

## **PGM Address to Provincial Meeting 2018**

Distinguished Guests and Brethren

First of all welcome once again to King Georges Hall and I hope that all the arrangements so far have been to your satisfaction. I hope that the closure of Blakeys for refurbishment was not too much of an inconvenience?

I have already Introduced and Welcomed our Distinguished guests from other Provinces and members of this Province who are senior in the Craft and other Orders, but I just want to say once again how much I value their presence and support.

It has been another busy year for the Province

We have had our usual social events and some new ones

We attended Keep Mark Lodge at Clitheroe to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> of WBro Ken Lord. It was a wonderful occasion supplemented by the personal Tribute being given by his son WBro Stephen Lord, the Prov GSW

Last November we attended Roberts Mark Lodge to support them in their efforts to recruit new members. An overview of the Mark and RAM degrees was presented to several Craft Brethren which has resulted in three new members for the Lodge who were Advanced earlier this month.

We will be planning similar events in the next 12 months albeit at some different Lodges so if your Lodge is interested in hosting such an evening please contact the Provincial Secretary.

Brethren, we must continue to focus on the need to recruit and retain Mark Brethren. Over the last 2 years I have encouraged Lodges to increase their Membership by at least ONE, that does not sound too difficult but I know that it is not easy.

In March this year we attended The Rugby Football Lodge to Dedicate their new Lodge Banner. Over 80 Brethren were present and thoroughly enjoyed the evening. I should mention that the WM, RW Bob Clancey, has had a wonderful year in the Chair of that Lodge, very well supported at each Meeting by Brethren from North & East Yorkshire. We also voted for two Joining Members at that Meeting WBro Steven Spooner and RW Bro Jim Steggles the PGM of West Yorkshire.

As an aside the RAM Lodge moored to the Rugby Football Lodge will be Consecrated next Thursday in Leeds by RW Bro Steggles and I am certain that we will have a full house.

I think these are excellent examples on how neighbouring Provinces can help and support each other.

We have also made full Team Visits to the Lodges of both of our Wardens and our Provincial Grand Charity Steward and all 3 visits have been wonderful happy evenings and raised considerable monies for the 2021 Festival and the East Lancashire Mark Benevolent Fund

Over 20 Acting Officers of the year attended each of these events

I am extremely grateful to all the acting officers of the Province who have supported myself and the Deputy and the Assistants on our visits to Lodges around the Province. We have again encouraged the Acting Officers of the year to attend visits by the Chain Bearers which has enhanced the meeting for all and I am hopeful that the new Officers Appointed today will do likewise.

Indeed, our first official visit is next week to the Installation Meeting of The Rugby Football Lodge and I am reliably informed that we will have 25 Provincial Officers in attendance, that is a tremendous start

In the next year we are especially looking forward to attending the Centenary Celebration of Goulburn Lodge in January 2019, followed by the 150<sup>th</sup> at St Andrews Lodge in February and I should mention that according to our records we will celebrate another 3 Centenaries in the Autumn of 2019.

We will also attend the Personal 50<sup>th</sup> of VWBro Wilf Hodgkinson in November this year. Not here today for health reasons

Brethren we have many Social Events

We had a successful Hog Roast in June last year and that will again be held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June this year at Middleton Masonic Hall.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> March this year we held our annual Master and Commanders Assembly at Bury

Our Grand and Provincial Officers Reception was held at Audenshaw on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April ... .

It is always our intention to move these events around the Province to suitable venues so that we share the travel times and just as important we are supporting a Masonic Hall in which Mark Masons meet

Our Cabaret Evening will again be held in November at the Holiday Inn, Bolton ..... and thanks, are due to WBro Malcolm McCarthy and the Fellowship Committee for the arrangements.

This year we hope to have the presence of 2 brethren and their Ladies from West Yorkshire. We supported their Charity Concert in February and donated 4 tickets for our Cabaret Evening and Accommodation.

Brethren we do not expect all the Brethren to attend all the events. Choose the events that most suit you and we will be delighted to see you there

You are all aware that we will host the MBF Festival in 2021, the appeal continues to gather pace and the festival committee, now under the chairmanship of W Bro John Smith, are overseeing many of the fundraising events which are now taking place throughout the year.

I would still request each lodge to continue to organise at least one event a year for the benefit of the festival.

I would encourage all the members of the Province if their circumstances allow to support some of these functions as well as our more established events which are all ongoing again this year. They are on the Web Site or ask your Fellowship / Festival Representative

Myself, the Deputy and Assistants have supported several Lodge Christmas Dinners, Sunday Lunches, Race Nights, Sportsman evenings and Golf Days to name but a few ..... and have enjoyed doing so.

And of course, we again have the Annual Festival Banquet on 15<sup>th</sup> September this year at Middleton and our thanks are due to WBro Trevor Parvin for his efforts. Once again it is a sell out.

I would also like to thank WBro Dennis Schiff who organised a Buddy Holly Evening at Rochdale Football Club in October last year and he is organising another similar event, a Neil Diamond Tribute act, at the same venue in October this year

***I am pleased to report that the total now stands at over £300,000 for which I thank each and every one of you and the other Provinces and indeed other Orders that have contributed.***

***That is again an increase of over £100,000 since the start of this Meeting last year***

But the effort must continue both for Lodges and individuals if we are to reach a total befitting the Province of East Lancashire

We have already drawn the winning tickets for the Double Chance Draw and these will be announced at the Festive Board

Finally, on the subject of the Festival I can confirm that the Venue for the Final Banquet in July 2021 will be Old Trafford Football Club. I know that will delight many of you, but I also know that many might have some reservations .... but I am confident that you will overcome them.

We now need to identify key personnel to assist the Banquet Committee to detail the arrangements for Transport, Stewarding and Communication

You will recall that last year our Team supported the MBF Charity Walk in London. The total raise was just over £440k and it has been decided to use this money to support the Blood Bikes throughout England and Wales. This roll out has already started and I am awaiting confirmation of the handover date for East Lancashire. It will in fact be a Blood Car not a Bike.

When raising the monies for the Festival please bear in mind the tremendous support that the MBF gives to Local and National Charities and our Beneficiaries:

In particular, Hope for Tomorrow, the MBF will fulfil its commitment to them this year at the Lincolnshire Festival and members from this Province will be there to support them in July.

The next major Project the MBF is supporting are 52 Ambulances and Support vehicles for the St John Ambulance, which will cost just over £3m in the next 3 years

In July last year Leslie and I attended the Chancery in London in the presence of our Grand Master and the Duke of Gloucester for the Presentation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ambulance which was donated to East Lancashire and I am delighted to say that RW Bro David Sellers and his wife MIRA also attended to receive the 1<sup>st</sup> Support vehicle for Cheshire

Even though much of our charitable efforts are directed to supporting the 2021 Festival we cannot ignore our own charity the ELMBF which will continue to financially support all the Festivals around the country as well as our own beneficiaries

I am pleased to note that many Lodges are still able to make a donation to the ELMBF at their Installation Meetings

The ELMBF continues to provide invaluable help to our less fortunate members and their dependants with financial assistance or advice where necessary, but the Prov Almoner WBro Barry Heal does need your help to identify any of our Brethren or Widows who may need assistance.

He works closely with the MBF and with the East Lancs Masonic Charity for the Craft to ensure the best outcomes for all our petitioners

Our Prov Grand Charity Steward is encouraged during his year of Office to raise monies for the ELMBF and this year's Charity Steward, WBro George Scaife arranged several events throughout the last 12 months,

Brethren as you are all aware that we are unique in the Mark degree in East Lancashire in owning two residential complexes at Blackburn and Bolton. They are administered by our own ELMBF charity with a management committee on each complex. They are primarily for Mark Masons or their dependants and relatives, but if there is a vacant property and it does not suit the requirements of anyone on the waiting list, the committee will certainly consider Craft Masons who are not in the Mark rather than have the property empty. If anyone is aware of someone who might benefit from living in these beautiful surroundings please contact the Provincial Office or the ELMBF Chairman, WBro Howard Nuttall or any of the committee members for advice on how to proceed. Details are on the Web Site.

Thanks are also due to the committees of Cannons Close and Priors Close Chaired by VWBro John Tiler and WBro David Biggs respectively unseen by many but certainly appreciated.

Finally, with regards to ELMBF I must thank the Chairman, WBro Howard Nuttall and the Company Secretary WBro Malcolm McCarthy for organising the PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) Testing here today. I do hope that many of you availed yourself of the Service.

This was introduced last year at the PGL of West Lancashire and we thought it was an excellent initiative and there is no shame in copying good ideas

Brethren, Last December we travelled to London to attend the RAMGR Investiture Meeting

Five of our Brethren were Appointed to RAMGR , WBros David Entwisle, Duncan Ferguson, David Rainsbury, George Scaife and Paul Waring, Plus Cliff Jewell and Gareth Jones members in East Lancs but have received their Grand Rank from Cheshire and West Lancashire respectively

These are all very well deserved ... Congratulations Brethren

On Tuesday June 12<sup>th</sup> we be will be attending the Grand Mark investiture meeting and again we are all grateful to WBro Malcolm McCarthy for the travel and accommodation arrangements.

The Brethren who will receive their 1<sup>st</sup> Appointments are:

As Grand Steward WBro David Rainsbury, as PAGDC WBro Duncan Ferguson,

As PGStB WBro Brian Wetherell

WBro Barry Heal our Almoner will be Promoted to Deputy Grand Sword Bearer

And WBro Paul Bowen our Organist will be Appointed as Assistant Grand Organist

**The Promotions, which will be conferred in September are :**

WBro John Smith the Deputy PGM to PGJO

WBro Derek Thornhill to PGSD

WBros Malcolm McCarthy, Paul Waring, Michael Porter, John Whitney, Jack Aston, Stan Bibby to PGJD

*Also members of East Lancs and receiving Promotions*

WBro Gareth Jones as PGSD courtesy of West Lancashire

Brethren they are all very well earned and deserve your acclamation.

Brethren I will shortly be investing Brethren with Provincial Grand rank.

I congratulate you all on your preferment and hope you have many years to enjoy your new ranks.

The Brethren who have acting rank please support the Provincial team visits and the RAM investiture meeting, I assure you that the best way to get the most enjoyment out of your new rank is to support your colleagues in the Provincial Team as we travel around the Province.

Brethren we have several key Retirements today

WBro David Kelly our Prov Deputy Grand Sec has requested to retire for health reasons but he insists that he will continue as a volunteer in the Office

WBro Andrew Greenhalgh an Prov Assistant Grand Sec with specific responsibility for the Grand & Provincial Officers Lunch will also retire today

WBro Simon Archer our Prov Grand DC will also retire today. Simon was Appointed Prov DC for the Craft last November and we both agreed that it would be impractical to hold both Offices and since then he has also been Appointed as an AGDC in UGLE. We wish him well in all he does.

And WBro David Dredge a Prov AGDC will retire today but only briefly as I will Appoint and Invest him as Prov GSwdB.

I must now thank all the brethren who make the arrangements for this meeting:

The Provincial Grand Secretary WBro David Rainford and his team,

The Event Stewards of the meeting for keeping us secure and giving advice and assistance where needed.

The sound engineers, The Para Medics, WBro David Lightbown and the brethren from Blackburn Masonic Hall who provided the Lodge Furniture for today's Meeting and once again our Provincial Tyler Ian Ronson for his attendance and support

And a special thank you to the Prov Grand Organist WBro Paul Bowen

They all carry out their various duties impeccably

Finally I must thank and congratulate the DC team led today for the final time by WBro Simon Archer

The Team have once again displayed that they are an example to follow and myself and the Deputy and Assistants are grateful for their support throughout the year as we travel around the Province.

Brethren,

At my Installation in September 2015 I said that I would focus on Membership, the 2021 Festival and the ELMBF

I hope that what you have heard today demonstrates what we have done in the last year and what we will continue to do but I stress we do need your support and assistance

Please enjoy your Mark and RAM Masonry

Thank you for attending today and for your patience

Have a safe journey home when that time comes

and may the Great Overseer of the Universe bless you all.