

PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPTER WILTSHIRE



ANNUAL CONVOCATION ADDRESS

12 MAY 2018

MELKSHAM

**THE MOST EXCELLENT GRAND SUPERINTENDENT IN
AND OVER THE PROVINCE OF WILTSHIRE**

E.COMP JOHN REID

Companions

I welcome you here this morning and thank you once again for giving up your precious time to support this very special occasion in Wiltshire's Masonic Calendar. Earlier, as always, I had much pleasure in welcoming our distinguished guests who once again have travelled long distances to be with us, especially as they have chosen to attend our Convocation knowing at this precise time in Bristol the Installation of a new Grand Superintendent and Provincial Grand Master is taking place. I take this opportunity to thank them for the warmth of their welcome and generous hospitality extended to the Wiltshire Executive and myself when we have visited their Provinces.

Companions I do not wish to dwell on the past only to say the last twelve months have once again been most enjoyable, rewarding and memorable.

This has been achieved through your dedication and commitment to the Royal Arch ensuring we strive to maintain the high standards of ritual and ceremonial, whilst making our Convocations immensely pleasurable for our membership and visitors alike.

This Province has for many year advocated the sharing of the ritual, many of our Chapters are now doing just that, particularly with the Lecturers and the Sojourners work, but Companions what is stopping you from sharing the First Principal's work between the Three Principals, thought through carefully it can be done, and if done properly can be impressive. This may help individuals in their decision to progress, so it is there Companions for your consideration.

I am sure you will recall on many occasions when responding to my toast I have encouraged you to relay to our Craft members how much we all enjoy this Order; something must be working Companions, for as we heard earlier from the Provincial Grand Registrar, our membership has again increased for the second consecutive year. However, now is not the time to become complacent Companions there is still much work to be done.

In order to improve our current Royal Arch Representatives scheme, a Working Group chaired by the Deputy Grand Superintendent was asked to evaluate the current role of our Royal Arch Representatives. I can inform you they have made a number of recommendations which I am sure will enhance the profile of our Representatives and the Royal Arch in our Craft Lodges. These recommendations have been endorsed in principle by the Provincial Grand Master. In order to initiate these recommendations a Royal Arch Representatives seminar will be held on the 5th June 2018 at the Calne Masonic Centre.

We all know recruitment is important to the Royal Arch, but we must not forget those Companions we have not seen at our Convocations for some time, I therefore ask you all to make a concerted effort to contact those Companions and entice them back to our meetings. Companions please do not sit back and expect our Scribes and Almoners to do all the chasing; Companions, I say again let us all make that extra effort to invite our absent Companions to once more enjoy the Companionship of the Order.

I acknowledge that we all have busy lives and the support of our own Chapters is paramount, but where you can Companions I would encourage you to visit neighbouring Chapters, let us increase our support of one another, I know it will enhance your enjoyment of this Order. This has been particularly evident on the transfer of the Wiltshire Travelling Quaich with upwards of ten Companions accompanying it on its journey to its new destination. (I hope it's not just the Malt Whiskey that's the attraction, surely not Companions).

As always the Provincial Team is here to help in any way they can. Talking Heads is still available to be delivered in Craft Lodges along with The Royal Arch in Camera, Your Chapter in Focus to be delivered in your Chapters, both very informative and at times amusing. EComp Tony Oke is the coordinator for these very worthwhile events.

Companions we all know our major charitable contributions are made through our Craft Lodges, however, I sincerely thank those individuals and Chapters that have supported the Children at Christmas initiative. Since our last Annual Convocation we have procured three special ergonomically designed chairs for the John McNeill Opportunity Centre for Children with learning difficulties which otherwise the charity could not afford. In addition we once again presented Victim Support Wiltshire with a cheque to purchase specific items to supplement the emotional support they give to children through their difficult times of trauma, fear and anxiety. Companions following the success of a Sunday lunch held two years ago which was so popular we are planning to hold another fund raising lunch on 25th November at the Chippenham Masonic Centre.

Companions it was agreed at the Annual General Purposes Committee that the proceeds from the alms collection today will go towards our Royal Arch Benevolent Fund in support of Children at Christmas.

Today we celebrate with those Companions receiving their first appointments and well deserved promotions in recognition of their continued contribution to the Royal Arch. I hope that the new Provincial Team will match the enthusiasm and commitment of the outgoing team in their support of the Provincial Executive, all the appointments and promotions are well deserved, but I remind you that it is also a call for you to give future service to your Chapters and the Province.

I thank the outgoing team for their hard work, and encourage them to continue to support our Chapters. I especially thank EComp Peter Read 2nd Provincial Grand Principal, EComp Brian Amos Provincial Assistant Grand Scribe Ezra and EComp Alan Coleman communications and information Officer who are stepping down today. Companions, they have served with dignity to themselves and total commitment to the Province.

Included in today's celebration I congratulate Excellent Companions Tony Oke promoted to Past Assistant Grand Sojourner and Mike Mossman appointed to Past Grand Standard Bearer in celebration and recognition of the Most Excellent First Grand Principals 50 years in office. While more recently Excellent Companions Michael Meade was promoted to Past Assistant Grand Sojourner; Richard Palmer received a first appointment as Past Grand Standard Bearer and Brian Amos a first appointment as Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, each a richly deserved honour.

Before I conclude Companions, may I remind all 1st Principals and Past 1st Principals that the Wiltshire Chapter of 1st Principals is available to you to continue the friendships made during your year in office.

As in previous years the success of our Annual Convocation is not the result of a single individual but that of an army of willing helpers. I am so aware of the time, planning and commitment that has been expended by all the Companions involved, to those Companions and I thank you most sincerely. Special thanks are extended to the Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra and his Assistant along with the Director of Ceremonies and his team and those Chapters under whose banners we are meeting under today; the Chapter of Concord, Thynne Chapter and Stonehenge Chapter.

I thank each and every one of you for your support here today and look forward again to meeting you in your own Chapters during my visits throughout the Province. I am confident that the Holy Royal Arch in Wiltshire is a most appealing Order to which to belong. I thank you for your attention and trust the TTALGMH will keep you safe and be with you all.