



District Grand Prefect's Address to District Grand Council

Brethren all, it is now my honour to address you for the 7th time at this our 17th Annual Meeting since the District of Surrey was formed here at Croydon out of the old District of Southern Counties.

It is so nice to see so many people here today and thank you all for your support, especially our Past Deputy Grand Master who is always most welcome in Surrey and whose company we enjoy immensely. Thank you for honouring us with your presence Sir.

An important part of all Freemasonry is visiting, which continues to be the case especially during these difficult times; so thank you again to our many guests, whether travelling from near or far. It is very much appreciated by us all that you have given up your precious time to support our District meeting. We look forward to your company at our Festive Board and hope that you will enjoy your time with us. I must also take this opportunity to add my sincere thanks for the generous hospitality which we receive around the country when we visit other Districts.

Brethren, as well as generosity we are also well known and admired for our Brotherly Love. Can I ask that we all continue to make a huge effort to stay in close contact with one another regularly. I believe that we are all Almoners and as there could be difficult times ahead for some of our members let's be as supportive as we can and by staying in contact with each other is the very first thing we should do. If someone has not attended a meeting just call them to ensure they are fit and well and remind them how much we are looking forward to seeing them at our next meeting. I can tell you from my own experience that an unexpected phone call received can bring the recipient so much joy! Our members are precious to us so let's ensure we look after each other. Please let me know if you are aware of any member experiencing difficulties for one reason or another and remember Brethren "It's good to talk" and long may that continue!

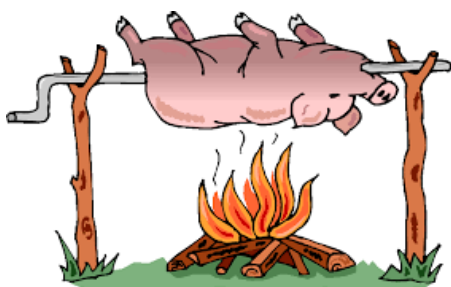


I congratulate all the Officers whom I have been pleased to appoint or promote with District Grand Rank today. I hope you will all enjoy your year in Office, and if possible be able to support most of the Official Visits this coming year. I can assure you that it is not only appreciated by myself and our Deputy District Grand Prefect but also all the councils who gratefully enjoy our company. If any of our members would also like to attend, I can also assure you that you will also be made most welcome.



On another note, I will ask our District Grand Secretary to send out the dates of other Annual District Meetings around the country which you may like to consider attending. As Bob's chauffeur there is always room in my car for another two, again Brethren there is no pressure to attend, albeit your company would be greatly appreciated by one and all.

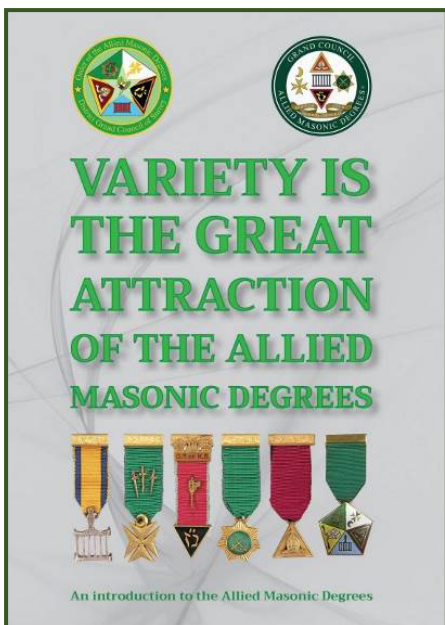
I would also like to congratulate the Brethren who received Appointment or Promotion in Grand Rank at the Annual Meeting of Grand Council at Great Queen Street. It was a lovely meeting which unfortunately I was unable to attend but it was well supported, and my congratulations go out to W.Bro. Alan Brockwell, Promotion to Past Grand Junior Deacon; as well as First appointments to W.Bro. Simon Polkinghorne and W.Bro. Mark Guzam to Past Grand Standard Bearers. I do congratulate them all for these well-deserved appointments.



This year's Hog Roast was another great success, sold out to capacity, raising lots of money from the raffle and yes brethren he did it again our Past District Grand Prefect ensured that the sun shone all day – how does he do that brethren? "is there no end to his talents"!! Thanks again to those that attended and brethren, please put next year's date in your diaries which is the 14th of July 2024. Bro Kevin Brennan is organising this event again and I thank Kevin for his hard work in ensuring that our Hog Roast is not only well supported but also an extremely enjoyable family day out.

The Web Site – 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 articles and pictures which the Deputy District Grand Prefect, W.Bro. Bob Tuthill, will be pleased to add to your web site. Brother Secretaries, please also do not forget to let our District Grand Secretary know what degrees you will be doing at your meetings by sending him a copy of your summons.

Our Past District Grand Senior Warden (*who is sometimes known as the DGP – that is District Grand Photographer*) will be attending all the Official Visits and other meetings with his ever-ready camera so that he can spread the happiness and joy we share at our meetings, through our web site and of course The Surrey Gridiron. Chris I'm sure you do not need to be reminded but I thank you again for the hard work and commitment that you give to our wonderful order, which is very much appreciated by us all.



As well as the napkins, the trifold flyer, and the pens which I hope you will continue to use to promote our order and encourage new members to join, V.W.Bro Mik Barnes has put together a booklet which we have had printed called “Variety is the Great Attraction of the Allied Masonic Degrees”. It is very informative and will give potential candidates a better knowledge of the Allied Masonic Degrees. These will be distributed again to your secretaries and put on display in our Masonic Centres – thank you again V.W.Bro. Mik.

Also, remember Brethren that we have been very fortunate to have had the full support of our Past Provincial Grand Master in the Mark to promote our Order at Mark meetings, so please take full advantage of this by spreading the word and wearing your Allied napkins at each Mark festive board and seemingly the new Provincial Grand Master is OK about it as well. Brethren what this does is to create awareness and hopefully a conversation about the beauty of the Allied Masonic degrees. The good news brethren is that we have welcomed in 8 new members and 6 joining members this year, albeit we have unfortunately lost 5 members, for reasons beyond our control.

I congratulate and thank those councils that have recruited new members with a special thanks to Surrey Council No 64 who have hardly ever had a meeting without admitting a new candidate – please keep up the good work! To those who have not managed to recruit, please let me know how we can help you in any way to reverse that trend.

Brethren, District Meetings do not just happen. A lot of people have worked extremely hard to put everything together today for our enjoyment. and I offer my sincere thanks to all of them, particularly the District Grand Secretary W.Bro. Alan Brockwell and his team; the District Grand Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro. Anton Smith and his team; W.Bro. Chris Craddock, who as always does so much work behind the scenes; and W.Bro. Ray Seeley who does so much work for us in addition to his duties as District Grand Treasurer.

W.Bro. Alan is retiring this year so this will be his last meeting as District Grand Secretary - being capably replaced by Bro. Trevor Sadler, whom you may remember brethren was the Provincial Grand Secretary for the Surrey Mark.

Alan, all the Surrey members and I thank you wholeheartedly for your hard work and dedication to your role as District Grand Secretary, we wish you well in semi-retirement. I say semi-retirement, as I know we can and I'm sure you will be called upon for your invaluable knowledge. Don't forget to tell Wendy that you're only getting a little bit of your diary back!

The Charity collection at this Meeting today will be going into the District Benevolent Fund, and because of your generosity, we will be able to support some very worthy causes.

The District Meeting next year will again be held here on the first Saturday in December which will be the 7th of December 2024 so please make a note in your diary.

I finish by wishing you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 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.

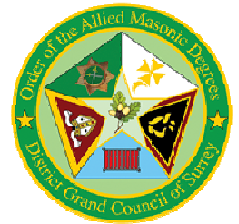


John V C French

District Grand Prefect
Saturday 2nd December 2023

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of Surrey in the Allied Masonic Degrees

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of Surrey took place on Saturday the 2nd of December at Croydon Masonic Hall.



Brethren of the District of Surrey and their guests started arriving from 9 am where they received a warm welcome from the reception team, before making their way into the lounge where tea, coffee, and bacon butties were being served.



There were many guests from other Districts, such as Kent....



... and Southern Counties.



As well as Heads of Other Orders in Surrey.





District Grand Council were honoured with the presence of the Past Deputy Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Clive Manuel, seen here with the District Grand Prefect, R.W.Bro. John V C French, and other Right Worshipful Brethren.





The R.W. Brethren, the Past Deputy Grand Master, and the District Grand Prefect entered in procession into District Grand Council.....

..... to music from our District Grand Organist, Bro. Bob Soper.



The District Grand Prefect opened District Grand Council and welcomed all the guests and visitors, especially the Past Deputy Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Clive Manuel.

After the regular business of the Council had been concluded, the District Grand Prefect announced that he had much pleasure in re-appointing W.Bro. Robert Gregory (Bob) Tuthill as his Deputy District Grand Prefect.



The District Grand Prefect appointed and invested the District Grand Officers of the year, and those promoted in Past District Grand Rank.



On appointing Bro. Trevor Sadler as the new District Grand Secretary our District Grand Prefect expressed his appreciation to W.Bro. Alan Brockwell for all he has done for the District over the past seven years as District Grand Secretary.



He then addressed District Grand Council. In his address he said that it was good to see so many Brethren present and thanked everyone for their support, especially our Past Deputy Grand Master who is always most welcome in Surrey, and whose company we enjoy immensely. He said that visiting is an important part of all Freemasonry, and thanked our guests for the generous hospitality which he and his team receive around the country when they visit other Districts.



The District Grand Prefect congratulated all the Officers whom he had been pleased to appoint or promote in District Grand Rank, hoping they will all enjoy their year in Office, and if possible be able to support the Official Visits this coming year. He also congratulated the Brethren who received Appointment or Promotion in Grand Rank at the Annual Meeting of Grand Council at Great Queen Street. He thanked the District Recorder and the District Grand Director of Ceremonies and their teams for ensuring today's meeting was a success, and finished by wishing everyone and their loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

District Grand Council was then closed in due form and the District Grand Prefect retired in procession from District Grand Council accompanied by District Grand Officers and Honoured Guests.



Greeting everyone on their way out from the Temple.



After a few group photos with the members of the other Districts.....



... we retired for refreshments where we were joined by Pat Crossan, the Provincial Prior of Surrey, a guest for lunch....

.... and W.Bro. Rufus who brought along W.Bro. Mark Bajona – his driver.



The Brethren of the District Grand Council of Surrey and their guests sat down to a splendid lunch at the Croydon Masonic Halls.







The Toast to the District Grand Prefect was given by W.Bro. Bob Tuthill, the Deputy District Grand Prefect.



He said how good it was to see John at the meeting after his health challenges over the past few months and presented him with one of his caricatures to remind him of his stay in hospital.



In his reply our District Grand Prefect thanked everyone for their support and best wishes over the past few months, and had much pleasure in presenting W.Bro. Alan Brockwell with gifts for him and Wendy in thanks for all he has done for the District while District Grand Secretary.

He then proposed the toast to the visitors thanking them again for their support for the District. R.W.Bro. Clive Manuel responded by saying it was always good to visit Surrey and wished John and his team all the best for the future.

After a most enjoyable day we all went on our way, looking forward to when we meet again.

Two Seagulls supporters surround a lone Chelsea man

The Holy Office of Grand High Priest

James Smith presents a Candidate's view of the evening

I will remember Tuesday 14th November for two reasons. As I set out for Redhill the sky opened and the roads swiftly filled with blocked drains, one of which I was the recipient of a lorry driving through at speed soaking my suit. Luckily, I was near enough to home to dash back and change. Arriving, in a dry state I went up to the temple room but needless to say I wasn't best pleased and not in the happiest of moods.



The second and most important reason I shall remember this day was being admitted to the Office of High Priest. The majority of the work being carried out by the Most Excellent President V.W.Bro. Eric Trodd, who delighted all who were there and left me trying to remember everything that was said, from the tongue twisting readings from the Chaplain, W.Bro. Bob Tuthill the Deputy District Grand Prefect, or the description of the battle of four kings against five. I apparently represented Abram returning from my journey after the battle of the kings and being received by Melchizedek. Of all the Allied degrees this one seemed the most complicated to carry out especially



when I was entrusted with the various signs, words, and grip - no less than ten!

The District Grand Prefect congratulated me on receiving the Holy Order of Grand High Priest and V.W. Bro Eric Trodd on performing such an excellent ceremony.



I must give my thanks to all the Brethren that made the evening so special for me because now I was very pleased and in the very happiest of moods.

A very full itinerary for the evening concluded with the election and induction of W.Bro. Alan Hall as the Worshipful Master for the ensuing year, who appointed his officers in a lovely manner. This was followed by R.W.Bro. John French, the District Grand Prefect discussing Recruitment and Retention and how the Surrey Hills Council deserved to have new members to witness what was a most enjoyable performance of the Holy Order of Grand High Priest Degree.

The Annual District meeting of London

Surrey was well represented at the Annual Meeting of the Allied Masonic Degrees District of London at Mark Masons Hall.

Our District Grand Prefect, R.W.Bro. John French, was accompanied by his Deputy W.Bro. Bob Tuthill, the Past District Grand Prefect for Surrey, R.W.Bro. Ray Hussey; the District Grand Secretary, W.Bro. Alan Brockwell; and the District Junior Warden, W.Bro. Derek Williamson.



An excellent meeting was presided over by the District Grand Prefect of London, R.W.Bro. Colin Woodcock, M.B.E., despite an Installation for a new District Grand Prefect for Cumberland and Westmorland, the meeting was well represented by District Grand Prefects and members from all over the country, and four new members were also present.

Another successful meeting for London with most enjoyable musical fanfares from Dougie Black the District Organist, and well organised by the District Grand Secretary Scott Cargill.



A wonderful festive board at Mark Masons Hall finished off the day well and I am sure we are all looking forward to attending next year.

