

PGM's Address to PGL on 7th May 2016

Brethren I am delighted that this Provincial meeting is enhanced and honoured by the welcome attendance of the Deputy Grand Master R.W.Bro. Keith Emmerson. Again I bid you a very warm welcome sir. We were sorry to learn of your forthcoming retirement as our Deputy Grand Master. I do sincerely hope that you will come back to see us in Somerset on some future occasion. You are today accompanied by R.W.Bro. Kessick Jones the Grand Director of Ceremonies and may I on this occasion take this opportunity of offering our congratulations to him on having been Installed as Grand Master of The Grand Council of the Order of Royal and Select Masters of England and Wales and its Districts and Councils Overseas.

I also extend a very warm welcome to all the Brethren of the Province and also again welcome our many visitors and guests from other Provinces.

I am also particularly pleased to welcome some of the new Mark Master Masons who have been advanced during the past year and we hope that they have enjoyed the meeting here today and that they will have a long and happy membership in this very special degree.

Again, it is a great pleasure for me to see a delegation of Royal Ark Mariners in Provincial Grand Lodge in their colourful regalia and I extend to them a very warm welcome. For those Brethren who are not Royal Ark Mariners may I suggest you consider joining this beautiful and interesting degree which is a natural progression from the Mark Degree.

It has again been a busy year. Members of the Provincial Team have participated in a Lodge Honours Board Dedication and a Banner Dedication.

Members of the Team also delivered the Mark Degree Tracing Board lecture on four occasions quite apart from a number of Team Visits with in the Province.

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Also during the past year it has been a very great pleasure for me to have presented 50 year certificates to two of our great stalwarts within the Province.

I would now like to thank the outgoing team of Provincial Officers for their support and commitment during the past year. They have been a really fine team.

Today it has been a great pleasure for me to invest the new team of Officers for the forthcoming year and I congratulate those Brethren who have been promoted in Provincial Grand Lodge and I thank them for their continued service to their respective Lodges.

To the new Provincial Team of Active Officers I offer my congratulations on their new status. I sincerely hope and I expect them to support me, the Deputy PGM and those Brethren representing me, particularly at Installation Meetings and on Team Visits.

I would also wish to remind them that this new status brings greater responsibility and commitment.

Brethren, again I stress Provincial Honours, as with any honour, need to be earned and are not given as of right.

I am pleased to report that at the Annual Investiture at Grand Lodge to be held on the Tuesday 7th June at Great Queen Street the MW the Grand Master has been pleased to make the following appointments and promotions to Brethren of this Province.

First Appointments:-

WB David Lyons to PAGDC

WB Richard Cooper to PGStdB

WB Terry Wadman to PAGStdB

Promotions:-

W.Bro. Philip Voisey, DPGM to PGJO, W.Bro. Raymond Johnstone-Smith and W.Bro. Peter Elmont both to PGSD. W.Bro. Neil Hawes and W.Bro. John Nicholson Snr. to PGJD. Also W.Bro. David Burrows to PGJD (via Gloucestershire and Herefordshire).

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I am sure you will join me in congratulating these Brethren and wish them a very happy and enjoyable day at the Investiture.

The Somerset Ancient Mark Masters Team, have presented their unique ceremony on four occasions during the past year. If any Lodge or Province would like the team to visit them and perform that particular Ceremony they should contact the Organising Secretary W.Bro. Barrie Baker and my thanks go to him and the team..

The "Team of Development and Improvement" continue to provide Brethren who would be glad to attend Lodges which unfortunately do not have a candidate. As an alternative they would be able to deliver the Lecture on the Degree of Mark Master Mason or the Lecture on the Tracing Board of the Degree of Mark Master Mason. If any Lodge would like to avail themselves of the services of the team they should contact W.Bro. Derek Wilton the coordinator, and I would like to thank him and members of his team on behalf of the Province for their continued commitment .

The 600 club organised by W.Bro. John Nicholson Snr. continues to be successful in raising considerable funds for the MBF and our thanks go to him for his dedication and hard work. Well done John. I would also like to thank the two Charity Representatives, W.Bro. Eric Kellett and W.Bro. Chris Beckett who so ably assist him.

Many thanks must go to W.Bro. Pat Morrissey for his sterling work as editor of the Triangle Magazine and also to W.Bro. Gerry Chilcott for the printing and its distribution. These are most valuable services for which we are extremely grateful and I cannot thank them both enough, but remember Brethren W.Bro. Pat needs your input by sending into him items of interest and photographs for inclusion in the magazine.

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Our sincere thanks must again go to V.W.Bro. Ray Guthrie for all he has done and continues to do with regard to the Provincial website. He has done a fantastic job in upgrading the site but Brethren, V.W.Bro. Ray continues to need your help by providing him with such information as you would like to see included on the site. Please assist him!

Brethren, in my last address to Provincial Grand Lodge I announced my Charity Appeal when I informed you that a new Hope for Tomorrow Somerset Nurse Support Vehicle was needed and with the help and support of brethren we might be able to provide such vehicle. Brethren, I am extremely pleased and proud to report that your efforts have been outstanding in that we have been able to purchase the vehicle and it is proudly showing the Provincial Mark Logo.

The Nurse Support Vehicle was officially handed over at a presentation at Musgrove Park Hospital on Monday 25th April and I together with the Deputy Provincial Grand Master attend this presentation with nine other brethren. It was most unfortunate that numbers had to be restricted but this was due to the location of the presentation in that the venue was a working hospital environment.

I am however, very pleased that the vehicle has been on display outside this hotel today with representatives from Hope for Tomorrow for all to see.

Brethren, through your generosity we have exceeded the amount for the purchase of the vehicle and that any surplus monies will be utilised in purchasing specific items of equipment required for the Somerset Mobile Chemotherapy Unit.

Brethren you might be interested to know that the Somerset Mobile Chemotherapy Unit is called Big Bumble and our Nurse Support Vehicle is called (you got it) Little Bumble. I sincerely thank those individual Brethren and Lodges who supported this project.

I now call off Provincial Grand Lodge.

I would now like to invite Nikki Dodd a Representative from Hope for Tomorrow, who wishes to address you on behalf of the charity.

I Call on Provincial Grand Lodge.

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Brethren, Now that the vehicle has been purchased and handed over and you have heard from Hope for Tomorrow I now officially close my appeal. I do not intend to commence another appeal during the coming year and therefore leave individual Lodges to allocate charity monies to such charities as they think fit. But I hope however that you will not forget our Provincial Mark Benevolent Fund and JJ Webber Fund which both do such sterling work within and outside the Province.

Having visited all the Mark Lodges within the Province this past year, it has given me great satisfaction to witness the very high standard of ritual delivered generally in most Lodges.

May I again take this opportunity of reminding Brethren that in this Province we take great pride in ensuring that the ritual is learnt and **not read**. Ritual books should be used during a Ceremony only in exceptional circumstances and also with the exception of the Immediate Past Master.

The Annual Provincial Weekend was again held at the Sandbanks Hotel, Poole in Dorset. The weekend was well attended and was a most enjoyable event and to those who did attend I extend my grateful thanks for their support. My sincere thanks go to W.Bro. Robin Back, the organiser and co-ordinator of the weekend. All being well we shall be holding the event at the Sandbanks again next year,

Our Mark Lodges continue to do quite well regarding Advancements and Joining Members. However, I am concerned at the number of resignations last year but I do accept that a number of these resignations have come from Brethren who have moved away, work commitments. There are also Brethren who through age and infirmity find it difficult to attend Lodges particularly at night. It might be worth encouraging them to consider joining our day light Lodge. We must also strive to retain those Brethren already within our membership and ensure that we maintain their interest.

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It is important to establish why a brother has resigned and not just accept this resignation without making some enquiries.

I am all too well aware that some of our Lodges are finding it difficult in attracting candidates and the lack of regular attendance of members. As I have said in the past we must all do what we can to give them help and support by attending their meeting as visitors whenever possible.

As regards recruitment into the Mark Degree we all have a part to play in expounding the virtues of Mark Masonry and encouraging those Master Masons who you think are suitable and would be committed.

To this end there are two recruitment tools I would recommend.

Firstly, the booklet "Taking the Fourth Regular Step" which is available for distribution to members of the Craft which we hope might encourage them to join us.

Secondly, by holding a "Craft meeting the Mark" evening. Such evening have been held at Yeovil, Wincanton and Clevedon Masonic Halls, and proved to be a great success in attracting new members and I personally would like to thank those Lodges for taking this initiative forward. I would therefore strongly urge Lodges to consider holding a "Craft Meeting the Mark" evening at their own Masonic Centres. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master and I together with members of the Provincial Executive are available to assist in any way possible.

Brethren, once again my thanks and those of the Province go to the Provincial Grand Secretary W.Bro. John Smith and his Deputy, W.Bro. Ian Strickland for the administration that is required for such an event such as this and the general administration of the Province. My thanks also go to the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team and also to the invaluable team of helpers in the preparation and the setting up of the hall for this meeting.

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Brethren I have today appointed and invested a new Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro. Mark Golding. I wish him well and I sincerely hope that he enjoys his new appointment. I would however, like to place on record my sincere thanks and those of the Province to WB Ray Johnstone-Smith for his dedicated service over the past seven years. He has been a superb Director of Ceremonies and has earned the respect of all. Thank you Ray.

May I take this opportunity of thanking the Webbington Hotel and its staff for their help and co-operation.

Thanks also to the St John Ambulance who have provided us with medical cover during the day.

In conclusion Brethren, I do thank you for your close attention to my address, and may the Great Overseer of the Universe continue to watch over us. Let us leave this meeting ever remembering that part of the "In Conclusion", "Among Mark Master Masons you will ever find friends".

God bless you all and thank you.