

Brethren, may I start by saying how delighted I am to see so many of you here at this, my fourth annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge as your Provincial Grand Master. Thank you all for your support.

Earlier, I extended a warm welcome to our esteemed guests and visitors from 22 Provinces. Your presence and support highlight the fraternal friendship that underpins our order and makes it so special. I trust you enjoy our hospitality and company today as we have done at your Provincial meetings.

Brethren, on behalf of myself and my Deputy I thank the outgoing Provincial Officers who have, once again, given exceptional and magnificent support over the previous year.

Last year saw a first for Wiltshire - the Sesquicentenary meeting of The Wiltshire Keystone Lodge, one of the most memorable events of the year. The Lodge predates the formation of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Wiltshire by 18 years. The Pro Grand Master, M W Bro John Prizeman, attended to present the Sesquicentenary Warrant, making it a truly special occasion.

I offer my sincere congratulations to W Bro Phil Beavers who was appointed to **PAGDC** last week. Additionally, I must congratulate W Bro Malcolm Mace who will be promoted to **PGJD** at the September meeting of Grand Lodge after a remarkable 12 years as our Provincial Grand Organist, and to W Bro Stuart Hambleton who will also be promoted to **PGJD**. Finally, I congratulate W Bro Phil Beavers once again who was appointed to **RAMGR** last December.

Completing the review of the past year, I am pleased to report that since our last Provincial meeting, through your excellent promotion of the Magic Of The Mark, we have seen the largest number of Advancees in over 15 years. My grateful thanks to you all for your efforts which has resulted in an increase of

4% in individual members. Please strive to Advance your candidates in good quality ceremonies. They will enjoy themselves, and will be more likely to promote the Mark to their friends. And, please, ensure your meetings continue to have good content – the Provincial Support Team is always available to help you.

I now want to turn to charity, which is at the heart of Mark Masonry. Of course, we are all aware of the ongoing Wiltshire Craft Festival which concludes in 2028, and I need to exercise caution in asking too much of you as we move one year closer to the Wiltshire MBF Festival in 2032. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your unwavering support of the Mark Benevolent Fund, both individually and through your Lodges. Thank you to all Lodges who have, collectively, donated over £12,000 to local and national charities over the last year.

This year, as is our custom, we have donated £1000 to Oxfordshire, who are hosting the MBF Festival banquet at the end of July, bringing our total support to £3000; and £1000 to Hampshire & Isle of Wight who are hosting next year. In the forthcoming year we plan to donate a further £2000 to Hampshire & Isle of Wight and £1000 to Warwickshire who are hosting in 2027.

Brethren, the main purpose of this meeting is to recognise and honour those who have been appointed and promoted within our ranks. It is only fitting that I now extend my congratulations to all those whom I have just invested with a Provincial Mark Grand Rank, particularly those receiving first appointments, and those who have been elevated to Provincial R.A.M.G.R.

To the Brethren I have invested today, this day is special for you, and I trust you enjoy it. Your appointment to Provincial Grand Rank brings greater responsibility. I urge you to return to your respective Lodges and offer your

support and encouragement to your newer members. Please make every effort to accompany a new member to an Advancement ceremony as soon as possible after they have joined.

And I urge every one of us to continue to promote the Magic Of The Mark. Remember the Craft, Royal Arch and Mark are all rooted in the legend of Hiram Abiff and Adonirum and membership of all 3 orders provides you with a rounded understanding of the foundations of Freemasonry. Remember, you need a Keystone to complete the Arch.

Brethren, this year W Bro John Hughes has retired as our Provincial Grand Chaplain after an 11-year tenure, during which he served under 3 Provincial Grand Masters. On behalf of RW Bro Martin Brown, RW Bro Andy Beaumont and myself and, of course the members of the Province, I want to place on record our thanks for his exemplary service and wonderful support for the Mark.

I end my address by extending my grateful thanks to the Provincial Grand Secretary, and his Deputy, for planning and organising the meeting, with a special thanks to W Bro Nigel for his time as Deputy as he stands aside this year. Thanks also to the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies for orchestrating the ceremonial for the meeting. Thank you to the brethren of Lansdowne Mark Lodge for providing the transport and heavy lifting and to the stewarding Lodges for all your help.

Brethren, thank you all for your enthusiastic support for the Mark in Wiltshire and I wish you all a relaxing summer break. Continue to enjoy your Mark masonry and may the Great Overseer of the Universe bless and guide us until we meet again.