



The Provincial Grand Lodge of Somerset

The Provincial Grand Master David Lloyd Jenkins Report to the Annual Grand Lodge Meeting 2nd April 2009

The Annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge is one of the most important events in the Province's calendar and it's therefore very good to see so many of you supporting it, especially our many guests who have given generously of their time and travelled many miles to be with us.

As always, the climax of the day is the appointment and investiture of Brethren to Provincial Grand Rank. For many it is their first appointment; for others a well earned promotion. In either case it is in recognition of work well done and an expression of confidence that the new rank, and with it new responsibilities, will encourage those so honoured to use their experience and talents to the benefit and welfare of their own Lodges and to provide encouragement and guidance to newer members. Also to accept and welcome the new opportunity to aid the work of the Craft in general and this Province in particular. I extend my congratulations and best wishes to each one of them.

Our congratulations are also extended to those who have been honoured by the MW GM with appointments to Grand Rank in both the Craft and Holy Royal Arch, and who will be invested later this month.

W.Bro.Chris Shrapnel. AGPurs. An active rank in appreciation of the sterling work he has undertaken in connection with Adelphi at UGLE now being used by some 30 Provinces to date.

W.Bro.David Irish PAGDC. Secretary of the Somerset Masters' Lodge

W.Bro.John Bennett, Grand Superintendent to PDepGSwdB

and

W.Bro.John Winston to PJGD. Provincial Grand Almoner for the past 11 years in which capacity he has been the most marvellous custodian of the welfare of those seeking assistance from our Masonic Charities.

And in Supreme Grand Chapter:

E.Comp.Bob Moore to PGStdB and a promotion for

E.Comp.Robert Biggs to PGSwdB

To those who have completed their year in active office in the Province go my warm thanks for their support and loyalty. We have enjoyed their company and hope the year has provided them with good memories. Our two Wardens have been wonderful ambassadors and travelled the Province extensively, receiving a warm welcome at the Lodges they have visited.

The Provincial Office at Wedmore is always busy and on your behalf I thank our Provincial Grand Secretary, his Assistant Secretary and team, including our secretary Pauline Smith, for all they do in their administrative role. The

same sentiment applies to our Provincial Reference Book team, the Editor of Compass, our Provincial Information and Communications team including the Provincial Information Officer and Provincial Grand Mentor, and in a very successful first year, our Provincial Grand Orator who had delivered 19 Orations to date. Also our very grateful thanks go to our Provincial Director of Music and the musicians and choristers of St.Cecilia Lodge and our Provincial Grand Organist; today W.Bro.Ivan Cottrell, for the magnificent musical support given at our Provincial ceremonies and at the Somersetshire Lodge in London, and finally to the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team for keeping us all in order.

Royal Cumberland Lodge No.41 held a number of events to celebrate their 275th Anniversary last year with the actual anniversary meeting attended by the Junior Grand Warden Sir Norman Lloyd Edwards; now PGM of South Wales. A number of other events were held concurrently within the Province to mark 275 years of Masonry in Somerset with Bridgwater Lodges in particular arranging four successful fundraising endeavours. This resulted in a boat being purchased for the Somerset Youth and Community Sailing Assn and a defibrillator being provided for public use in the centre of Bridgwater.

In June last year we held the biennial Cathedral Service at Wells when I was able to present the Dean and Chapter with a gift of £60K from the Freemasons of Somerset and their families (incl. £10K from the Grand Charity) to be used (at the Cathedral's suggestion) for re-opening the Pilgrim's Porch after 200 years. The Cathedral has further allowed two Porchstones to be placed in the Porch (now the main entrance to the building) suitably engraved with the Provincial Crests in each corner. These stones have been made and presented by W.Bro.Alwyn Leek, a highly skilled and gifted craftsman to whom we are indebted. It's very interesting to think that the millions of people who will cross the threshold of Wells Cathedral for many hundreds of years into the future will walk over those stones. I hope all our Brethren and guests will take a good look at them if and when they visit the City of Wells.

The collection taken at Wells Cathedral last June raised £1300 in aid of the Somerset Community Foundation who, with Quartet (the Community Foundation operating in the north of the County) are here with us today. They provide help for those affected by poverty, exclusion and deprivation in Somerset with SCF alone providing over £2M worth of assistance in its six years of operation. At present the Community Foundations are raising money for their endowment funds in the Government's Grassroots Challenge, in SCF's case on a match funding of ratio of 1 to 1. This is a marvellous opportunity for donors to double their money and perhaps consider a named fund through which to apply their funding. It would be an ideal vehicle for Lodges in their community fundraising endeavours and dovetail well with Masonic charitable objectives. I commend its work to you and your Lodges.

Turning to the matter of Masonic Charities it was announced at the Charity Meeting earlier today that Somerset would be hosting the 2020 Festival for the Grand Charity. You are all well aware of the valuable work carried out by this most important of Masonic Charities both within the Craft and in support of non-Masonic charities. Likewise the assistance it provides whenever and wherever there are disasters in the world - a truly international charity of which we can all be immensely proud. It's really too early to be talking about the

level of support we might be able to give in 2020, but as a parallel for thought - in the 14 years between 2007 and 2020 the Brethren and families of this Province are likely to receive some £3M in support from the Masonic Charities. You will recall that the £2.5M in support we received in the years leading up to the 2007 Festival acted as a benchmark that we were able to meet through the generosity of you all. It maybe that the Brethren would like to see a similar sort of benchmark adopted as a commitment and objective for 2020. We have 11 years in which to raise funds but, as I said last year, our approach will be very different this time and within a new culture of giving. This will hopefully see all Brethren in the Province giving on a regular basis by Gift Aid through their Lodge and onwards to the designated Provincial Festival Fund. If every Brother in this Province committed to £1 per week for the duration of the Festival we could achieve £3m by 2020 without any additional Festival Fundraising.

We have now completed the planned re-arrangement of the Provincial Grand Lodge Benevolent Fund. This was necessary in order to bring the Fund into line with present day requirements and enable us to expand its activities. The new fund is called The Somerset Masonic Charity and is both a registered Company and registered Charity. The old Benevolent Fund is not being wound up because it is still needed to receive legacies specifically given to it. However, it will be consolidated with the Somerset Masonic Charity, which will be its Trustee. The day to day running of the Charity will be the responsibility of a Management Committee headed by the Provincial Grand Charity Steward and includes four Lodge Charity Stewards (appointed in rotation) who, in turn, have been allocated a number of Lodges with whom they will liaise. I believe this will achieve the objective of bringing the Charity closer to Lodges.

UGLE has recently sent all Lodge Secretaries a copy of rules that should be applied in handling Charity Accounts and emphasising the importance of treating charitable monies correctly. It includes various details of best practice but I would particularly draw attention to the need for Brethren to be told for what purpose a Raffle or Draw is being held, before it takes place. This will allow Brethren to make an informed choice; not have their generosity taken for granted and is simply good manners.

Please support Cadogan Court again this by buying their Programme for the Summer Fair. To those who gave support last year either in person or by providing produce a big thank you. It allowed the Dep.PGM and his team to raise over £3500 – a splendid achievement. Also splendid is the magnificent figure of some £145K raised by Lodges for local causes during the past year. Such generosity to those who need a helping hand shows Masonry is its real colours – an organisation whose heart is expanded by benevolence.

The new History of the Province is making progress but considerable re-working of the photography has put the project back and we shall have to wait a while longer to see the finished article. In the meantime the new Provincial Initiates Guide and supporting booklets for the three degrees are in wide circulation and proving to be immensely useful while the Provincial website has a new Editor eager to provide us and the rest of the world with news and information.

It's marvellous to be meeting under the new Provincial Banner presented to

PGL this time last year and dedicated at Backwell Lodge in October. Our thanks go to the Peters family for making this possible and in addition for presenting a smaller version of the Banner to the Province at The Somersetshire Lodge last month. This replica banner is ideally sized for easy transportation and will be very useful.

Before closing I would like to express our gratitude to W.Bro. Keith Britton and his hard working team who have prepared everything so well here at the Winter Gardens; to St.Kew Lodge for the use of their furniture and to the management and staff of the centre for the great help and assistance they always provide.

We're frequently reminded that Masonry is full of new beginnings and change, no more so than the recent Installation of the new Pro and Deputy Grand Masters, and here today as the Province starts out on a new Masonic year. We have seen the Craft become more open, interesting and accessible to the requirements and needs of the 21st century through publications and the internet; by schemes designed to make Masonry vibrant and relevant to existing and new members alike such as Mentoring, Orations, the Universities scheme and it seems that these changes are having the desired effect. The last Quarterly Communication recorded the fact that GL Certificates issued last year exceeded the previous year; the second time in five years that there had been a rise. In the Province we have seen the number of proposals for candidates maintained at a high level; ranging in ages from 18 to 87 and with an average in the mid 40's. I am convinced that the vast majority of these new members stem from friendships made with our Brethren and their families through social events, ladies nights and gentlemen's evenings and that '*a favourable opinion pre-conceived of the institution*' really is a tenet proving to be a major attraction to the Craft and all it stands for. As Lord Northampton commented in one of his addresses recently 'we spend too much time worrying about *when*' rather than *why*' we were created. I suggest those who are now being attracted to join the Craft have found out *why* and will enjoy the discovery of everything else on their journey - with our help. It's self-evident that this is what the writers of our rituals had in mind when they developed the Freemasonry we know and love; as a progressive science leading from darkness and ignorance to light and knowledge and blossoming in wisdom and enlightenment.

Thank you all for being here today. May the Grand Design of Freemasonry always be foremost in your thoughts, words and deeds? Please be happy and communicate happiness.