

## PGM's Address to PGL on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014

Brethren it has, for me, been a very emotional and memorable day and one I shall never forget. It was a great delight to see the Investiture Ceremony and also this Provincial Grand Lodge meeting so well supported by the Brethren of the Province together with our many visitors and guests from other Provinces, some of whom have travelled a considerable distance.

I extend a very warm welcome to all our visitors and members of the Province and I am also particularly pleased to welcome the many new Mark Master Masons who have been advanced during the past year.

One of my first tasks, which gave me great pleasure, was to appoint and invest my Deputy Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. Philip Voisey, who I congratulate and I look forward to working with him.

I am all too well aware of the responsibility now resting on my shoulders in the knowledge that I have a very hard act to follow in being conscious of the great esteem in which my predecessors have been held.

Brethren, some of you may have noticed that resting on this pedestal is a new bible. This beautiful bible was dedicated by RW.Bro. David Nelson at the William de Irwin Lodge in November last year. It was purchased from a legacy left to the Province by the late VWBro. Ted Mear. After some discussion on how to use some of the legacy the Executive decided that a bible would be a fitting tribute to his memory and to that end this bible, which contains a suitable inscription, will now be present at every Annual Provincial Meeting and every Royal Ark Mariner Assembly.

I would like to thank the outgoing team of Provincial Officers for their support and commitment during the past year.

It has been a great pleasure for me to invest the new team of Officers for the forthcoming year and I congratulate those Brethren who have been promoted in Provincial Grand Lodge.

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To the new Provincial Team of Active Officers I offer my congratulations on their new status. I sincerely hope and expect that they will support me, the Deputy PGM and those Brethren representing me, particularly at Installation Meetings and on Team Visits. I would also wish to remind them that this new status brings greater responsibility in their respective Lodges in ensuring that our new Advance's receive help and advice with their ritual, but most importantly that they are encouraged to experience the friendship and fellowship that our unique Degree provides.

To the Brethren who have been promoted today I thank you for the service you have given to your respective Lodges and I would ask you to please provide leadership and wise council to the new members joining our Order and continue to promote the Mark Degree around the Province.

I am pleased to report that at the Annual Investiture at Grand Lodge to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> June at FMH Great Queens Street the MW the Grand Master has been pleased to make the following appointments and promotions to members of this Province.

WB Mark Golding, of the Eldon Lodge is appointed to the Active Rank of Grand Standard Bearer .

WB Philip Voisey, of the Eldon Lodge to Past Grand Senior Deacon.

WB Neil Hurcum, of the Hallam Lodge to Past Assistant Grand Sword Bearer,

WB Steve Williams, of the Else Lodge to Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearer

and WB Alexander Kemlo of the George Norman Lodge to Past Asst. Grand Standard Bearer.

WB Vernon Harding, the past Provincial Grand Chaplain and WB Eric Kellett, the Past Provincial Grand Charity Steward both of the Mendip Lodge are promoted to Past Grand Senior Deacon.

I am sure you will join me in congratulating these Brethren and wish them a very happy and enjoyable day at the Investiture.

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It is a great pleasure for me to see a delegation of Royal Ark Mariners in Provincial Grand Lodge in their colourful regalia and I extend to them a very warm welcome.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> February at the Royal Ark Mariner Assembly my predecessor invested 8 Brethren with Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank, which is distinguished by a rainbow collaret and is given to Brethren who have done much to promote the Degree. To those Mark Master Masons who are not Royal Ark Mariners may I encourage you to consider joining this beautiful and inspiring Degree which is quite special and I do urge you to talk to those Brethren who wear the rainbow ribbon and find out more about the Degree and consider the merits of Membership.

The Somerset Ancient Mark Masters Team or as we affectionately know them as, The SAMM's, continue to travel far and wide to entertain many Lodges both in the Province as well as in other Provinces with their very professional rendition of the ancient Mark ceremony. I congratulate them and in particular VWB Geoff Nash the organising Secretary who incidentally has now relinquished that post. I wish continued success to the new Organising Secretary W.Bro. Peter Roworth, and all the brethren of the team who give up their time so freely.

At this Annual Provincial meeting it is appropriate that we recognise and acknowledge the work of the members of the Lodge of Improvement which I would now like to be known as the "Team of Development and Improvement". They provide a number of Brethren to attend Lodges that unfortunately do not have a candidate and they will deliver the Mark Lecture and if necessary provide personnel who can step in to fill offices in an emergency situation. Please use them.

To the co-ordinator WB Derek Wilton and his team I thank them on behalf of the Lodges they have visited, and on behalf of the Province.

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I would like specifically to thank W.Bro. John Nicholson the Charity Representative for the North of the Province who has worked tirelessly in organising and conducting the Provincial 600 club Draw which through his efforts has raised a substantial amount for the Provincial Benevolent Fund and to also publicly recognise and acknowledge the sterling work of W.Bro. Eric Kellett, the Charity Representative for the South who does so much in his quiet and unassuming manner.

Also I would like to express the thanks of the Province to W.Bro. Pat Morrissey for his sterling work as editor of the Triangle Magazine and also to W.Bro. Gerry Chilcott for the printing and its distribution.

Brethren I can report that the Provincial Web site is in the process of being reorganised and updated by V.W.Bro. Ray Guthrie and our sincere thanks to him for all he has done and continues to do in setting up and maintaining the Provincial Web site.

Brethren, as you are all too well aware during the winter period Somerset, was hit by torrential rain and winds which caused devastation, destruction and disruption particularly in the area of the Somerset levels. My predecessor setup a flood relief fund to help those in need. He received donations from other Provinces, Lodges and individuals. I am able to report that a number of needy individuals have received financial assistance from the fund and that this is an ongoing process. I understand Grand Lodge has set aside additional monies if required.

In March a large number of Brethren together with their ladies enjoyed another weekend away at Paignton organised by W.Bro. Tony Snook and Dorothy which incidentally, they have done for the past 17 years. We owe a great debt of gratitude to them both and on behalf of the Province I thank them most sincerely.

Time moves on however and change is inevitable so to this end I therefore inform you that the Provincial weekend away next year will be held at a different venue and will be organised by W. Bro. Robin Back of the Quantock Lodge. More information will follow shortly.

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Brethren this whole day has been the culmination of many months of planning and hard work by the Provincial Grand Secretary W.Bro. John Smith and his Deputy W.Bro. Ian Strickland both of whom I thank most sincerely for attending to all the administration required for today with the help of Grand Lodge and in particular VWBro. Angus Hannagan, the Deputy Grand Secretary.

I would also wish to thank and congratulate my Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies WB Ray Johnstone-Smith, his Deputy and his 2 Assistants together with the invaluable team of helpers for ensuring the planning and all the arrangements for the ceremonial for the day were up to the high standard required for this special occasion.

Brethren may I remind you that it is most important that we ensure that our individual Craft Lodges are well supported with suitable candidates. With our regular attendance we can inform and enlighten those brethren who have yet to come into the Mark Degree. We must all recognise that a strong Craft Province will ultimately provide suitable members for the Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Degrees. We are, I am sure, all too well aware that the craft is our life line and we must not forget it.

On the whole Brethren our Mark Lodges are doing quite well regarding recruitment and retention in particular the Royal Ark Mariner Degree. However, we must not rest on our laurels and try our hardest to recruit brethren who you think would be suitable.

Remember, it's not just numbers but a real commitment we would like to see from those joining our Lodges.

I do know that some of our Lodges are finding it difficult and we must all do what we can to give them, help and support by attending their meeting whenever possible.

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May I take this opportunity of thanking the Webbington Hotel and its staff for their help and co-operation and in particular Rebecca Furlong.

Thanks also to the St John Ambulance who have provided us with medical cover during the day.

In conclusion Brethren, I do thank you for your close attention to this my first address, and may the Great Overseer of the Universe continue to provide to us all with the moral guidance, and strength of purpose to steer us through the trials and tribulations that we experience in our daily lives and I pray that the Great Overseer of the Universe with the support of the Brethren of this Province will give me the strength, wisdom and understanding to lead this wonderful Province of ours forward. Brethren let us leave this meeting today with joy in our hearts, looking forward to a very happy and fruitful year.

Finally I leave you with this very old Chinese Proverb:-

If there be Righteousness in the heart, there will be Beauty in the Character.

If there is Beauty in the Character there will be Harmony in the Home.

If there is Harmony in the Home there will be Order in the Nation.

When there is Order in the Nation there will be Peace in the World

God bless you all and thank you.