

## "Masonry There and Here"

As new Brethren, we become very comfortable with what we see in our Mother Lodges. The ritual becomes second nature, the manner of managing the Business becomes ingrained, the way we greet visitors is patterned into our brains in much the same way that Dr. Pavlov trained his famous dogs.

That's unfortunate in many ways, as it often closes our minds to the enjoyment of seeing commonplace things done differently!

"Masonic Visitation" is considered in many jurisdictions around the world to be a "right", very much the same as the "human rights" guaranteed by the UN. The fact is that "visiting" is not a "right" in that sense, as any Lodge, and the Master of that Lodge, has the power to admit or refuse admittance, to any visitor except certain Grand Officers attending in the performance of their official duties. But that's not my point.

Visiting, travelling about, seeing how "the other feller does it" is in many ways the lifeblood of Masonry. Our Fraternity is built on the legend of the mobile nature of stone masons and jobs, and this is immortalised in more than one place in our rituals.

I live in Nova Scotia, where I am a member of an English Lodge that sits in the middle of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, surrounded by 27 other Lodges within a half hours drive. More than half of them meet in the same building my Lodge uses. Two of those Lodges use a version of Emulation Work, one uses a form of Working based on an Irish ritual, and the rest use an American ritual called variously "Webb Working" or "Ancient York". The inter-visitation and cross-pollination is constant, and the Lodges experience a goodly number of Brethren who have joined additional Lodges. This can have some amusing results, particularly when sitting in Office in more than one place!

In our Masonic careers, we often develop a tendency to believe many things are "done best our way", referring to the specific traditions of our Mother Lodges. This of course implies that none of the other Lodges round and about "do it right" at all!

I extend an invitation to any Brother to attend a meeting of The Royal Standard Lodge # 398 EC, meeting in Halifax on the Second Tuesday of each month except July and August, to see some of the possible "differences" for themselves (Oh, by the way, that's Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and no, I won't be sending the airfare.)

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