

PROVING A VISITOR UNKNOWN TO YOU

Sadly, the Craft can be sufficiently fascinating to some persons who are not Masons for them to attempt to gain improper admission to a Lodge.

Equally there are members of 'Masonic' Orders not recognised by our Grand Lodge who attempt to fraternise with our Lodges.

Finally, there are excluded, expelled or disgraced Masons who attempt to re-enter the Craft surreptitiously or irregularly.

As a result, vigilance is essential if a stranger presents himself, asking to attend your meetings. The following precautions should be followed.

1. On the whole, visits from strangers should be arranged in advance so that any necessary inquiries can be made before the meeting.
2. A stranger should have with him his Grand Lodge Certificate and a Letter of Clearance and Recommendation from his Lodge(s). Obviously, if he is from another Grand Lodge, his Grand Lodge Certificate must be scrutinised in advance by the Province. A Lodge Secretary would not have the necessary experience to do this. The visitor's signature should help to demonstrate that he is the *bona fide* holder of that certificate.
3. Notwithstanding paperwork, it is the job of the Junior Warden to 'prove' the visitor. If he finds this difficult, he should ask a more experienced Brother to undertake it, and would have to do so if it was necessary to test whether the visitor was an Installed Master if the Junior Warden was not.
4. The proving Brother should take the visitor to a private location and require of him the Ss, Ts and Ws of all the Degrees of which the visitor claims to be in possession, including those of Installed Master if appropriate.

In doing this, the proving Brother should make some allowances for variations of practice, particularly in the Ss but should form a view as to whether the visitor appears to him to have the competence and knowledge he would expect from the visiting Mason.

5. If the proving Brother is able to vouch for the visitor, and the paperwork is in order, the visit may continue.