



**Internet Lodge 9659**  
**United Grand Lodge of England**  
**Province of East Lancashire**  
<http://internet.lodge.org.uk>

**Short Papers Competition 2007**

*The opinions reflected by the author are not necessarily those of Internet Lodge,  
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**Paper 07/2007**

**Title**  
**Author**

**What's in *Your* Attic?**  
**Bro David Joyce – England**

If you asked, "What's in the attic?" at your Masonic Centre, they will probably tell you, "Not a lot". If you ask what happens to stuff that is no longer used, you might hear something like, "We use what's in the temple, and a few things from the lodge's locker – just like we always have".

***But you always haven't!*** Masons are great ones for *presenting* things, and this makes other things redundant. The donor's presence\* ensures the new objects will be used, causing the old to be forgotten, but they do retain an odd status. Whereas an individual may throw his own property away, lodge property is collectively owned. How do you dispose of it?

That's exactly what attics are for! Let's consider just one Masonic Hall.

Nobody knew anything about a box containing *two* pairs of wardens' columns. One pair was dated 1895. The other turned out to date from the lodge's founding in the mid-1700's. They make a *double* example of things that no one wanted to discard in the face of replacements. The benefactor purposefully had a box made to contain his new ones *and* the earlier pair. When *they* were replaced, they were put in the attic. Now no one is left alive to tell of it.

A boxful of tokens became genuinely redundant when the Masonic Hall was built. Luckily, one elderly member knew that they were meal tokens that were once given to innkeepers in exchange for dining. They were intended to prevent overcharging, since a licensee would only be paid for as many meals as he could present tokens. Despite being solid silver, they lay (almost) forgotten from 1905 until 2005.

An apparently rolled up banner turned out to be an early transparency of a skeletal 'death', with his scythe and other icons of mortality, painted on to translucent leather. It was replaced in the late 19th century with an identical design, painted on to glass. Hindsight now shows that this was traced from the leather original. The glass one is lit from behind, which suggests that the leather one was back-lit too, being stretched in front of a light source.

Unfortunately, such discoveries need proper conservation and display. There are several options: you might spend some money and create a museum corner 'in house'. You can donate things to museums that already exist. You can even sell things for the collective benefit of the lodge. It is not only old lodges, as in the examples, that have hidden gems. Lots of old rubbish (otherwise called art nouveau, or art deco) has been replaced relatively recently with 'modern' items as wartime austerity gave way to increasing affluence.

If you simply shove the 'rubbish' back where it came from, it will certainly outlive *you*, as it did your forgotten predecessors. But, while *you* will indeed be removed from worldly knowledge, whatever you might find in your attic will probably cause its increase!

\*Make a pun of it if you really must!

*Short papers are intended to be read aloud in lodge meetings as a form of Masonic Education.  
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