

Provincial Grand Masters Address to the Provincial Grand Assembly 2012

Brother Royal Ark Mariners may I welcome you all to this is the 8th Provincial Grand Assembly of Royal Ark Mariners to be held in Somerset and looking around this Lodge room this morning it is so gratifying to see so many Royal Ark Mariners gathered to celebrate another successful year for this wonderful Order we all appreciate and enjoy. Whilst I have welcomed our distinguished guests individually it would be remiss of me not to again thank them all for taking time out of their very busy schedules to join and support the Province of Somerset at this Provincial Assembly.

On 10th October 2011 I was privileged to consecrate the Yatton Lodge, a new Royal Ark Mariners Lodge meeting in the Yatton Masonic Hall which is moored to the George Norman Lodge of Mark Master Masons No.967 this increases the Total number of Lodges within the Province to 12. Whilst this may not appear a significant increase it does permit me as your Provincial Grand Master to increase the number of appointments to Provincial Royal Ark Mariners Grand Rank by 2 promotions. It has therefore been a great pleasure for me to invest 7 Brethren this morning unfortunately the 8th Brother is in Australia and was unable to be present this morning. To those Brethren, I have invested this morning, may I say to them congratulations on your preferment but please remember that these appointments do carry additional responsibilities, duties and Masonic commitments. Never the less it would be unkind of me not to encourage every recipient with a sincere wish that they will enjoy their new status in our Order, please wear your collaret with pride because you have earned your promotion by being diligent and hardworking in your Lodge and supporting and working within the Province of Somerset.

Since our last meeting it has been my privilege to be invited to Dyfed Province on 10th June, to their Provincial Royal Ark Mariners Assembly held within the Installed Commanders Lodge which is called De Gorllewin Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.1535 and held at the Masonic Hall in Carmarthen. The Provincial Grand Master RWB Nigel Adams had asked me to present a paper at the Assembly, and by kind permission of our Chaplain Brother Vernon Harding I presented his paper "A Deeper Meaning of the Royal Ark Mariners Degree" which was received extremely well by all

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the Brethren present. They enjoyed it so much that I was presented with a bottle of Penderyn Single Malt Welsh Whisky, and very nice it is Brethren after a long evening attending to my duties in Lodge. This leads me on to discuss our Somerset Commanders Lodge which has had a difficult time over the last few years with an alarming decline in Membership. However Brethren I am pleased to report to this Assembly that the current Worshipful Commander WB Tony Snook and the Commander elect WB Bryan Foster have done a marvellous job of reinvigorating the Lodge with a new approach to the meeting format and an interesting program of events for the ensuing year. The Installation meeting is now to be held at the Wedmore Masonic Hall on the 2nd March, by dispensation, where I understand that 25 new Members will be proposed during the evening. I shall be attending with the Provincial Team and the Lodge will be supported by RWB David James Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Monmouthshire who will be reading a paper, together with RWB Martin Brown Provincial Grand Master for the Province of Wiltshire who has produced a fascinating paper on the Provincial Swords a number of which were presented by a Brother Sholto Hare to various Provinces, which included our own sword here in Somerset.

May I take this opportunity to appeal to all Past Commanders to consider joining, participating, and contributing to this most important and prestigious Lodge in the Province of Somerset, and at the same time suggesting to any Royal Ark Mariner of any rank, that they would be welcome to support the Somerset Commanders as a visitor.

Brethren it is my pleasure to report that at the Grand Assembly of Royal Ark Mariners held on the 9th December 2011 the MW Brother Benjamin Addy invested WB David Platten from Herbert Fuller Lodge No.128, WB Trevor Burton Portal Lodge No.155 and WB John Massey Thackeray Lodge No.730 with Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank. This was the first investiture that our new Pro Grand Master had taken and I can report that it was a lovely day and a splendid meeting and I do hope that the 3 Brethren who were invested enjoyed the occasion as much as I did. May I add that the three recipients

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must appreciate that the conferring of Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank is a very special promotion in our Order and a Brother so honoured is required to serve the Degree, serve his Province and serve his Lodge, but most importantly he is charged with using his considerable experience to encourage and instruct the younger Members in the beautiful ritual providing them with the necessary skills to take part in our deliberations and ceremonies.

It has been of particular pleasure for me to witness the very high standard of ritual delivered in Lodge in the Province especially the presentation of the lecture on the Tracing Board which is usually given by a number of Brethren.

I would wish to thank all Commanders, Past Commanders, Lodge Scribes and Lodge Directors of Ceremonies for their assiduity and dedication to the Degree of Royal Ark Mariners by ensuring that Lodges progress the membership and high standards of ritual which I observe on my visits to the Lodges throughout the year. It is a pleasure to report that our Membership has remained fairly constant, which in these difficult financial times is quite gratifying to see that resignations and exclusions a reasonable low. I am sure that I do not need to remind Brethren that visiting and supporting a Lodge is a great virtue and shows fraternal affection and goodwill.

I would wish to convey my personal congratulation to WB Derek Wilton and the members of the Lodge of improvement who have demonstrated parts of our ritual today which I asked them to do as a prompt to Lodge Scribes and Directors of Ceremonies who may wish to seek their help when a Candidate is not available for an evening. I am well aware of the amount of hardwork he does to ensure that Lodges have help and assistance throughout the year and would take this opportunity to thank him and all the Brethren who form the Demonstration or Lodge of Improvement Team. Brethren within Somerset are all well aware that our Deputy Provincial Grand Master WB Raymond Guthrie is to retire at the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting in May and I would like to thank WB Ray for the superb contribution he has made to the Province of Somerset over the last 8 years. He has been a wonderful Royal Ark Mariner and a good friend to us all, his expertise in the degree, his vision and determined drive have

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provided us with a twice yearly magazine as well as a fantastic web-site which is the envy on many Provinces, and this includes Grand Lodge. WB Ray on behalf of all of us and on my own behalf may I say a big thank you to you as this will be the last Provincial Royal Ark Mariners Assembly you will preside at as our Deputy PGM. As a consequence of WB Guthrie's retirement I have appointed WB John Morgan to be the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and he will be obligated and invested at the annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge in May at the Webbington Hotel. To replace WB John as the Provincial Grand Secretary and Provincial Scribe I have appointed WB John Smith who will be assisted by WB Ian Strickland as the Deputy Provincial Grand Secretary, both will be invested at Provincial Grand Lodge in May.

Brethren this meeting as with other meeting of the Province does not just happen but is well planned and executed by the Provincial Grand Scribe and his Deputy WB John Winston, The Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies WB Ray Johnstone-Smith and his Assistant DC WB Mark Golding all of whom work behind the scenes to ensure that we all can enjoy a well organised meeting and superb ceremonial. On behalf of the Province Brethren I thank you for all the hardwork and many hours of preparation that you have devoted to this Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Assembly today.

Finally Brethren I would wish to thank you all for your close attention to my address, and also for the courteous manner in which you have all have received me and my Provincial Officers this morning. Brethren of Somerset you have all made this Provincial Assembly an enjoyable success throughout the last few years, and I do thank your support during the last 8 years and of course this morning.

May the Supreme Commander of the Universe be a perpetual inspiration to you all, may he guide your steps in your every day life, may he show you the beauty that surrounds us all, may he give you strength to deal with the burdens placed upon you and may he give you wisdom to appreciate the values of peace and harmony.

God Bless you and Thank you Brethren.