



**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,  
The Province of East Lancashire or the United Grand Lodge of England.*

**Paper 62/2007**

**Title** **Landmarks of This Lodge**  
**Author** **Bro Naunton Liles - Wales**

Let us dwell for a few moments on the traditions of this Lodge. Do some of you wonder why our more senior Past Masters are adamant about preserving unchanged some seemingly trivial things we do in our ritual and in the words we recite. The mere slip of a syllable can invoke apoplexy in some of our older brethren, and a foot wrong in the floor-work can invoke St Vitus's dance at our Lodges of Instruction. So why is this so important? Or indeed, is it important?

We belong to a fraternity that is steeped in history, and we guard our landmarks with a vigour that sometimes seems all too ardent. Why? Is it that the older brethren are just trying to demonstrate their superior knowledge or their elephant-like memories of time past; or is there some benefit in all this attention to detail?

No other institution like Rotary or the Church has more solid foundation for its customs and ceremonies than that of Craft Freemasonry. There are just under 10,000 Lodges in the UGLE, and all of them differ just a little bit. You must have visited other Lodges where you have seen things done differently. But I beseech you, do not bring home 'better' ideas to change things in this Lodge. The way we work has been set down for very many years, and who are we, this year, to suggest that we have something better to add?

The snag is, little changes creep in almost unnoticed until one of the grandees on the back benches wakes up and says: "It wasn't done like that when I was in the Chair". And he's probably right - and certainly if two or three are gathered together from his period in the Chair, they probably know what we used to do then and we should be very wary of opposing them and introducing a change, unless it is really wise.

Now here's another thought! You probably know of some Lodges that have falling numbers, and the time must come when we have to address the problem of too few people trying to support a lodge in decline. Now what? Should we all go across and join them to boost support? It seldom works in the long term. Should we merge with another Lodge? Imaging this Lodge with all our peculiar little difference in ritual. Would we agree to give up our "standards", our particular or should I say peculiar, way of doing things? Would we merge with another Lodge?

So I leave you with this vexed question. Our traditions are long standing and not to be meddled with lightly - our forefathers sets high standards, we should maintain them. But if the greater good of the Craft implies some Lodges should merge, to form stronger units, what can be given up? What should be maintained?

Ponder on this Brethren; it is an important question for the future of the Craft which we greatly treasure and so enjoy.

*Short papers are intended to be read aloud in lodge meetings as a form of Masonic Education.  
Whilst we encourage you to use them for their intended purpose they must not be reproduced for  
publication in any manner without the prior permission of Internet Lodge No 9659 E.C. or the author.  
© 2008 Internet Lodge and the author*