



## **Provincial Grand Master's Address 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025**

Brethren, once again a very warm welcome to you all.

Having already welcomed our distinguished guests many of whom have travelled long distances to be with us; I take this opportunity to thank the Provinces represented here today for the warmth of their welcome and the most generous hospitality we receive when attending your Annual Meetings.

We trust your time spent with us today will be equally enjoyable and memorable.

I am as ever greatly appreciative of the work undertaken by my Deputy, and the Assistant Provincial Grand Master and I know our Lodges are always pleased to see them particularly on the evening of an Installation.

While today is a special occasion for the Brethren being appointed or promoted; I must first thank those officers who are retiring today having supported the Executive and myself during the last twelve months. Your contribution has been well received by the Lodges, and has added greatly to the occasion, and enjoyment of the meetings you have attended.

Brethren, I'm sure, you have noticed there have been a number of changes in senior Provincial appointments. The Province has to move forward, succession planning must be thought through, policy and procedures need to be regularly reviewed, and, when the time is right, appropriate changes made.

The Provincial Secretary W Bro Rob Evans, the Treasurer W Bro Chris Robbins, the Director of Ceremonies W Bro Barry Jordan-Davies, and the Mentor W Bro David Little are standing down today, while the Charity Steward, W Bro Clive Emerson is moving to a new role.

I have the greatest respect for each of them as men and as Freemasons, I cannot thank them enough for their contribution in assisting with the smooth running of the Province. I am acutely aware of the support, commitment and dedication they have given to this Province during their term in office.

Brethren you are a credit to yourselves, your Lodges and the Province and you have earned the respect and esteem of the Members.

To those who have received honours today, whether Present or Past, I congratulate you all, and would remind you, that any honour conferred, whether Grand or Provincial rank, reflects what you have done, what you are doing, and what you will be doing in the future. Just filling an Office is not the same as being proactive, you must step up, lead by example, guide, support and encourage your members. It is also part of your duty to assist in the implementation of change as necessary as Freemasonry moves forward.

Brethren, having just mentioned Grand Rank, I am sure you would wish to join with me, in congratulating those who were appointed and promoted in Grand Rank in April, several of whom now hold or, have held Senior Active appointments within the Provincial Team.

- W Bro Steve Lee to Past Junior Grand Deacon
- W Bros Rob Evans and Barry Jordan-Davis to Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
- W Bros Alan Colman, Ian Lever and Richard Wright to Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearers, and
- W Bro Des Morgan who received a promotion to Past Junior Grand Deacon.

They are all well-deserved honours.

Brethren the Visiting Officer's scheme in our Province has been in place for a number of years with many different variants. I understand the need for a Visiting Officers scheme in a large Province having many Lodges and a large membership. While covering a large geographical area; we in Wiltshire are neither, we are quite small in comparison, more akin to a close knit family of Brothers.

Since my appointment as Provincial Grand Master I have regularly reviewed the Visiting Officers' Scheme and made changes as necessary. However, following my most recent review, I have made the decision to amend the Visiting Officers' Scheme and utilise my authority under Rule 124 Book of Constitutions. This allows me to send any of my Provincial Officers, present or past, to visit any Lodge in our Province, whenever I feel it appropriate to do so,

and that Visiting Officer shall be given the courtesy to be placed on the immediate right of the presiding Brother.

I take this opportunity to thank each of the Visiting Officers that have supported the Province over the last three years. You are indeed a credit to yourselves having undertaken your appointment with great dignity, and in true masonic spirit. I trust that you have enjoyed your time as a Visiting Officer, moreover, should I at any future time call upon you, that you will be willing to undertake a similar duty on my behalf.

Brethren I am aware of instances that have been out of character from that expected of a Freemason. Our teachings, rules and regulations, if they are to mean anything, clearly require us, to maintain the highest standards in our private and public lives, and therefore it is only right that we should expect the same high standards of compliance, integrity, kindness and honesty, within our Lodges.

Brethren you should not need reminding there is no such thing as a Private Lodge, it is a Warranted Lodge, I therefore once again, direct your attention to, and expect compliance with, your Bylaws, the Book of Constitutions and the booklet Information for the Guidance of Members of the Craft. Brethren let's not forget we have all affirmed our unqualified assent to act and abide by the ancient usages and established customs of the order.

Let's show a little more empathy and respect to each other. As a member of a Lodge we are part of a team, we should all be working together, there is no place for any individual to hold entitlement over the membership of any Lodge. Maintaining harmony in the Lodge is essential if we are to remain successful and enjoy our Freemasonry.

Brethren, as you mingled and passed through the foyer today, you would not have failed to notice the display board, Wiltshire Freemasons, "Building Together", the latest initiative from UGLE.

This is the harmonisation of the Members' Pathway and Archway into one single resource, offering a clear and coherent path for candidates and members alike. A tool to create stronger and more vibrant Lodges and Chapters, resulting in happier and more engaged members.

"Building Together" is aligned with the Membership Strategy, and One Journey, One Organisation. It is important that candidates are made aware

they are not just joining a Lodge but joining Freemasonry on a journey that spans four stages. Three in a Craft Lodge and one in a Royal Arch Chapter, only then will they, or you, if you have not already done so, complete the journey in Pure Antient Masonry.

In order to reinforce the meaning and continuity of the Masonic experience for the new Mason, there are going to be three special readings that describe a Mason's progress following an Initiation, Passing and Raising; yes Brethren, they will be read, this, however, does not give you and your Lodge licence to read the ceremony as a whole.

It is important that our Candidates are furnished with the relevant information and booklets at the appropriate stages of their Masonic journey, this includes during the presentation of a Grand Lodge Certificate, where reference is made to the Royal Arch. I expect Lodges to present a copy of the "Discover More" booklet at the conclusion of a Brother's Raising. If we have looked after the Candidate properly through the early stages of his journey and raised his awareness of the fourth part of his journey, only then will we be able to say "Welcome Companion" you have now completed your journey in Pure Antient Freemasonry.

Let us not forget there are other Masonic Orders beyond the Craft that we must respect and support when time and circumstances permit. Many of us here today are members of one or more of these Orders from which we gain immense pleasure.

Brethren we are all but half way through the Wiltshire 2028 Festival, and I am thankful for your continued support of the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

In the last 12 months, we have witnessed a number of very different fund raising events, an auction of promises, a 44 mile cycle ride, not for the faint hearted I have been told, and the recent expedition to the summit of Mount Toubkal in Morocco. Brethren there is much fun and, dare I say pain, to be had in fund raising, above all there is surely a great deal of satisfaction at having achieved so much

At the time of drafting my address, there are 6 Lodges I must congratulate on having reached and exceeded their goal, The Lodge of Concord; Wiltshire Lodge of Fidelity; The Border Lodge; Stonehenge Lodge; Highworth Lodge and the Downton Lodge. This is a tremendous achievement equally matched by the

generous donations of individual units from the Royal Arch and other Masonic Orders.

Brethren we may be in Festival but I once again congratulate you again, as year on year, this Province has exceeded its giving to non-masonic local charities. In addition the MCF has awarded Grants totalling £113k in support of Wiltshire Freemasons and their families as well as £195k to Wiltshire charities.

Brethren, giving, giving of our time, skills, knowledge, and experiences can justly be said to reflect your commitment to the principle of Community Engagement, the Third Pillar of the 2022 Strategy. By ensuring, we as Freemasons, are engaging with our local communities we promote the happy and beneficial effects of our institution. Incidentally, these skill sets should also be exercised in our Lodges.

Further to the 2022 Strategy and the Membership Challenge I can report for this year the Province has achieved a net gain of 54 new members. This is encouraging, however engagement and especially retention are of equal importance to attraction. I believe this is an area in which we can and must improve. Brethren this is in your hands and that of your Lodges.

Brethren, throughout the year there is so much work undertaken by the Executive that you never see, neither could you imagine the time and commitment given by them to the running of the Province, so I take this opportunity to acknowledge their support both to myself and this Province. They deserve a huge debt of gratitude, I believe you know who they are.

Today's event could not possibly have happened without the huge amount of work by so many behind the scenes. The Secretariat, Director of Ceremonies, and Communication teams, I include W Bro Lever for the production of the entrance display and information boards, not forgetting, those Lodges under whose banners we are meeting today, the Lansdowne Lodge No.626, The Border Lodge No.3129 and Wiltshire Lodge of Agriculture No.9090. I thank you all.

Finally, Brethren, I, once more, thank every one of you for your support over the last year as well as your attendance here today, and I look forward to welcoming you to Marlborough on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December for Carols at Christmas.

As always, I look forward with great optimism to serving this wonderful Province as your Provincial Grand Master in the year ahead. Brethren I thank you for your

attention and trust that The Great Architect of the Universe will keep you safe and be with you all.