who still lives on the Rock and was the author of our Correspondence Course, The Solomon's Tracing Board. Such is the fellowship and meaning of Freemasonry that stretches from coast to coast in this large country of ours.

In our Province of British Columbia and Yukon we are blessed with four rituals; Ancient American, like ours, Canadian, Emulation, which is the English and the Australian. In addition there are many special lodge meetings such as Historical, Traditional and even one that meets outside, close by in the USA.

I had thought I had seen it all but on a visit to Burlington United #93 for their Installation Lodge meeting it was new one on me. It was a family affair with wives and family present. There were so many past and present members of the Grand Lodge of the State of Washington present they were sat in a line of additional seats in the North West.

The Grand Master sat with his wife and the Senior Warden had his Grand Daughter sitting beside him and at one point she assisted a brother who had a cough by fetching a glass of water. I asked our VWB secretary if this was usual and he remarked "they do things a bit different down here".

It is always best if you go to see a degree being carried out. These are often the same concept but how they are presented is very different.

But the big bonus is you meet so many interesting people. People just like yourself and you soon make memorable friends. Nothing was more evident than this than when we had a Masonic funeral here in Lodge Room downstairs and so many masons turned up from all over the district we even way out numbered the family.

They say that the more you put into something the more you get out of it and this is very true of visiting other lodges. The active senior members in lodge already know this, so to the younger members I say to you "Start Traveling" and find out the pleasure of the unique fellowship of the Masonic World out there.

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

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

