

Provincial Grand Master's address to Provincial Grand Lodge 15th June 2012

Brethren,

There have been a number of changes in the Provincial team this year and I congratulate all those in new offices and express my thanks to all those retiring.

All those invested and promoted today have earned their preferment in one way or another but it is also an encouragement for still further support of your Lodges and also the Mark Degree in general. We should all be ambassadors for this important Degree and promote it to our Craft colleagues. Brethren, use the web site www.berksmark.org.uk and the leaflets to good effect.

The talk on the Mark Degree prepared by VW Bro Nick has been well received in Craft Lodges and we have presented it a number of times including to Berkshire Masters Lodge in February.

Our congratulations also go to those brethren who received Grand Rank or were promoted on Tuesday. Don Beaver was promoted to Past Grand Junior Deacon; Ian Johnson, our Treasurer, was appointed to active rank as a Grand Steward, and is here resplendent with his chain; David Fisher was appointed a Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies and Jim Payen was appointed a Past Grand Standard Bearer. Well done to them all.

Brethren if you don't know by now that we have a Festival in 2017 you must have just returned from solitary! We launched the Festival on 29th February and a good many of you were present. As I said then we have no Lodge or Provincial targets but I would like all who are able to fill in regular giving forms, which spreads the giving over 5 years. You don't have to be a taxpayer but if you are we can reclaim an extra 20% from HMRC. The Festival Committee now chaired by my new Deputy are organising various Province wide events one of which is a quiz on 31st October, more details will be available at the Festive Board. I am hoping that individual Lodges will also organise events. Brethren the emphasis should be on having fun while raising some monies for 2017. Any ideas you have pass on to the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Richard or our new Senior Warden, John Nixon.

It will not have escaped your notice that the next item proposes a change of date for our next Provincial meeting. We moved this year to Friday to accommodate an outside let at this centre. That let with the Open University has turned into a 5 year contract for this week and so we are moving to the 2nd Thursday in September. I know this will not suit everyone but the financial health of this centre is paramount and if we don't look after it we will lose it. Other centres have lost sight of the importance of outside lets to their cost. The officers I have invested have a 3 month bonus!

My thanks must go to those who make today run smoothly and also, in fact, the whole year. In particular Richard Olliver who has single-handedly organised today as his deputy, Roy, has been indisposed; well done to Richard and to Graham, our Director of Ceremonies, and his team.

A very big thank you from me personally and us all to our retiring Deputy Secretary, Roy. It is just so great to see you here today with all your serious health problems and in the middle of chemo treatment. You have been a great organiser and a perfect back up to Richard, working tirelessly behind the scenes, many, many thanks. We wish you well with your treatment - we have everything crossed for you.

Finally another big thank you to my retiring Deputy VW Bro Nick. He is, like all of us, a busy Mason but has focussed on the Mark Degree, also filling an important role as a Deputy Grand

Director of Ceremonies. Much of his work has been behind the scenes, including the presentations we have given to the Craft which have been continuously revised as the PGM introduces new material and wanders off script! I thank you personally. I know we will remain good friends and I can rely on your support in the future. We wish you well in your new responsibilities and hope the Royal and Select Masters Degree prospers under your leadership. To mark the high esteem with which you are held on behalf of the Province I would like to present you with this gift from all the members of Berkshire Mark.

I find it difficult to understand where the last 5 years went but my original patent did finish yesterday.....It has been renewed and I look forward to my 6th year as your PGM. Thank you all for your welcome to me and my team in your lodges and for your attendance today.