

Provincial Grand Master's Address

Brethren, I start as always by thanking you all for attending this Mess. Whilst our numbers are down slightly on last year, this is to be expected due to the current combined circumstances of both still present Covid as well as some financial uncertainty. I remain, however, both amazed and humbled by your continued support for our wonderful Province. You, brethren, are the backbone of this Province and long may you continue to attend. Thank you!

So, you will be pleased to know, I am not going to “bore” you with lots of Provincial news, suffice it to say please continue to support the many 2030 MBF Festival activities and to update you that “we”, that is to say “you” have already raised over a quarter of one million pounds so I do say “thank you all”, do please continue to support where you can and, if you have not already, do try and make Festival Steward status and earning your jewel. If you are unable to attend any of the events planned for next year, then do please give some support if you can to my Wing Walk where donations can be made via our website or the “just giving” page.

So, on that note, I have some MBF collarettes to present and thought it should be appropriate to do so today.

Therefore, firstly to Geoff Newman and Dave Todd who have both achieved Gold Patron status

Next, all achieving Patron Status,

Vince Bull; Bob Needham; Steve Joslin; Les Irving and Paul Busby. Well done, and thanks to you all!

On a similar note, our Province is now an MBF Gold Patron and this can be displayed on your Lodge Summonses. I do, genuinely, give a big “thank you” to all those who have been involved in arranging, helping and attending various events that have taken place to date. I know those who attend are really appreciative of your commitment and hard work behind the scenes in making all the arrangements.

Moving on, as you will know, we have held three successful “Awareness Events” under the leadership of my Deputy, W.Bro. John Finlay and he, and his team, are looking to hold two further events, one at Chelmsford on the 4th of March and one at Upminster on a date to be confirmed. Please, when the details are finalised, do make every effort to support these events by inviting as many Master Masons as you can.

On a similar note, I have a plea to make, all those of you who are competent at any part(s) of either or both Mark and Royal Ark Mariner ritual please consider joining the Ritual Support Team. They are looking for more help to assist those units that are still struggling to deliver the quality of ritual our new members deserve.

As we are now recruiting a good number of new candidates, it is imperative that we give them a great Ceremony so that they not only fully enjoy the experience but also, and just as

importantly, that they go back to their Craft Lodges and can fully recommend joining these wonderful Degrees.

So, if you are able to help, please make contact with either the ProvGDC, Tony Goater, the DepGDC, Phil Richardson or, as a last resort, my Deputy, John Finlay. Don't forget that we also have the additional resources of the Fillebrook Lodge for D.C.s and those moving through the Officers posts; the monthly Provincial LOI and we are now in the process of setting up a virtual LOI system through the Zoom portal for those who cannot easily travel. All these resources are available to anyone who wants to improve their ritual or understanding of our Ceremonies for the combined reason of making both our meetings more enjoyable and, at the same time, making them more professional and appealing to new members. So, if you can attend, do so, or at least ensure you take the message back to your Lodges so that all members are aware of the potential benefit.

So, now brethren, I move to my appointments of both the Provincial Wardens and my nomination to the Grand Master of a Grand Steward.

Firstly, my Provincial Grand Senior Warden.

This brother was Advanced in 2008 and is a member of two Mark Lodges and two Royal Ark Mariner Lodges.

He was first appointed to Provincial rank in 2016 and has made steady progress since then, he is either Secretary or Treasurer in all of his Lodges. I would describe him as a "quietly efficient" and effective brother. He was of tremendous help to the Province behind the scenes dealing with an unfortunate set of circumstances. He was able to quietly and confidentially deal with the issues presented to him which led to a satisfactory resolution of the matter.

I am sure he has a bright future in both our Degrees and for our Province. He recently took on the office of Treasurer for our Installed Masters Lodge, the largest in the U.K, and probably the largest in the G.L.M.M.M.

He takes on all that is asked of him in his own efficient and competent manner without fuss or confusion. I am confident he will represent me and this Province as Prov.G.S.W. in the same manner.

So, brethren, my nomination is W.Bro. Robert Sandy.

Moving on, what can I say about my nomination for Provincial Grand Junior Warden. Well, one thing for sure, I wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of him! This will become clearer as I go on!

This brother was Advanced in 2009 and is a member of four Mark Lodges and four R.A.M. Lodges. Although this brother was only appointed to Provincial Rank a relatively short time ago, I'm sure he is one to watch for the future. He was a Provincial ADC for two years before further promotion as well as holding office as ADC in the 1044 Installed Lodges.

Not only that, but he has also shown his commitment to our Province and the Order by being one of the main instigators and a Founder of two Lodges as well as a Founder of a further one.

In his "spare time" as he still works, he is authoring the record book on the Province's History which will be released later. He is an excellent ritualist who can be relied on to help ensure our Candidates receive the best possible ceremonies.

Brethren, my nomination is W.Bro. Geoff "big boy" Waddoups.

So, last, but never least, is my nomination as Grand Steward.

This is someone I would describe again as being “on the quiet side” but also very efficient and effective. He is a member of three Mark and two R.A.M. Lodges having been Advanced in 2009. Since that time, he has been elected Treasurer in four of those Lodges so, one hopes, he could be said to be familiar with his sums and figures.

He recently moved away from Essex to another County but still makes the commitment to attend all his Lodges and discharge his other duties. He is also regularly accompanies me on official visits as well as attending our Provincial meeting and joining the 1044 Lodge as soon as he became eligible.

This brother also took on the role of Provincial Treasurer and, since then, has managed to negotiate with the Cooperative Bank a free banking contract for all of our units and not only for us in Essex, but nationally for all. No mean feat in itself but it also demonstrates the commitment of this brother not only to his Lodges in thus Province, but also for our Order in general.

I am, of course, referring to W.Bro. Clive Snell.

Brethren, I do hope that my nominations meet with your approval and that you will give all off the brethren to ne honoured all the support you cam.

So, I finish by truly thanking all of you for attending tonight and to your attention to our speakers. I trust you enjoyed your ,meals, the company and the occasion. Next year we will be holding this mess in the north and are currently negotiating with Colchester but I will, of course, let you know nearer the time. I shall also be reverting to our “normal” date of the third Friday in November.

Finally, then, thanks to Geoff Newman and his team for arranging the event and to the DC’s team, for escorting myself and the other executive.

For those of you that I don’t see before next year, please try and attend our PGL meeting at Felsted.

Lastly, have a safe journey home, have a happy festive and holiday season, Happy Christmas to those who celebrate it and a safe and prosperous holiday period to those that don’t and I wish a very safe and prosperous New Year to you all,