

# Canadian Orange lodge in recruitment drive



Vimy LOL 2697 based near Toronto, Canada recently had an initiation ceremony for seven new members

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THE "spirit of Orangeism" is alive and well in Canada after a reformed lodge experienced an upsurge in membership.

Vimy LOL 2697, based in the town of Whitby, near Toronto, recently held an initiation ceremony for seven new members.

After being reactivated only two years ago, the organisation has blossomed from the original 13 members to currently over 40 - larger than many individual lodges in Northern Ireland. Special guests at the event included the Most Worshipful Grand Master Harry Thompson and the Provincial Grand Master Dennis Glazier.

Both senior brethren congratulated the newest members and wished Vimy LOL every success in the years to come.

County Secretary of the Orange Lodge in Toronto, John Wells, told the News Letter lodge meetings are seen by members as an opportunity for "fraternallising and socialising".

"The majority of members of the Whitby lodge had been members of the institution in Toronto and many had moved to the Whitby area in recent years," he said.

"The membership is relatively young and members have common Orange heritage and background. We also have five father-son combinations, including a grandfather and grandson."

Vimy brethren are due take part in next year's Toronto Orange parade, which is the longest consecutively held parade on the North American continent.

Vimy was originally formed in 1917, only five months following the historic battle of Vimy Ridge.

The lodge commemorates that battle as an historic development in Canadian history and pays homage to the more than 3,600 fatalities and the 11,000 wounded in battle.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge saw the four divisions of the Canadian Corps working together as one formation for the first time and together with the British Corps to their south had, by the end of the battle, captured more ground and prisoners than any offensive up to that point in World War One.

Orange Order Grand Master Robert Saulters congratulated the brethren of Vimy LOL on their successful recruitment drive.

"I had the pleasure of visiting Canada a couple of months, where I opened a new Orange hall in London, Ontario," he said.

"It was a wonderful occasion and I felt uplifted by the spirit of Orangeism there.

"The Orange Institution is a vibrant organisation in Canada at the moment and it seems that more young people are joining."