



Notes from a Preceptor's Handbook

A Preceptor:

(OED) 1440 A.D. from Latin *praeceptor*

one who instructs, a teacher, a tutor, a mentor

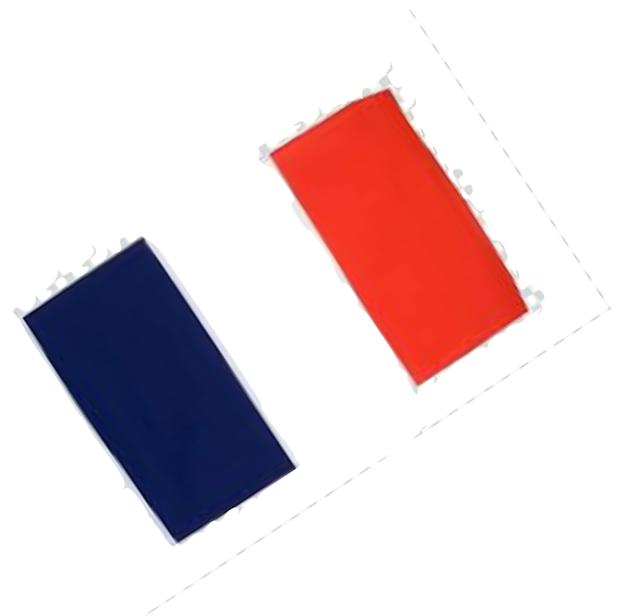
NOTRE DOUX
ENNEMI
LA FRANCE

Or

our sweet

Enemy

France



'Our sweet enemy, France'

Many Masons might favour the laid-back life style that, by popular fancy, France traditionally offers its visitors – a village square with limitless sunshine and a distant clink of *boules* providing a backdrop to a well-shaded cafe offering the delicious aroma of fresh coffee with a baguette fresh from the *boulangerie*, unsalted butter, a divine cheese, a sumptuous peach or two – and, *bien sur*, a superb bottle of vin ordinaire... served by an honest *garçon* and a bill that is embarrassingly modest... (Alright, alright, I made that bit up!).

However whether by flying aluminium tube, fast ferry or slow yacht, many of us do enjoy crossing the Channel and – regalia case thrust in the locker – also hope to include a local Lodge visit when overseas. Sometimes though we may find we are not altogether welcome. Why not? Surely French Freemasonry – birth-place of so many English Masonic traditions – sits serenely alongside the Scots and English Constitutions. We can attend a Scottish Lodge without serious bar or impediment so why can attendance at some Continental Lodges become an issue?

So much depends on the current level of understanding {'Recognition'} between the English Constitution and the Constitution of the country you are visiting. Why might this be so? Simply put, the United Grand Lodge has been very resistant to *any* change of its Constitution and for 300 years has striven to be consistent in this regard. It seeks to maintain the principles set out in the 1723 and 1738 Constitutions drafted by one of our earliest Grand Masters, the Rev'd Dr Anderson.

The UGLE had published its *Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition* between nations as follows:

- 1 The foreign Grand Lodge must possess regularity of its origin and constitution;
- 2 There must be a belief in the GAOTU.
- 3 Use must be made of the VSL in all its rituals
- 4 Membership must be exclusively male and there must be no connection with any mixed or irregular or pseudo-Masonic body.
- 5 It must possess sovereign and sole jurisdiction over the three Craft Degrees.
- 6 The presence of the Three Great Lights is essential.
- 7 It should maintain a ban on religious and political discussion.
- 8 It must enforce observance of the Ancient Landmarks

If in any country there are rival Grand Lodges or current proposals to change or modify any of these eight basic Principles then UGLE will withhold Recognition (and also your permission to visit) until the matter has been satisfactorily clarified.

Moral? Should you wish to attend a Lodge overseas first approach the Grand Secretary in Great Queen Street and establish the strength or legality of the link with your destination. The legality can change suddenly and be reversed as quickly. Please do not rely on what Brother Fred told you in the bar about the sheer simplicity of his visit last year. Turn to your Lodge Secretary. He will be most anxious to help and find out the latest state of play through the Provincial Grand Secretary.

Who knows, if a Lodge visit is not possible this time then the space reserved in the case for that sadly not-to-be-used regalia might become happily filled on return *with perhaps* another bottle of duty free...?

Michael Lee

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