

ADDRESS 2

Companions it has been a very long day
I will not detain you for longer than I must

For those waiting to make a last minute entry into the sweep on the length
of my address
It is 8 pages long printed in 14 point and double spaced.

Companions, again I must thank you all for attending in such wonderful
numbers. I have already introduced our Distinguished Guests and I thank
them again for their support today.

I must begin by congratulating all those who have been appointed or
promoted to Provincial Grand Rank. I remind you all that your
preferment is not only recognition of past services but should be regarded
as an opportunity and incentive for further service to Royal Arch
Masonry.

In total today I have promoted or appointed 110 Companions. This I
hope clearly confirms our on-going intention to reduce the backlog of
promotions we would like to make.

I must congratulate in particular our new Deputy Grand Superintendent
and Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals on their appointments.

Companions I am very fortunate to have such a strong team to support me
and I am sure you will want to join me in wishing them good fortune and
good health to enjoy their very important positions.

On your behalf I have great pleasure in expressing our great gratitude to
the retiring M E Grand Superintendent, Ex Companion Richard Brian
Ward Price. Richard has worked tirelessly in promoting Royal Arch
Masonry in Worcestershire and representing us throughout the Order
generally. We are all aware that Richard has not enjoyed the best of
health in recent months. The problems stemming from his most recent
surgery have prevented him from being with us this afternoon and have
prohibited me from thanking him personally today. I will however at the
first opportunity convey to him our best wishes for a speedy recovery and
a happy return on the Golf Course!

I must also on your behalf thank the retiring Deputy Grand Superintendent, Ex Companion Michael Broome. Michael has served this Province well in a number of roles and we thank him for his positive contribution over many years.

And of course today we have installed a new Third Prov Grand Principal and therefore must say farewell to Ex Comp Jeremy Mallin. Jeremy has fulfilled his duties in an exemplary manner and we thank him for his commitment over the last 12 months. But fear not Companions you will be seeing Jeremy on duty again around the Province.

You have already been informed that at the meeting of Supreme Grand Chapter on the 29th of April a number of our Companions will receive promotion in or appointment to Grand Rank.

Ex Comp Michael Broome promoted to P G Swd B
Ex Comp Norman Burden to P A G Soj
And Ex Comp Michael Guest to P A G Soj

With Ex Companions Roger West and Dr. Feramerz Minwalla both appointed to P G Std B

I make no apology for repeating this as Grand Rank is a great distinction and worthy of note and we congratulate all these Companions and hope that they will enjoy their new responsibilities.

Recruitment and retention are two issues which continue to be a challenge to all the Orders in Freemasonry, the Royal Arch is no exception and we must use all our efforts to ensure that our Order is attractive to both new and existing members.

The scheme for Royal Arch Representatives in all Craft Lodges is now established and beginning to show results. I charge all of you to be active and supportive in your Lodges to encourage Brethren to enter this most important Order in Freemasonry.

I am pleased to welcome again our Provincial Grand Master, Right Wor Bro Richard Goddard and thank him for his support and encouragement and to pledge our on-going support for the 2011 Appeal. A year to go Companions, please urge the members of your Chapters to support the Appeal over the remaining few months.

There are many people I must thank for making today run so smoothly.

The Provincial Office, in particular our Prov G S E, Ex Comp Michael Cole and the Assistant S E, Ex Comp Ian Fothergill.

The Host Chapters and the Prov G Stewards for their hard work

And I must not forget the Prov G D C and his team for the organisation of what has been a very long and busy day.

That Companions completes all I have to say
Except...

I think I should share with you my feelings about today and the future of Royal Arch Masonry in Worcestershire.

I am very proud to be a Worcestershire Freemason. Freemasonry has given me so much over the last 37 years and to have the opportunity to give something back is a great privilege.

I firmly believe that The Holy Royal Arch is a very important Order in Freemasonry and serves a pivotal role in the whole Masonic structure.

It places the teachings of the 3 Craft Degrees into the context of our relationship with God and in that sense completes the Third Degree. But it also provides the foundation for our further investigation and discoveries along the road to Masonic Light or in today's terms the Meaning of Life.

As Freemasons we are enjoined from the start of our Masonic careers to think seriously about the purpose of life. The Royal Arch offers us the opportunity to do this. Chapters will only flourish and grow if the Companions appreciate that there is purpose and meaning to the Order that is relevant to them today.

The problem it seems to me Companions, is that through a series of changes to our Rites and Ceremonies over the last 300 years driven by political and pragmatic pressures, Royal Arch has become one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult Order to comprehend and understand and therefore appreciate and enjoy.

We are rightly proud of the standard of ritual and ceremonial in this Province. But though ceremonial may attract interest it can rarely convert attention into understanding and so into enthusiasm and ultimately into enjoyment.

We must all strive for a better understanding of our Order – its important principles and messages. Only then can we with enthusiasm encourage Brethren to join us and remain with us.

We must take this Supreme Order seriously, to practice our ritual with due solemnity, its messages are weighty and significant, but this will not prevent our meetings from being happy, cheerful and relaxed, rather it should enhance our pleasure in them.

Whenever I return from a Masonic Meeting my wife asks me “Did you have a good evening?”

My aim, Companions, is that when you are asked that question on your return the answer will be:

“Good ceremony, good Candidate, good companionship – a really good night!”

We can only achieve this through an increased understanding of this Order and a willingness to enjoy it.

Companions I believe that this Order will only flourish if the members of it experience enjoyment from both the ritual and the companionship.

You will not be surprised that I do not have a great list of new initiatives to announce today but my Executive and I are already planning new programmes and events designed to increase understanding, involvement and enjoyment for all of us.

I see the Worcestershire Installed First Principals Chapter as a key channel of communication within the Province and aim to make a number of announcements at our Meeting in June.

Companions I feel very proud and honoured to serve you as your Grand Superintendent.

I will do everything in my power to ensure that Royal Arch Masonry flourishes in the Province of Worcestershire.

I look forward to meeting with you in your Chapters and with your support we will enjoy the unique Companionship that only Royal Arch Masonry can bring.

I thank you for your attention.