

MEGS Address on Saturday 27th September 2008

ME Second Grand Principal and Companions.

Allow me first to welcome you all to this Provincial Royal Arch Convocation. My thanks to those Chapters who were invited to bring their Banners. I particularly welcome those attending for the first time. I hope you are enjoying your day and that you will come again next year. If you have any thoughts on how we might improve the opportunity for delivering a happy and enjoyable Convocation do please communicate with me or with any of the Provincial Team.

Companions we have been honoured to day with the attendance at our Convocation of ME Companion George Francis the 2nd Grand Principal and I ask you greet him with enthusiastic applause. 2nd Grand Principal you are most welcome, I thank you for coming to join us and particularly for addressing us this morning. It is a rare privilege to have such a senior officer of the Royal Arch come this far North and your remarks left us both enthused and I think more determined to raise our efforts to promote Chapter masonry across the Province.

We are always pleased to welcome distinguished visitors from other Provinces. This year I am delighted to recognise two recently installed Grand Superintendents. From Lincolnshire Graham Ives – welcome Graham - *applause*. From Cumberland & Westmorland installed just this Thursday Norman Thompson – welcome Norman – *applause*. In addition we welcome deputations from our friends in the West Riding, from Durham, from Northumberland and for the first time at our convocation from East Lancashire – *applause*.

We are also honoured by the attendance of a number of heads of other orders in particular

Michael Carr retiring next week after 18 years the Inspector General of Rose Croix

Geoff Salter Provincial Prior Knights Templar who also retires at the end of October

Last year I introduced a lunch party for all the heads of orders operating within this Province. We meet again next month and I am delighted to be able to tell you that all 12 heads will be attending. I believe that it is important that all orders of freemasonry live together in harmony.

It seems difficult to appreciate that it is now 12 months since I was installed as Grand Superintendent and while I was aware that I would want to make some changes I knew full well that Yorkshire North and East might well be described in Royal Arch terms as market leaders. Such an exalted position was very much due to the enthusiasm and experience of two of my predecessors in this office Donald Davinson and John Raylor both here with us this morning and I ask them to stand and receive your welcome – *applause*.

When you inherit a healthy Province there is no need for revolution however some innovations are always necessary to maintain momentum in an ever changing world. I am conscious that a number of other orders have what I shall call "display teams" and I have always allowed them to put on presentations to Craft Lodges by invitation. It occurred to me that we should take a leaf out of their book and have a Chapter presentation team. I am pleased to report that the first performance will be on 14 January when Chapter greets the Craft will be presented at the Masonic Hall in Beverley Road Hull and thereafter in Middlesbrough on 13 March. The dress rehearsal was a success and I am sure everyone will find something of interest from the presentations.

I am pleased to report that - subject to the many formalities being dealt with - there will be a new Installed Principals Chapter consecrated in Northallerton under the White Horse IM banner. The Consecration venue will be able to accommodate a large number of Companions and will provide an opportunity for many companions to witness a very special, colourful and moving ceremony.

The Royal Arch has been fully integrated into the Provincial Website and we have a team of enthusiasts working to expand the facilities available.

For the first time we held a very happy evening dinner party in Helmsley for the MEZs in office. I think I can sum up the success of that evening by saying ask anyone who was there – they will tell you not to miss next year which is already booked and is on Tuesday 16 June The Feathers Helmsley.

Likewise I have integrated both Craft and Chapter into the Provincial Executive and the Provincial Office which emphasises my theme - a year ago - which was togetherness. This year I want to extend that theme and add the word happiness. Companions - smiling is a most infectious human activity and when it occurs spontaneously such as exalting a new Companion or installing the new Principals creates happiness. In my travels in the last 12 months to 13 Chapters I have felt a sense of relaxation although a determination to give a good performance for the candidate or the new officers. Companions being a Royal Arch Mason is supposed to be fun. It is a hobby, it is a pastime, it is a way of life, as well as a daily commitment but without being fun it is a chore and I for one do not like doing chores!!

Companions having seen the success of the mentoring project in the Craft and now becoming part of the Grand Lodge philosophy I am proposing a mentoring structure across our Chapters. However having learnt some lessons from the Craft I feel it needs to be different and I will be asking the Chapter General Purposes Committee, who have met twice this last year and very much enhanced today, to look into this and advise me in conjunction with my two Principals as to the best way forward.

I have been considering another small change for some months being aware that neither in Supreme Grand Chapter nor in Provincial Grand Chapter do we now wear white gloves. Companions as from today it is my wish that Chapters in this Province regard the wearing of gloves - rather as we did many years ago with gauntlets - as optional. The visiting Provincial teams will in future not wear gloves and I hope that all the Chapters will follow this lead.

Companions one or two events are worthy of a little publicity. May I first draw attention to a very clever and entertaining event. I was lucky enough to be at the premier of The Initiation Opera and can say that this was perhaps one of the most rewarding Masonic events I have attended. It is not an opera so do not be put off by the title. It is more along the lines of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta- a musical comedy. The team of players have developed both the costumes and the script to provide a truly entertaining and very skilful performance. Before taking the show to the Province of Cheshire it is being performed at Middlesbrough Masonic Hall on Friday 24 October 2008. The show so closely follows the ceremony of initiation that it has to be restricted to Freemasons. You will not regret attending.

Likewise we are having our annual outing to Supreme Grand Chapter on Wednesday 12 November followed by a provincial lunch at the Freemasons Arms all companions are welcome both into Grand Chapter and to lunch. Bookings to John Hemy.

I extend my congratulations to all those whom I have appointed or promoted this morning. Provincial Rank is recognition of work already done but also anticipates work to be done. We will all be judged by your actions and attitudes and I look to you to encourage younger Companions to seek your guidance and not for you to be issuing instructions (that is what I do)

We applaud you all – *applause*.

I was present at the Supreme Grand Chapter Investiture in April and delighted to see my Provincial DC Terry Lister invested as PGStBr and Gerald Gelder and John Halliwell invested as PAGDCs. Again we had one promotion which was Past Provl DC John Clark with a well deserved PAGSoj – *applause*.

I must thank my Provincial Team who have joined me in huge numbers on the official visits in the last year and I thank all those who have represented me at regular and Installation meetings.

We are lucky Companions to have a truly dedicated Provincial operations team led by Scribe E Brian Baker with his assistant Andy Lowthorpe together with the girls Linda and Marie. Well done to you all – *applause*.

For the first time in the Chapter we have had a change in the organiser of the seating plans. For many years Clive Wood has been the arranger and this year has been replaced by Gerald Gelder who has managed to squeeze Clive's 10 years and more of experience into under 12 months and I am sure you will agree has done a great job – *applause*.

Finally the DC team. Terry Lister was a rookie last year jumping in a few weeks before the meeting. He and his team have done a great job today and I ask you to thank them – *applause*.

We have add the privilege of hearing from our 2nd Grand Principal and I am therefore happy to leave you with his thoughts on the way forward for this very special order of Freemasons.

Please remember that we are Companions together and I look forward to another year as your Grand Superintendent in and over a wonderful vibrant and happy Province.

May the True and Living God most High be with you all.