

Worcestershire Mark Annual Meeting – 8th June 2019

Address by the Provincial Grand Master

Brethren of the Mark Province of Worcestershire and Distinguished Visitors – once again, a very warm welcome to you all. It is very gratifying to see so many here today.

It has been a busy year as you can imagine. During the year, I have represented Worcestershire at some 18 Provincial meetings around the country. The hospitality I have received at these meetings has been magnificent and I am delighted to be able to repay some of that hospitality today.

As well as the Provincial meetings, I have attended Grand Lodge and the Royal Ark Mariner Assembly as your PGM. In December at the RAM Assembly, it was super to see W.Bros John Moore and Charles Gwynn receive Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank and once again, I congratulate them.

Next Tuesday a goodly contingent of some 30 Worcestershire Mark Masons will travel to Great Queen Street to see several of our Brethren receive Grand Rank appointments from HRH Prince Michael of Kent, the Grand Master. 3 Brethren will receive active offices – RW Bro Frank Spencer will be re-appointed as GDC. Our excellent Chaplain, W.Bro. Justin Parker, will also be re-appointed as Assistant Grand Chaplain. And I'm delighted to say that W.Bro. George Simpson will become an active Grand Senior Deacon. We look forward to seeing George around the Province sporting his chain of office. As well as these active ranks, I'm very pleased to say that 2 Brethren from the Province will receive first appointments on Tuesday: W.Bros ...

- Cec Carriss – PAGDC
- Mike Gage - PAGDC

This year Brethren, the allocation has been changed, based on the number of **members** in the Province, rather than the number of **memberships**. Consequently, our allocation has fallen, so it is even more special to receive Grand Rank.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate members of the Provincial Grand Directors of Ceremonies and the Almoners and Charity Stewards Lodges who

have been honoured by way of their home Provinces. Congratulations to all the recipients of Grand Rank and let us show our appreciation for their honours.

Looking at the home front, we have had a busy year in the Province. There have been a number of special meetings and Provincial Team visits, which have been most enjoyable. I won't list them all, but would mention just a few.

Malvern seemed to be a focus of attention this past year. In September, I was delighted to present a 50-year certificate to W.Bro. John Guise, which proved a very popular event. W.Bro. John is the sole remaining founder of the Lodge. Then in March, V.W. Bro. John King (*you may remember him!*) presented a Grand Lodge certificate to the Lodge on its 50th anniversary. And finally, just a month ago, I was delighted to consecrate the Malvern Priory Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners, and it was super to see its Primus Commander, V.W.Bro. Brian Scoffield heading up the RAM Delegation this morning.

I would like to thank all the Provincial Officers who attended these special events and would urge the new Officers appointed today to attend future events – make the most of your year to support the Province – but above all to enjoy your honour.

These special events are marvellous, but perhaps the greatest enjoyment for me as your PGM has been attending Lodges, both formally on installation nights and informally to support an advancement or to present GL certificates and so on. I said last year that I intended to get out and about as much as I could. Universally, I have been welcomed warmly and have enjoyed the company of the Brethren very much indeed and I thank you all for it.

All in all, Brethren, it has been a super year and I believe the Province is in extremely good heart with nett increase in members of both the Mark & RAM. We look forward to the forthcoming year with anticipation. There will be several team visits and special events, some of which are noted on the back cover of the Order of Proceedings.

Brethren, the central core of Mark Masonry is charity and we've once again had a good year and I particularly thank our Provincial Almoner and Charity Steward, W.Bros. Charles Gwynn and Mike Gage for their constant hard work..

I am grateful to you all for supporting the Worcestershire Association of Carers this year. We have raised some £3,000 for them – well done. This next year, I would again ask Lodges to support the Worcestershire Association of Carers. I hope you agree that this is a very worthy cause.

On a national level, in August I attended the handover of the Blood Bike vehicles, purchased from the funds raised by the Royal Parks Walk last year. Our local group, the Severn Freewheelers, was well represented and were hugely grateful for the help from the MBF.

On Monday, I was at the handover of a new Support Vehicle for St. John Ambulance, County of West Midlands, which includes part of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire and Shropshire. The event was really super and it was marvellous to see our charity at work. Brethren, the handover of the St. John Support Vehicle donated through **our** Province will take place at Rainbow Hill on 25th July. I am looking forward to handing over the keys to the vehicle on your behalf. It is one of the last of the vehicles making up the £3.2 million donation from Mark Masonry.

It is wonderful that the Mark Benevolent Fund supports so many worthy causes and it is wonderful that you Brethren continue to give money to the MBF so readily. It is therefore with great pride I can announce that a Worcestershire Lodge for the first time achieved the top honorific from the MBF – the Grand Patron Diamond Award.

Bro. Prov.G.D.C. – will be you please conduct the WM of the Provincial Directors of Ceremonies Lodge, V.W. Bro. Philip Marshall to me? Present Collarette

Donating money is one thing, but donating time in a charitable cause can be even better. In October last year, our Provincial Grand Charity Steward volunteered to help to steward the Cerebral Palsy Sport Swimming Gala in Worcester. He was helped out by 2 Brethren of the Province as well as Mike's family. The same event is happening next October and Mike would love to have more helpers. Please contact him if you would like to volunteer.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Almoners and Charity Stewards for the time they put in for charitable purposes. It is invaluable and much appreciated. Our Provincial Almoner, W.Bro. Charles Gwynn, organised a seminar recently for Lodge

Almoners in the Craft, Royal Arch and the Mark. Unfortunately only 3 Mark and RAM Lodges were represented. The job of Almoner is an important and often complex one. When Charles organises another seminar, I urge **all** Lodge Almoners to attend – it will enable our core purpose – charity – to be managed better.

And talking of charity - *Bro Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, will you please escort W.Bro. Nigel Barry, the Provincial Deputy Grand Secretary of the Province of Sussex by the Sea to me. Present cheque.*

Brethren, next year's MBF Festival is being held by the Province of Kent and because of the golf Open, they can't hold it in July as normally happens. So the Festival Dinner is on the second Saturday of June next year, which is why our Provincial meeting will be moving to the first Saturday of June next year.

Bro Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, will you please escort W.Bro. David Stiff, of the Province of Kent to me. Present cheque.

It just remains for me to say a few thank you's. Firstly, many thanks to Bro. Steven O'Nyons for providing the fans, which were to have kept us cool on this normally hot day. My thanks go to the Craft Province of Worcestershire and particularly the Provincial Grand Master. Let us not forget Brethren, that we all start as Craft masons. If we wish to grow our lovely degree, our recruiting ground is our Craft Lodges. Please support them as much as you can and bring gentlemen into masonry who will be a credit to you, to themselves and to Masonry in general. Always be on the lookout for Craft masons who would benefit from joining Mark Masonry – that is all of them!! Let us help them to enjoy our friendly degree.

My very grateful thanks go to my Deputy and Assistant. Their support, advice and unstinting efforts have been huge and I couldn't have had such a happy year without their help. I do thank you both. And John – I shall miss you and your wise guidance, but I know I can still turn to you for help and advice when needed. And I look forward to working with the new Deputy and Assistant.

I thank all the Provincial Officers for their support during the year. In particular, the Wardens, W.Bros Roger Bennett and Mark Winfield. They have done an outstanding job, attending all the installations and many other meetings and events. They can be

justly proud of their year. And congratulations to W.Bro. Roger on becoming the Mayor of Redditch.

To the host Lodges for this meeting, Eaton Lodge No 977 and St. Egwin Lodge No. 1135, I do thank you for your support.

I thank all the visitors for making the journey here today and making this meeting so special.

It is almost impossible to say how grateful I am to W.Bro. Adrian Hutt and his secretarial team and W.Bro Richard Green and his DC team for their help and support, not just in organising today's meeting but for all they have done in the past year in so many ways, not least keeping me in line and not letting me make too many mistakes. I thank you.

And finally Brethren of the Mark Province of Worcestershire, I thank **you** for making my fourth year as PGM so enjoyable. I thank you for accepting me so openly and for the warmth of welcome I have received throughout the Province.

Brethren, for those of you who have been, thank you for listening and may the Great Overseer and the Supreme Commander of the Universe bless you and keep you safe.