

John Prizeman
Presentation to Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge
13th March 2024

I thank M.W. Bro. Jonathan Spence for inviting me to address this Quarterly Communication.

I am sure you are wondering why someone from Mark Masons Hall has been invited to address Grand Lodge.

Brethren you may not be aware I have served longer than MW Bro Jonathan as a Pro Grand Master, by almost twenty-four hours, being Installed at Mark Grand Lodge the day before the Quarterly Communication of Craft Grand Lodge in September 2022. But let me assure you I do recognise today that he is The Pro Grand Master, and I am A Pro Grand Master. Today I address you as a Past Grand Sword Bearer.

But why me a Mark Mason? Pro Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons. Why should I be invited to address this Quarterly Communication?

That question is an easy one to answer. I would not be where I am today unless, first and foremost, I am a Craft and Royal Arch Mason. And as such, it has allowed me over the last fifty two years to take further measured steps on my Masonic journey.

It cannot be denied that some Brethren after completing their third degree at first decide to be Advanced into the Mark Degree, perhaps they consider one must first prepare the Keystone before you can wrench it forth.

But we accept without exception that the very spring and fount of all English Freemasonry, the foundation on which it has been built for the last two hundred and ten years, are the Three Craft Degrees and including the Royal Arch. We have in today's Paper of Business amendments that demonstrate the closeness of the Craft and the Royal Arch.

The Royal Arch should never be considered a way to a means, a clear demonstration of commitment to progress is essential if a Brother and Companion is to understand and make a worthwhile contribution in the Companion Orders.

I would suggest that a Royal Arch Chapter provides one of the most memorable experiences in Freemasonry, after the Brothers' Initiation, when during the Exaltation ceremony the blindfold is removed and the secret vault is revealed to his view.

An active participation in a Royal Arch Chapter is an essential ingredient in qualifying for membership of at least five of the Orders of Freemasonry administered by Mark Masons Hall.

I firmly believe the various Orders of Freemasonry beyond the Craft should never be rushed, too much too soon leads to confusion in the early years of the Masonic shared experience. And should always be in balance with domestic and civil responsibilities.

Membership of any Masonic order from the very start should be regarded as a privilege to which we can make a worthwhile contribution.

I always remind Mark Lodges, Provinces and Mark Grand Lodge of that fact - because active participation in our Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters will identify those Brethren who may qualify by their active participation to make further Masonic discoveries. And in every case GLMMM supports that responsibility.

I am pleased to note that recently the Mark Provincial Grand Master for London with the support of the Metropolitan Grand Master has held Royal Arch awareness meetings for Mark Masons. In which I know he has and will emphasise that The Royal Arch should be considered an integral part of the Brethren's understanding of the route their Masonic journey should take - again first and foremost the Three Degrees including the Royal Arch.

I repeat, it stands to reason we should be active Craft and Royal Arch Masons so that we can advise Brethren and Companions on the next logical routes available to them which their curiosity, inclination and personal circumstances in life will allow them to pursue on their Masonic journey.

Of course I hope that an awareness of the Orders beyond the Craft will be permitted and explained in Craft Lodges as well as those Orders requiring Royal Arch membership, but I believe it is incumbent within those Orders beyond the Craft to emphasise in their own respective Lodges, Preceptories, Conclaves and Councils that their Orders cannot succeed without a strong and prosperous Craft.

It cannot be denied that the various Orders offer further opportunity for Brethren to serve, excel, and exercise their talents either as ritualists or administrators.

It is essential that in Provinces and Districts there is a regular and programmed round table dialogue between the Heads of all the Orders. By that I mean equal partners working for the good of Freemasonry - as there now clearly exists and is hereby demonstrated between the United Grand Lodge of England and the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons together with the Companion Orders.