

[Book Review by Neil Morse, June 2010]

THEY CALL EACH OTHER BROTHER by Bro. Bob James
available from the author.

My father used to say that he likes old things; that's why he married my mother.

He doesn't say it now – the cumulative result of multiple broken jaws only allows him to mumble.

Bob James, in his latest contribution to masonic research, acknowledges his love of old things, and makes a strong case for the preservation of banners, regalia, ritual books, photos, furniture, even buildings, against institutionalised neglect.

We really shouldn't get too involved with his thesis – after all, a beancounter in a GL Committee recently referred to Bob as follows: “a Brother who has only recently joined our organisation (2 or 3 years ago I understand), is not in possession of sufficient Masonic Wisdom to attempt to divert over 700 years of tradition - and whilst possessing a PhD in ‘Fraternal Organisations’ is highly admirable, this qualification cannot substitute for the 40+ years experience (each), of most of the other members of MLC.”

But this was the Brother who also stated: “Although Grand Lodge goes through the ‘formality’ of ‘electing’ the Board – it's not a real election as the candidates on the ballot equal the number of vacancies on the board, and irrespective of the qualifications of those wishing to stand for election, the Chair of the Board and Grand Secretary ‘filter out’ all other applicants, with the exception of those placed on the ballot. Thus, ALL of the aforementioned are effectively ‘appointed’ by those 2 individuals. At least the MLC was the GM's personal selection and the credentials of ALL are impeccable.”

“ALL” – spot the inconsistency. Or is that “ALL, but Bob”?

The Craft will always matter.