



The District Grand Prefect's Address to District Grand Council



Good morning and welcome Brethren - we would have been meeting at Croydon Masonic Centre today for our 14th Annual meeting for the District of Surrey but due to the Covid restrictions alternative arrangements have had to be made. So may I begin by thanking you all for joining in on this Zoom meeting with a special thanks to our Grand Master, our Deputy Grand Master and our Grand Secretary. Whilst this may not be the preferred choice for some it has been a blessing that we have been able to stay in touch with each other as well as carry out some business and social gatherings meetings via the Zoom facility.

For obvious reasons there hasn't been too many changes from last year with the appointment of our District Grand Officers so congratulations one and all. I will be visiting each Council in the District during the coming year when time and circumstances permit, and I invite you to join us on these visits. I do however appreciate that you are all very busy in your private and Masonic lives so there is no pressure but I will be delighted to see you if you can make some if not all the official visits. Please also remember that if anyone wishes to keep me company on my future visits to other Annual District meetings rest assured you will be made more than welcome.

My congratulations also to those who have received appointments and promotions in Grand Rank; namely W.Bro. Trevor Currans, promotion to Past Grand Senior Deacon; W.Bro. John Coleman and W.Bro. Terry Carpenter, both first appointments to Past Grand Standard Bearer. Plus, W.Bro. Simon McCarthy first appointment to Past Grand Sword Bearer (via London). It was such a shame that the Annual Meeting of Grand Council at Freemasons Hall was cancelled due to Covid, albeit we will see each other soon and celebrate together.

In my previous addresses my key word is and will always be **enjoyment** because if we enjoy our wonderful order why would we not only continue to do so, but also encourage other Mark Master Masons to do the same by joining us? The good news Brethren is that during this difficult period, having missed many meetings we managed to welcome in four new members and two joining members albeit we have unfortunately lost seven members, for reasons beyond our control, plus one through passing. I congratulate and thank those councils that recruited new members and we can only hope for a bumper year when things return to normal.

My key words for most of this year have been **contact and support** so thank you all for staying in touch with each other during this pandemic. It is amazing the different ways, we can stay in touch via social media platforms such as Zoom, Twitter, emails, WhatsApp, Instagram - the list is endless but please do not forget the old-fashioned telephone. I can say first-hand how lovely and rewarding it is to receive or make a call especially to someone not expecting it - so thank you again and remember brethren **it is good to talk!**

Brethren, our District Grand Treasurer, W.Bro. Gerry Yockney, has this year decided to retire. Gerry, you have guided us so well since day one and we are in good shape to-day because of all your hard work, I cannot thank you enough. Don't forget though that if you get a little bored having freed up some of your precious time; you could always consider joining another council.....just a thought! Our new District Grand Treasurer who is Master Elect for Godalming Council will be Bro. Ray Seeley who is not only extremely skilled to take this office but is also very well known to us all as the Provincial Grand Treasurer in the Mark - thank you Ray, I look forward to working with you.

Our Web Site is a great source of information and I encourage you not only to log on so as to catch up with all of the news but also to send in any articles and pictures – there must be lots of members who deserve a mention for doing things above and beyond the call of duty during this pandemic, Our Deputy District Grand Prefect, Bob Tuthill, would be only too pleased to add onto your web site! Also a big thank you to Bro. Chris Eley for the support you give to the website, which is greatly appreciated.

It was unfortunate that we had to cancel our Annual Hog Roast event this year. It would have been another sell out, but worry not we will make up for it next year on **Sunday the 11th July 2021**. I have been assured by our Past District Grand Prefect that he will be continuing to take full responsibility for the weather and that it will be another glorious sunny day....and a reminder from him that he hasn't been wrong yet.....about the weather that is!

A lot of people have worked extremely hard to put today together and I offer my sincere thanks to all of them, particularly the District Grand Secretary, W.Bro. Alan Brockwell, and the Assistant District Grand Secretary, W.Bro Graham Beer. Our District Grand Director of Ceremonies has been able to put his feet up this year and relax; albeit one person who definitely hasn't had that luxury is Bro. Tim Ford who has looked after all of the technical requirements for this meeting to take place this morning, thank you again Tim!

The Charity collection at this Meeting today will be going into the District Benevolent Fund. Thank you all for your generosity, thereby enabling us to support some local worthy causes and continue to support the Surrey Mark 2022 Festival.

Brethren, I look forward to seeing you again just as soon as we can get back to regular meetings and reiterate my thanks and appreciation to you all for staying in contact and supporting each other; please keep up the good work. The District Meeting next year will be held at Croydon Masonic Halls on the first Saturday in December which will be **the 4th of December 2021** so please make a note in your diary. Brethren stay safe and keep well and I finish by wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. Thank you for the kind attention you have given to my address – and may the Great Disposer Of All have you in his Holy Keeping now and forever.

RW.Bro. John V C French

District Grand Prefect

5th December 2020