

Address to Provincial Grand Lodge 2011

Brethren, it is once again my great pleasure to welcome you all to our Annual meeting at Kings Heath this morning, for some of you it is your first visit, for many, this is a regular gathering of friends both old and new.

This Mark Province of Worcestershire continues to grow and flourish, with the Consecration of Saint Georges Lodge of MMM No 1920 last September which has once again established Mark Masonry in Kidderminster, and it is hoped that in due time they will have a Royal Ark Mariners Lodge Moored alongside.

Discussions are also taking place to investigate the possibility of a Mark Golfers Lodge which would meet 3 or 4 times a year, so if you are a golfer and enjoy the company of your fellow Mark Brethren please contact either Keith Crawford or Brian Wattison to register your interest.

Such has been the interest in the Mark Degree that some of our Lodges now have quite a waiting list, so rather than Advancing Brethren in double ceremonies it's been my recommendation that those lodges to look for another lodge with an evening without any work and invite along a team from the sponsoring lodge to perform the ceremony. This has the double effect of inter-visiting between lodges within the Province and at the same time bringing Brethren into the order without having to wait for 12 months or more.

The Centenary Lodge has been the first lodge to use this initiative along with

Mosaic Lodge acting as the host, and by all accounts it turned out to be a great evening for all concerned. So Brethren, if you have an evening where your Lodge has no work, please contact the Provincial Secretary who will Hopefully have a list of Lodges looking for assistance.

Reflecting on the last 12 months, it has been another busy year for all my active Provincial Officers, whom when called upon have given great support to all events within the Province.

Following an application to the Worthy Causes Committee of the Mark Grand Lodge Fund of Benevolence a donation of just over £40,000 was given to Dial-a-Ride in Kidderminster, to purchase a much needed Mini Bus, which I along with the Grand Treasurer and my Deputy Provincial Grand Master presented on a cold and blustery December morning.

This much needed addition to their small fleet of vehicles has been invaluable to the residents of the surrounding villages of Kidderminster enabling them to have access to the local amenities, which would otherwise have been impossible.

Over the Easter period my friend, Ms Debbie Dale, embarked on a cycle ride around the Province of Worcestershire in support of the 2015 Festival, visiting every lodge room within the Province where Mark Masons meet.

Through the generosity and support of the Mark and Royal Ark Mariner lodges she achieved a magnificent sum of nearly £8000.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those individual lodges and brethren who supported this event and acknowledge that it was through the individual fundraising of those lodges that collectively raised this wonderful amount of money, also can I thank the Provinces of Warwickshire and Leicestershire and Rutland for their generous donations in support of this cycle ride. Brethren, watch this space for what may be undertaken by Debbie and her bike next year!

Brethren, over the last 12 months we have seen the enhancement of the Worcestershire Mark and Royal Ark Mariner web site, which is now being managed by our new web master W.Bro John Icke. Under this new management the site has now been developed to enable lodges to download forms, view forthcoming events, read the latest newsletters and generally keep well informed with the latest news within the province. It is hoped that the site will be further enhanced to include a small on line shop to enable brethren not only from within the province but also on a national basis to purchase memorabilia in support of the 2015 festival.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to visit the web site I would encourage you to do so, I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

You may recall last year that because of financial difficulties at Mark Masons Hall it was necessary to introduce a one off levy of £5 per member to help cover the shortfall.

I'm now pleased to tell you that with the publication of the first 6 months figures there has been a marked improvement showing a healthy situation, so with your assistance brethren, Grand Lodge is now starting to get back on a firm financial footing.

Earlier this week many of us attended the Annual Meeting and Investitures of Mark Grand Lodge where a record number of Worcestershire Brethren were in attendance in support of our Brethren receiving preferment, and congratulations must go to the following Brethren receiving their first appointment,

W Bro Michael Simpson.....PAGDC
W Bro Jim WillisPAGDC
W Bro Jeff Whiteley.Grand Steward
W Bro Tom Gray.....P G Std B
W Bro Bruce Baker.....P Ass G Std B

And a well deserved promotion,

W Bro Fred Hall.....P G S D

And of course the reappointment of R W Bro Stuart Edwards as Grand Treasurer.

Can I also congratulate the Brethren that are visiting us today who were also recipients of first appointment or promotion by way of their own Provinces, and especially members of the DC's Lodge and in particular, W Bro David Davis who was promoted to acting Dep GDC.

Whilst referring to Grand Lodge, during his address, the Pro Grand Master John Hale announced his retirement. This came as a great surprise to all, and at the end of his address the Pro Grand Master received a prolonged Standing ovation.

I'm sure in time to come we will all reflect on the great service that our Pro Grand Master has given to our Order and the warmth and affection in which he is held, indeed, all the current Provincial Grand Masters here today have been Installed by him, and I believe the total of PGM'S & District PGM'S is around 60! That's quite a remarkable achievement.

The Installation of the new Pro Grand Master will take place in the Grand Temple at Great Queen St on Tuesday 13th September and the Grand Master has been pleased to appoint

R W Bro Benjamin Addy, As Pro Grand Master

R W Bro Michael Herbert, as Deputy Grand Master

R W Bro Keith Emmerson, P Prov GM for Hert's as Assistant Grand Master.

Rt W Bro Keith Emmerson is of course a member of the Director of Ceremonies Lodge in this Province, so unfortunately we may not be able to have his company as often as we have had in the past, unless we can sneak him in quietly!

Brethren, it has been an enormous pleasure for me this morning to appoint and invest my new team of provincial officers, I know that They are all going to have a happy, enjoyable and busy year with a banner dedication in September, lodge board dedications and a bible dedication to name but a few events taking place in the ensuing year.

So Brethren when you receive notification to discharge your provincial duties I'm sure you will do it the great pride and dignity, which the Mark Province in Worcestershire is well known for.

Today we see the retirement of V W Bro Ted Kettleborough as Prov G Charity Steward. Ted has served the office with great distinction for the last 9 years and has been instrumental in the successful launch of our festival. Unfortunately he cannot be with us today as he is receiving preferment in The Grand College of Knight Templar Priests.

W B Kevin Bryant has stood down today as Provincial Grand Secretary to enable him to spend more time with Annette and to be able to focus on his increasing duties as a busy head master. I take this opportunity to thank V W Bro John King for assistance in organising Provincial Grand Lodge on

Kevin's behalf this morning.

Special Thanks must go to W B the Rev John Guise who has been Provincial Grand Chaplin for the last 10 years, and has brought a wonderful quiet dignity to that office and has enthralled us all with his wonderful orations at our Consecrations and Banner Dedications.

Inclosing I would like to thank the host lodges that have assisted with the setting up of the Provincial Grand Lodge. My Deputy Provincial Grand Master Eric for his assistance and wise council over the last 12 months, Bob Reid and his team for looking after the car parks and bars and all the members of my Provincial executive for their continued support and assistance in the management of this Province, and last but by no means least my Provincial Grand Director of ceremonies and his team for the splendid work this morning.

Brethren I thank you all for your attendance this morning, and wish you a happy, quiet and peaceful summer.

God bless you all.