

Provincial Grand Chapter at Southport on 9 October 2019

Address of The Most Excellent Grand Superintendent Companion James Anthony Harrison

Welcome to you all.

This year I have invited newly exalted companions to join us at this meeting and I am delighted to welcome them. Although small in number, due to work and family commitments, nevertheless you are all more than welcome and I really do hope that you have enjoyed the proceedings so far and that you continue to find the rest of the afternoon both stimulating and interesting.

Some of you will recall that last year I informed you that 43% of our membership in the Province were Royal Arch Masons and suggested that it would be good if we could increase this percentage to 50 %. I have to report that we have not achieved that figure, in fact, although we have had many Exaltations across the province, we have also lost a number of Companions many of whom having been called to higher service. However, I fully support my colleagues in the Royal Arch Cabinet in their desire that the Royal Arch in West Lancashire should strive to be a high-quality experience of freemasonry with an emphasis on clarity and enjoyment. I strongly believe that RA ceremonies should be learnt rather than read, that the ceremony of exaltation should be enhanced in line with the guidelines of the Province, and that its delivery should be shared among as many members of the chapter as possible.

In terms of clarity of understanding, UGLE has provided us with a great resource - Solomon. I urge all Chapters to consider building 'nuggets' of information from Solomon into their agendas – either within their actual meetings or at the Festive Board. These nuggets can easily be delivered in a few minutes by any member of the Chapter thereby promoting a better and more complete understanding of our wonderful Order.

I'm delighted to tell you Companions that our new Third Provincial Grand Principal, The Rev Canon Godfrey Hirst, is to take to the recording studios! Not with his singing voice as a member of the Provincial Choir, but to record the passages of scriptures selected for the Installation of the three Principals. I anticipate that his recordings will be available via the Provincial website in order to aid the comprehension, pronunciation and delivery of these passages.

Companions, I continue to be impressed with the work of the Royal Arch Cabinet, who, under the leadership of my Deputy Grand Superintendent, Paul Renton, continue to do their level best to make the Royal Arch experience in West Lancashire, the best it can possibly be. Their efforts, made on your behalf, are unrelenting and they really are worthy of the success that will, with **your** continued support, undoubtedly come. Thank you all.

This meeting marks the retirement of EComp Ian Higham as Third Provincial Grand Principal. Unfortunately, he is unable to be with us today, but I would like to thank him for his commitment and support to the Province, and to me, over 14 years. I wish him and his wife Valerie, a happy, healthy and long retirement.

During this masonic year we have had many enjoyable visits to Chapters around the province and I have had the honour of attending some centenary celebrations and congratulate Hesketh Chapter, the Chapter of Hope and the Marquis of Lorne Chapter on attaining their centenaries.

Now I hope that many of you have availed yourselves of the PSA testing available to all attending this convocation, thanks to our WLFC. You should, as early warning is a wonderful thing, as my dear friend and Deputy PrGM knows only too well.

Companions, I must make mention of the West Lancashire 2021 Festival for the Masonic Charitable Foundation. I thank all those companions and chapters who are already supporting the festival and would ask those of you who have not yet done so to consider it as a matter of urgency. Our Festival is now halfway through and we only have two years left to run. With your assistance and patronage, we can demonstrate that the companions of this Province are committed to support not only our West Lancashire charities, but the hugely important work of the Masonic Charitable Foundation and may I say how thrilled I am to see so many of you wearing our Provincial tie and indeed **WEARING YOUR FESTIVAL JEWEL WITH PRIDE.**

On your behalf Companions I would like to thank a number of our Provincial team, my deputy Paul and all the Assistants to the PGP's for their sterling work, the Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra , Peter Taylor, and his staff , Diana , Violet , Andrew , and many volunteers, for their work in ensuring the success of this meeting, and for the work they undertake during the year for the Royal Arch. Ex Comp. Paul Hesketh retired as the PrGDC, during the year due to health issues and I thank him for all the assistance he gave to the Royal Arch, and to his successor David Thomas together with all his deputies, for their involvement in today's ceremonial and for what you have done during the past year in carrying out your many duties around the Province . David Case, retiring as Provincial Grand Scribe Nehemiah and all the acting officers of the past year , I hope that you have all enjoyed yourselves and attended many chapter meetings during your year of office. And to all those Excellent Companions, who have represented me at the many RA Installation Convocations throughout the year, my personal thanks for your continued support.

Finally, may I thank those companions from the Garston Group of Lodges and Chapters who have looked after us all so well today. For stewarding this meeting and ensuring that we have been able to enjoy our Convocation. Grateful thanks also to the Southport Group for the loan of their masonic furniture. All these companions will I am sure be working long after we are enjoying ourselves at the bar and the banquet.

Companions thank you for your attendance here today, continue to enjoy your RA masonry and may the **TALGMH** Bless you all.