

**ME Grand Superintendents address to the Companions  
Annual Convocation of Provincial Grand Chapter  
Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

Companions, it is an absolute delight to see you all here today and I welcome each and every one of you to this Annual Convocation of the Provincial Grand Chapter of Yorkshire, West Riding.

The support and encouragement I receive from all the Companions is, as a certain commentator on the television would say, “unbelievable”.

I sincerely thank all the Companions of this Province for your support, friendship and encouragement over the years. I also thank all our friends from other Provinces for your support and friendship.

The “indissoluble link” between the Craft and the Royal Arch continues to be as strong as ever and the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master and I continue to work closely together to preserve and sustain that link.

Right Worshipful Bro David, I thank you for your support and friendship.

Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, would you please escort the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master to me. Right Worshipful Brother David, at the last Annual Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge you presented to me this trophy, depicting two hands clasped in friendship with an engraved plate reading “The Indissoluble Link”.

I now have great pleasure into presenting it back to you in token of our close working relationship and friendship.

Companions, we must all support our Craft Lodges, the very foundation of Freemasonry and without which none of us would be here today.

I am pleased to say all the Orders and Degrees in this Province work in total harmony with one another, which ensures Freemasonry can have a strong and happy future for us all.

I would now like to congratulate those Companions who received their first appointment or were promoted at the last Annual Convocation of Supreme Grand Chapter. If you would each stand as I read your names the Companions here assembled can acknowledge you.

First Appointments - as Past Grand Standard Bearer: John Allison, Philip Drury, Paul Duckworth, Stephen Smith and Francis Testo and Promotion - as Past Grand Sword Bearer: James Newman.

And by way of celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Installation of the Most Excellent First Grand Principal, at the meeting of Supreme Grand Chapter on Wednesday of this week Andrew Henderson was appointed to the rank of Past Grand Standard Bearer and Brian Priestley was promoted to the rank of Past Assistant Grand Sojourner.

All the Appointments and Promotions were very well deserved and I offer our sincere congratulations to each and every one of you.

I also congratulate those Companions who today have received their first rank, or have been promoted, in Provincial Grand Chapter. The honours are well deserved and are in recognition of your past services to Royal Arch Masonry in this Province and the services I have every confidence you will give in the future.

In 2015 I had meetings with new Exaltees in the Province and it is my intention next year to have further such meetings in each of the five Areas of the Province to obtain feedback from our newest members.

The introduction of Risk Assessments relative to each Chapter in the Province has given the Rulers an indication of the strength of each Chapter and will enable us to continue to give assistance to those Chapters who perhaps may need help in difficult times and aid in the future prosperity of the Chapter.

Education Workshops are very important and I would urge Companions to attend. Those Companions who are about to take up new Offices in their Chapters will derive a greater understanding of what lies ahead and Companions who are experienced in the various Offices can impart their own personal knowledge to others.

The next Workshops are due to take place on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November at Tapton Hall, Sheffield. I will be there and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible on that day.

The Travelling Pedestal, which was presented to me at the 2015 Annual Convocation, has continued its travels throughout the Province and is currently in the hands of Amphibious Chapter in Heckmondwike. The idea was to encourage visiting and this has certainly proved successful. I am particularly delighted at the large number of Companions from the presenting Chapter that have accompanied the Pedestal on its travels and it is my intention to continue to be in attendance at each presentation. I wish the Pedestal well on its continued travels and I am confident all the recipient Chapters will take great care of it.

Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies would you now please escort E Comp Norman Goddard, together with E Comp David Hallas the First Principal of Wharnccliffe Chapter and E Comp Peter Brindley the First Principal of the South Yorkshire Chapter of Installed Principals to me, who I believe have presentations to make.

E Comps. Goddard, Hallas and Brindley were escorted to the ME Grand Superintendent and there presented the ME the Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals with their respective Sceptres.

E Comp. Goddard then addressed the Companions in the following terms;

“Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, Excellent Companions and Companions.

Paul Raymond Healey, PGSt B., who died earlier this year, crafted and donated these Sceptres. This was the final, terrestrial act of a very generous and skilful man and it will surely serve as a lasting tribute to a wonderful and loyal friend to all; a very successful Provincial Almoner and a most worthy Mason. I can feel his presence and hear him saying in his own inimitable way “That wo' just good Norm.”

We mourn him and we miss him.

Thank you Most Excellent”.

E Comps. Goddard, Hallas and Brindley, then returned to their seats.

As has been stated these new Sceptres were made by E Comp Paul Healey and it was his intention to present them at this meeting. E Comp Paul was a much loved and admired Companion and is sorely missed by us all. He was to be promoted to the Rank of Past Assistant Grand Sojourner at the Convocation of Supreme Grand Chapter in April of this year but unfortunately died before he received that Honour.

These Sceptres will be used at all future meetings of Provincial Grand Chapter and will be a constant reminder of a truly great Freemason.

I would now like to thank the son-in-law of E Comp Martin Wallace who made the stands for the new Sceptres. Martin, would you please convey my sincere thanks to your son-in-law.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February it was an absolute delight to attend a meeting of the Universities Chapter Yorkshire, which had been granted dispensations to hold a meeting at Castlegate, York. The meeting was attended by the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent in and over the Province of Yorkshire North and East Ridings, E Comp Jeffrey Gillyon, together with members of his Executive and many of the Acting Officers of the year.

E Comp Jeffrey, it was a truly enjoyable evening and I thank you and the Companions of your Province for making it such a special occasion.

Universities Chapter Yorkshire is to hold another meeting in the Province of Yorkshire North and East Ridings on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November. This time the meeting is to be held in Hull and I very much look forward to that occasion, especially as the Chapter is to welcome into Honorary membership none other than E Comp Jeffrey Gillyon.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> July next year Prudence Chapter is to host a presentation of the Ceremony of the Veils. This is to be held at Castle Grove, Leeds.

Full details will be issued shortly and Companions, if you have not witnessed such a presentation before I would urge you to attend, you will find it very interesting.

We are currently looking at how the presentation of “Talking Heads – The Next Step: Into the Royal Arch” should be progressed. My sincere thanks to E Comp Paul Grafton who has reviewed the original script and has finalised a Yorkshire West Riding version.

We are now considering a further way forward. That is, a presentation entitled “The Royal Arch – why should I join”, for which we are indebted to E Comp Peter Mason, Deputy Grand Superintendent of the Province of Cumberland and Westmoreland, in the compilation of the document.

It is intended for presentation in a Craft Lodge by members of the local Royal Arch Council, in support of the Lodge Royal Arch Representative, **when invited to do so.**

E Comp Graham Priestley has adapted the documentation and the approval of the Provincial Grand Master for these presentations to be made has been granted.

During the last twelve months it has a real pleasure and honour to be accompanied by the Acting Provincial Officers of the year on especial visits to Chapters in each of the five areas of the Province. We have always received a very warm welcome on our visits and I thank the Companions of those Chapters for their very kind hospitality. My thanks to E Comp Steve Emmett for his excellent work in co-ordinating these visits.

I have also been privileged and honoured to attend the Joint Chapter Meetings of each of the seven Royal Arch Councils in the Province and I thank the members of each of those Councils for the very generous invitations to attend. Royal Arch Councils are unique to this Province and the help and support given to Chapters is very much appreciated by us all. Your support cannot and must not be underestimated.

Last week it was an absolute joy to be present at the Royal Albert Hall to celebrate the Tercentenary of Grand Lodge. It was a wonderful occasion and a fitting tribute to three hundred years of Freemasonry in this country.

On Tuesday of this week it was my great honour and pleasure to attend the Centenary Meeting of Welcome Chapter at Tapton Hall, Sheffield. It was a truly splendid celebratory meeting and I wish the Chapter well for the future.

Now for a vote of thanks to a number of our very hard-working Companions.

I thank Excellent Companion Keith Tolan, Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra, and Excellent Companion Mick Dyson, Ruth and Rachel from the Provincial Office for the hard work in organising today's meeting and ensuring everything has worked so smoothly.

I thank Excellent Companion Keith Marriott, Provincial Grand Registrar, for his very comprehensive and informative report, which makes for very interesting reading.

I thank Excellent Companion Andrew Henderson, Provincial Grand Almoner, who is performing his very important role in an exemplary manner.

Companions, on both your and my own behalf I thank the members of the Royal Arch Executive.

Special thanks go to my Deputy, E Comp James Gray. Jim, your support and friendship is very much appreciated. We spend many happy hours both in each other's company and on the telephone and your contribution towards the wellbeing and success of this Province cannot be underestimated. It is a real pleasure to see you here today after breaking your ankle so badly – true commitment under such trying circumstances.

My sincere thanks likewise to my two Co-Principals, E Comp David Boyle and E Comp Francis Testo. David and Francis, your support, encouragement and friendship are very much appreciated.

Likewise, my thanks to the three Assistants to the Provincial Grand Principals - E Comp Craig Bannister, E Comp Graham Priestley and E Comp Frank Taylor.

Likewise to our Provincial Grand Treasurer, E Comp Brian Priestley, who looks after our finances in an exemplary way.

What an absolutely brilliant team of individuals I have to assist in running this Province. I thank each and every one of you and I look forward to working with you in the forthcoming year.

I also thank E Comp Ian Smith, our Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, both for his diligence in ensuring today's meeting has run so smoothly and also for accompanying me on numerous occasions to meetings throughout the Province. Ian, you have performed your duties with dignity and style. The Royal Arch is fortunate to have you as Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies.

Another unsung hero is E Comp Andrew Taylor, Provincial Grand Organist, who has played the organ today and at Chapter meetings up and down the Province. Andrew, it is always a delight to hear you play and thank you for your support and harmony.

Today is a very special day, it being the 11<sup>th</sup> November, when we remember those who gave their lives in conflict and I thank E Comp Craig Kidd for playing the trumpet for us today.

I would now like to thank the Chapter Principals who are with us today. Would you please stand so we may all acknowledge your presence. Thank you for your support and I wish your Chapters well.

I would also like to thank all the Companions below the Third Chair who are with us today. Would those Companions please stand so we may all acknowledge your presence. You are the future of this Order. Enjoy and cherish your Royal Arch Masonry. Companions, it is really great to see you here.

I would like to thank the members of the Criterion Chapter of Installed First Principals for ensuring our Distinguished Guests were suitably greeted and looked after on their arrival here today.

I must also say a special thank you to all the Companions who contributed towards the 2017 Festival in aid of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution through your Chapters. Your generosity is beyond belief, as the monies donated are over and above that given through your Craft Lodges.

It is my wish the Royal Arch should be a **caring Order**. One in which we look after and care for one another. The words “in peace, love and harmony” will be very familiar to you all and let us strive to maintain those important principles. I continue to ask that I am informed, via the Provincial Office, of any ill or hospitalised Companion so that I am made aware of the problems which are being endured by my Companions and to enable me to make contact with them.

Mentoring plays a vital role within the Province as a whole and within individual Chapters. E Comps Graham Priestley and Graham Hoyle are currently examining how this operates in this Province and at ways it can be improved.

Royal Arch is a very special Order in Freemasonry and is to be enjoyed by all. I must admit the ritual is not that easy to understand so I would urge all newer Companions to give it time and all will become clear.

We have heard from the Report of the Provincial Grand Registrar that recruitment into the Royal Arch in this Province is holding up relatively well but we are still losing too many members through resignation within a relatively short time of joining. What can we do to change this? When a Master Mason has determined his next step in Freemasonry is to join the Royal Arch please ensure you encourage that Brother to join the right Chapter for him i.e. one that meets at the most suitable location and on the most suitable night. If he does not join such a Chapter then the likelihood of retaining the new Exalte will be diminished.

Keep all the Companions interested, involve them, make them feel wanted and an important part of the Chapter.

We must look after all our Companions. It is really sad when attending a meeting and hearing the names of members who are not present. It is up to all of us to ensure those Companions are not forgotten, for us to contact them to ascertain if they are well, if any help is needed – encourage them to attend our meetings, to share with us the happy experience of a Royal Arch meeting.

You will have noticed photographs being taken before the meeting was opened. Further photographs will be taken immediately after the meeting has been closed and also at the festive board. My thanks to E Comp Stuart Burrows for his photographic expertise. Companions, please have a look on the Provincial website for, as they say, “something completely different”. I will be saying more about this at the festive board.

Companions, it is my great honour and privilege to serve all the Companions of this Province and with your help we can ensure the continued success of Royal Arch Masonry in this, the Province of Yorkshire, West Riding.

Companions, this is your Province. Cherish it, support it, enjoy it and ensure its success for generations to come.

May TTALGMH always watch over you.