

PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER'S ADDRESS....2009



Brethren I welcome you all to this Provincial Meeting, especially to all our distinguished guests, all of whom were introduced on their entrance as is our usual custom, and I am sure you gave them a very warm welcome. The support from other Provinces especially the Northern areas does typify the whole ethos of the Mark Degree of friendship and good company which we all enjoy.

As always we are very well supported by the Craft and all the other orders in East Lancashire although the ProvGM RWBro Jack Price has apologised as he has to attend to a family occasion. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master Dr. Nigel Bramley-Haworth and the Provincial Grand Secretary Alan Garnett are deputising for the ProvGM at a ceremony in London today to mark the Duke of Kent's fortieth year as the Grand Master, at which a substantial sum of money is being awarded to various charities.

I do welcome our Past ProvGM RWBro Paul J E Rink *OBE* and we all looking forward to the investiture next week to see him receive his appointment to PGSD.

I am always grateful to the senior members of the Craft for their support especially to Harold Woodward who will be honoured with Grand Rank next week and the other AProvGMs present WBro Derek Thornhill *JP*, Bro Martin Caller and VWBro Geoffrey Litherland and a special welcome to WBro Cyril Acton the Past DepProvGM of Cheshire who is also an East Lancashire Mark Mason.

From the Holy Royal Arch we pleased once again to have with us the Deputy Grand Superintendent WBro Alan Bennion and the Third Provincial Grand Principal Bro the Rev'd Donald Pryce and an Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals WBro Norman Clarke.

As always we are grateful for the support that we receive from all the Orders in Freemasonry within this Province. Today is no exception as we have the Past Grand Chamberlain of the Ancient and Accepted Rite, Rose Croix, VWBro His Honour Desmond Franks and the two Inspectors General for our area WBro Barry Wallwork and WBro David Hawkins. We will also be delighted to see Barry promoted to VWBro at Grand Lodge next Tuesday.

The Grand Superintendent for The Knights Templar Priests who is also the District Grand Prefect for the Allied Masonic Degrees for West Lancashire, VWBro Tom Jackson and our own WBro Alex McLaren who, in addition to his being the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, is the District Grand Prefect for East Lancashire for the Allied Masonic Degrees and they are both most welcome.

Once again I am delighted to have the support of WBro Colin Williams the Chief Adept for the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia and WBro David H Gallear the Provincial Prior of Lancashire. Other long standing friends and members of the Mark Degree in this Province are WBro James Munroe *BEM*, the ProvGM of the Royal Order of Scotland for Cheshire and WBro Howard Nuttall the Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler for the Order of the Secret Monitor. Finally, we have with us the Deputy Grand Master Mason – North West Counties of the Worshipful Society of Freemasons (Operatives), VWBro Frederick E Hargreaves who is also the Provincial Grand Secretary of the Mark Masonic Province of West Lancashire. Brethren I am sure you will wish to welcome our distinguished guests from the other Orders of Freemasonry in Lancashire with our usual warm acclamation.

Next year we shall celebrate the centenary of the Province and arrangements are well in hand for a celebratory dinner next October. However, this milestone in our history cannot be marked in just that fashion, much as we all enjoy such occasions. As you know over the last five years through ELMBF we have made significant contributions amounting to over One Hundred Thousand pounds to Macmillan Nurses and to Christies Hospital for Prostate Cancer research which culminated last year when the final cheques were presented at the Gala "Fun day" at Middleton. There were many other smaller grants which are listed in the ELMBF Treasurer's report in the booklet.

With the centenary in mind we have not made any large donations this year preferring to make the major contributions in 2010. We are at present in discussions with St John Ambulance regarding a Drivable First Aid unit which is literally a mobile accident and emergency unit and which is very high on their list of priorities. We are also in contact with the Christies Foundation Trust regarding In-Vivo Dosimetry equipment which is used to make precise measurements on patients themselves for radiation treatment, as it is delivered to the patient. This equipment will be installed at the new Cancer Care unit which Christies are building in Oldham. In the past we have given support to the Hospice movement throughout the Province and again this will be on the agenda for the coming year, probably at one of the children's units.

As I said these projects are still at the discussion stage but our financial commitment will be in excess of One

Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds which I know you will agree we can all be immensely proud.

As always, we are very much focused on the fact that the contributions we make to all these worthwhile charities will also benefit our own local communities. This is in contrast to making a donation to a national charity, where we are not aware of where or how our money will be used. We will continue supporting other local charities as we have in the past. Examples of this support are, The Bolton Mountain Rescue and the Community Boat Fund and others, as and when the need arises.

I am grateful to you all for the contributions that are made to the ELMBF funds and for your support for all the functions which are held throughout the year. This year for the first time we held a Charity Ball which was very well supported and will be repeated later this year. I must make special mention of the Provincial Grand Charity Steward WBro Stephen Swinyard who has worked tirelessly to make a success of his year. I will be making the draw for the Car raffle at the dinner later and I know he has a substantial cheque to present. ***(At the dinner, Stephen Swinyard presented a cheque for £5,000).***

The fund also supports the Provincial Grand Almoner in his endeavours and I assure you Brethren because of Keith Clayton's efforts and his persuasive letters to the Mark Grand Charity our beneficiaries are in receipt of monies far in excess of his available Provincial funding. The initiative that we started in offering to pay for private consultations to circumvent the delays in waiting for NHS appointments has been well received and there are many of our brethren who are very grateful that any treatment required for themselves or immediate family has been forthcoming quicker than waiting for the normal channels, and rightly, like any good idea, is now being copied by other Provinces.

Following the very successful celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, there is now a 150th Keystone jewel which can be awarded to either Lodges or individuals. I am delighted that the first recipient Lodge is FW Broadbent Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No. 1132 that I consecrated in April, became a Keystone Lodge on the day of Consecration. I would like as many of our Mark and RAM Lodges as possible to work towards that distinction, which can be attained in increments over a period rather than one single donation. Details of how to attain the Keystone Jewel can be obtained from the Provincial Grand Secretary; the procedure is very simple and would certainly be an honour for any Lodge.

Next week is the Grand Mark Investiture in London, I am sure you will all join me in congratulating the recipients especially VWBro Hedley Jackson on his promotion to Grand Master Overseer. Other promotions are, to PGJO WBro Barry Wallwork; to PGSD WBro's Jack Price and Edward M Starr and to PGJD WBro John B Wilson.

The Grand Stewards are David Combes and Graham Mangham.

The first appointments to past rank are, to PGSD WBro Paul JE Rink OBE; to PAGDC WBro's William L Anderson JP, Thomas Mather, Trevor E Parvin and Ian Ronson. To PAGSwdB, Gordon A Hinchcliffe and Harold Woodward, to PGStB Alan W Baxendale and Brian J Chaddock JP.

Brethren all these appointments are very well deserved and reflect the time and commitment these brethren have given to our Order, I am sure you would wish to congratulate them all.

Once again I am grateful to Trevor Jewitt for acting as the "unpaid travel agent" and to all the Stewards on the journey to London for attending to the needs of about a 100 thirsty Mark Masons. We shall, this year, be dining at the Connaught Rooms and we are all looking forward to WBro John Pearson, who has been honoured with the Presidency of the Board of Grand Stewards, proposing the toast to the Grand Master, "no pressure there then John!"

I will shortly be investing the Provincial Officers of the year and the brethren receiving appointments to and promotions in Provincial Grand Rank. I congratulate them all on their preferment and hope that they have many years to enjoy their rank and encourage others to similar attainments. I wish to thank the acting Provincial Officers of this year for their support at our various functions and the representatives who have attended on my behalf at installation meetings around this large Province. The reports that are returned to the Provincial office are all carefully scrutinised and help to inform our selections for today's honours.

Once again the Fellowship Committee have had a busy year. All their functions have been very well supported. Whilst it is invidious to select one, out of many who selflessly give time and energy for the good of the Province, I must thank Trevor E Parvin for all his efforts in coordinating our special meetings, especially when we hosted the Grand Masters Lodge of Instruction, which was very successful and greatly appreciated by the London Team. My grateful thanks also to Frank Baxendale and the secretariat for all their work, particularly in organising this meeting. To Alex McClaren and the best DC's team in the business for another impeccable display, and for accompanying the Deputy, Assistants and myself; as we travel around the Province.

Finally my thanks to Ian Ronson and the brethren who make this meeting possible by transporting the furniture and arranging the hall: to the paramedics who are available, but will hopefully be unemployed: to John the sound

engineer and the Brethren who have hosted our guests and operate the private bar. I also wish formally to thank Ian Lord who retires from the DC's team today for all his support over the years and to the two retiring Provincial Grand Wardens David Greenhalgh and Garth Green who have fully justified their selection and have been an example to all.

Most of all Brethren my thanks and appreciation go to you and all the members of the Province for the support given to me, and the members of my team. Our roles in administering the Province are made so much easier by the fact that wherever we go, we are welcomed with enthusiasm, appreciation and very good company, which typifies the ethos of this Degree.

I hope you all have a marvellous summer recess and I look forward to enjoying the pleasure of your company in the new Masonic season.

RWBro Keith Partington Schofield, GMRAC

Provincial Grand Master