



A Tribute to R.W.Bro. Michael Whelan, District Grand Prefect of the Southern Counties



It is with sadness that we learnt of the passing of R.W.Bro. Mike Whelan. Mike, who was a member of Southern Cross Council No XIII, was the District Grand Prefect of the Southern Counties District having served as the Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Province of Dorset for many years. He also held senior ranks in many other Order.



We were delighted that R.W.Bro. Mike was able to attend our Annual Meeting in December and although unwell for some time he was hoping to be able to attend his last District Meeting in Botley. Sadly that was not to be as Mike passed away a few days before his meeting.



In April 2022 R.W.Bro. Mike brought along a coach load of Candidates from the Southern Counties to Surbiton for the Degree of the Red Cross of Babylon, as well as many Brethren of the Southern Counties to support them.

Along with his Deputy, V.W.Bro. Laurie Brooks, Mike joined Southern Cross Council No XIII in September 2022.

Mike, who was very pleasant in his manner and easy to get on with, will be sorely missed by all those who knew him.



The 2024 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of the Southern Counties



The 2024 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of the Southern Counties took place on Saturday the 3rd of February 2024 at the Masonic Hall, Botley, Hampshire. The day was tinged with sadness as the District Grand Prefect, R.W.Bro. Michael Whelan, had passed away a few days earlier.



Brethren of the District of the Southern Counties 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. R.W.Bro. Rufus brought along W.Bro. Mark Bajona – his driver.



There were many guests from other Districts, as well as the Pro Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, M.W.Bro. John H Prizeman.

The R.W. Brethren, and the Deputy District Grand Prefect in Charge, V.W.Bro. Lawrence Brooks, and District Officers entered in procession to music from the Organist, W.Bro. Matthew Burt.



The Deputy District Grand Prefect in Charge opened District Grand Council and welcomed all the guests and visitors from other Districts, as well as Heads of other Orders in Hampshire and surrounding Counties. A eulogy was given by W.Bro. Malcolm Lloyd, District Grand Chaplain, for R.W.Bro. Michael Whelan and other Brethren who has departed over the past year.

After the regular business of the Council had been concluded, the Deputy District Grand Prefect in Charge appointed and invested the District Grand Officers of the year, and those promoted in Past District Grand Rank.

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 at this sad time for the District of the Southern Counties.

He continued by giving a moving tribute to R.W.Bro. Mike, who will be missed by so many in this District, and around the country.



District Grand Council was then closed in due form and the Deputy District Grand Prefect in Charge retired in procession from District Grand Council accompanied by District Grand Officers and Honoured Guests, greeting everyone on their way out from the Temple.



The Brethren of the District Grand Council of the Southern Counties and their guests sat down to a splendid lunch at the Masonic Hall, Botley.

After a few group photos with the recently appointed Officers, and members of the other Districts, we retired for refreshments.



The Brethren of the District of the Southern Counties and their guests then departed their several ways following a very successful morning.

The Toast to the District was given by R.W.Bro. Richard Dunlevy, Past District Grand Prefect. The response on behalf of the District was by V.W.Bro. Laurance Brooks, Deputy District Grand Prefect in Charge.



West Midlands District Meeting



It was a 5am start for the Deputy District Grand Prefect on Saturday the 27th of January to attend the first District meeting of the new year.

Making his way to meet up with the District Grand Prefect's home in Hampshire they both travelled up to Burton on Trent for the West Midlands District Meeting. Being a crisp clear morning, they made very good time and covered the rest of the journey in a little over three hours in time for the customary coffee and bacon rolls.

The meeting was very well supported as being held in the middle of the country it attracted a lot of guests from Districts in the North and the South.

The District meeting of the Grand Council of West Midlands was very well presided over by R.W.Bro. Joe McCollum and his team, especially the Director of Ceremonies W.Bro. Kerry Parkes the Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies and well represented by the eleven Councils in the West Midlands. Our District Grand Prefect R.W.Bro. John French was delighted to catch up with his fellow District Grand Prefects.

The photo below shows him with R.W.Bro. Paul Snape, the District Grand Prefect of West Lancashire and R.W.Bro. Gene Earland, the District Grand Prefect of Sussex.



Also at the meeting were welcomed R.W.Bro. Frank Spencer, the Deputy Grand Master from the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons. and M.W.Bro. Andrew Sweeney, the Grand Supreme Ruler of the Order of the Secret Monitor.

Likewise, the Deputy District Grand Prefect Bob Tuthill enjoyed sharing information with his fellow deputies. The photo below shows Bob with W.Bro. Ian Taylor the Deputy District Grand Prefect of Sussex and W.Bro. Tony Edwards the Deputy District Grand Prefect of Essex.



The morning ended with a very tasty festive board after the meeting, held in a most convivial atmosphere.



GRAND COLLEGE *of* RITES *of the* UNITED STATES *of* AMERICA



Another Order for Simon Polkinghorne



Last week Bro. Simon Polkinghorne, was awarded the Knights Grand Cross of the Grand College of Rites, in Washington D.C.




The Grand College of Rites (*officially, the Grand College of Rites of the United States of America*) was established by nine Master Masons in Washington, D.C., on May 12, 1932, for the purpose of controlling and preventing the resurrection of abandoned and unauthorized rituals in the United States.

It collects these rituals from extinct organizations and prints them in an annual volume titled *Collectanea*, which is privately distributed to its own members.


Among the rituals over which the Grand College claims jurisdiction are those of the Egyptian Masonic Rite of Memphis, Ancient, Free, and Accepted Architects, Ancient and Primitive Rite, and others.

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Next Council Meeting Dates

The next Council meetings are:

On **Monday the 19th of February** at Croydon, Surrey Council will be conducting the **Red Cross of Babylon Ceremony**. For details contact Mike Neville mrmikeneville@aol.com

On **Tuesday the 2nd of April** at Sutton, Pride of Surrey Council will be conducting the **Grand Tilers of Solomon Ceremony** (provisional). For details contact Simon Polkinghorne

simonpolkinghorne@yahoo.co.uk

On **Wednesday the 17th of April** at Nutfield, Surrey Hills Council will be holding a **White Table for non-members**. For details contact Steve Harvey st.g.harvey@gmail.com

On **Wednesday the 24th of April** at Surbiton in the morning, Southern Cross Council will be conducting the **Red Cross of Babylon Ceremony**.

For details contact Ian Clark nelsclark@yahoo.co.uk