

Brethren... A very warm welcome back to everyone and although they are not here, a big thank you must go to the Grand Supreme Ruler, M.Wy.Bro.Andrew Christopher Sweeney and his team for investing me as the Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler of this very fine Province earlier today. It was an occasion that I will always remember and although I have been installed into various Chairs throughout my Masonic career, to be installed in such a fashion is one that will live me forever. A big thank you must go to my predecessor R. Wy. Bro Frank G H Smith, who retired after seven years and I am sure that we all wish him the best of health to enjoy his retirement.

A big thank you must also go to R. Wy. Bro Howard Nuttall who decided, in his infinite wisdom to appoint me as his Deputy Director of Ceremonies, where I learned my craft as a DC from Wy. Bro Gerald Hodson. I later became the Prov Director of Ceremonies and carried on learning whilst Howard was the PGSR. On his retirement, R. W.Bro.Frank G.H.Smith was appointed PGSR and I became his Deputy and we have worked together for seven years, and I have valued his friendship during that time.

In 2019, events unfolded where the disclosure of a new virus, made in China, gripped the World and the ensuing Pandemic has made everyone more aware of how infallible we are to illnesses, and many to re-think their lifestyle and how we all interact with others. Up to this time, I and others were unaware of Zoom, but how times have changed. Initial teething problems were overcome and I must thank the many Conclave Secretaries and in particular, Wy. Bro Paul A Joynson who helped many of the Secretaries in arranging and hosting the many Zoom meetings held during the Pandemic. This gave everyone the opportunity to not only keep up to date with each other, but also the opportunity to keep abreast of events happening throughout the Province and of the vast amount of information being sent by MMH. Zoom was not restricted to the Province, but many of us enjoyed each other's company when attending Virtual Provincial Meetings held around the Country, this gave many the opportunity to take part who otherwise might have given it a miss due to a variety of circumstances.

The last 19 months have been very strange and have created many problems, many of which not of our own doing, but hopefully we have weathered that storm and I must thank the Visiting Deacons, both Provincial who have kept in touch with the Conclave Secretaries and also for the Conclave Visiting Deacons for keeping in touch with the members of their respective Conclaves. As we emerge from the Pandemic and these difficult times, there will be some members who will be eager to resume their Masonry, but there will be those who may a bit more reticent. Either because of concern for their own health if they have underlying medical issues and that of their loved ones, but also because they may have got out of the habit of leaving the house to attend meetings. Masonry was a habit where we all got used to attending a Lodge/Chapter/Secret Monitor and other Degree meeting because our diaries and calendars was full. That we would then attend other various meetings when invited by a friend also because commonplace, but I feel that Secret Monitors have a somewhat unique bond. That bond of friendship is made more important by the work of the Visiting Deacons, and the need to keep in touch with every member of the Conclave who may feel isolated by the Pandemic. However, this responsibility cannot be met by the Visiting Deacons alone, but we must all ensure we keep on touch with each other so no member is ever left feeling lonely or forgotten and in doing so, to entice them to start attending Masonic meetings once again and to get back into the habit of leaving the house. Let us remind them that they are not forgotten and will always be made welcome when they feel confident to resume their Masonry.

To help the Conclaves in their recovery after the Pandemic, I plan to freeze the Provincial dues payable for each Unit for another year, so there will be no dues sent out by Province in August-September 2022.

Today sees the retirement of several brethren who have worked extremely hard, not only to make this meeting happen today, but over the many years. I must thank the retiring Provincial Recorder Wy. Bro Alan Edge PGSwdB for all of his hard work and enthusiasm over the many years and to congratulate him on his promotion in Grand Conclave to PAGDC, a worthy promotion.

Wy. Bro Eric Bullock PGStdB, as an Assistant Recorder your work was invaluable and your recording of Data, spreadsheets, working as a team with Alan and what you have done for not only this Installation and Provincial meeting and organising of trains to MMH, I cannot thank you enough, that you sorted out the trains to and from London for the Annual Grand Conclave meeting and organised the meal at The Ship Tavern, Old Holborne will always be appreciated by everyone who went. That both you and Alan worked well as a Team, made it much easier to get things done and I thank you for everything that the both of you have done, and I am sure that your predecessors will be making contact for advice.

Wy. Bro Steven Nelson Smith PGSwdB, your help in keeping the finances of the Province in order is no mean feat, and I thank you for everything you have done quietly and efficiently and congratulate you on your promotion in Grand Conclave to PAGDC.

Other brethren have given way to others and I must thank R. Wy. Bro Stephen Jackson P.G.G. (The Boss), Prov Grand Chancellor, for friendship, council and company over the many years, and his experience will not be lost.

Wy. Bro Allan Shields P.G.Stwd for his unstinting work as Prov.G.G. and his support of the Provincial Visiting Deacons during the Pandemic months.

I must congratulate and thank V. Wy. Bro Stephen P Holcroft G.V. for accepting the appointment of being my Deputy. Stephen is known to many, both within the Province and in many other Provinces in his role as Grand Visitor, an office he is to hold for a further year and congratulations on his re-appointment at Grand Conclave in November. I have known and worked with Stephen since 1990 when I joined the Greater Manchester Police Motorcycle Unit at Plant Hill, he asked me what little blue book I was reading and a friendship developed from then and has been maintained ever since. I will always remember riding together whilst on Road Patrol and whenever we stopped, I would be asked the questions leading up to being Passed to a Fellowcraft (later the Raising) and I always forgot the symbols bit... whilst sat at a junction Stephen would bang his hands together as if using a set of symbols... I never ever forgot that... We then went onto work together on the Special Escort Group and lastly the Motorway Unit before we both retired. Masonically, we have visited each other Lodges over the many years and have remained friends throughout, and I know that he will not only support me but will support the Province with confidence and sincerity.

Brethren, with regards to Grand Conclave, I would like to congratulate the following brethren in their preferment to Grand Rank..

To Grand Steward Wy. Bro Paul Arthur Joynson

To Past Grand Standard Bearer Wy. Bro. Martin Paul Roche

To Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies Wy. Bro Alan Stanley Edge

To Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies Wy. Bro Steven Nelson Smith

To Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies Wy. Bro Terence Kershaw

To Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies Wy. Bro Davis Pestell

Re-appointed to Grand Organist V. Wy. Bro Paul Bowen

Re-appointed to Grand Visitor V. Wy. Bro Stephen Paul Holcroft

I look forward to seeing all of you receive your well-deserved ranks at Great Queen Street, London on Thursday 11th November 2021 at 12.30hrs.

Lastly brethren, I must thank all of you for your support today and I welcome each and everyone of you back today, It has been quite a while since we have been able to meet in person and in such large numbers, and I do appreciate the fact that you have all made the time and effort to be here today. Not only to support me in my special day, but to support the many friends who have received either first appointment, re-appointment or promotion today.

Today is our special day and I thank you for your support and that you have enjoyed your day with us. To all of these brethren, I thank you for accepting your individual office and congratulate each and everyone of you, and I am sure that this new team will work well together and I look forward to seeing you at planned Team Visits and at various Conclave meetings throughout the year.

Visits planned for the year are

1. Thursday 23rd November 2021, Cockcroft Conclave No.25, where we will be celebrating two 50 years in Secret Monitor Freemasonry
2. Bishops Blaize Conclave No.48, West Yorkshire who celebrate their Centenary. Thursday 3rd February 2022 at Tapton Hall, Sheffield
3. Supera Moras Conclave No.49, who celebrate their Centenary, date to be confirmed
4. Earl Of Harwood Conclave No.71 Saturday 14th May 2022
5. Roses In Concord 185, Clayton le Moors, Tuesday 11th October 2022

Brethren, I wish you all a safe journey home and I look forward to continuing our special friendship in the future.