



Provincial Grand Master's Address

Provincial Grand Lodge

Detling

Saturday 30th September 2023

Today's meeting is not only to mark another year in the life of this Province but primarily and importantly we are here to congratulate those brethren, who have been appointed or promoted with Provincial rank. As always, you are reminded that these appointments are not only an acknowledgement of what you have accomplished in your respective Lodges, but more importantly there is an expectation to play an even more challenging role in the development of your Lodges and the Province in general.

Brethren moving on to Welfare we must always be mindful of the challenges of the real world around us all, including cost of living matters as well as the health and welfare of our fellow members, we need to remain focused on the future, there are many brethren who, for a myriad of reasons, no longer wish to (or can) drive at night. They would, however, still like to attend Lodge meetings. Keep an eye out for these brethren in your Lodge and offer them a lift, if you or another member of your Lodge are able to do so, please be proactive with this, do not wait to be asked, as sometimes these members wrongly feel they could be a burden and are putting others out. As we grow older, we sometimes grow more forgetful. We miss important dates; we forget to pay our lodge membership fees; we forget to send our apologies. Look out for these brethren in your Lodge. Don't just email or phone them, go and knock on their doors. Make sure they really are OK, ever remembering we are all Almoners. There is a lot of information in the Lodge Almoners Toolkit which is available on the website.

The Provincial Grand Almoner is there to help and guide Lodge Almoners should help ever be needed.

Our number one priority remains Membership. Membership permeates every aspect of what we do, from the key role of the Almoner, to the Area Chairman, from the work carried out by our own Lodge Secretaries, to the efforts of individual members who attract new Advances to our wonderful Order, we are all individually and collectively responsible for the success of our own Lodges, as well as the Province as a whole. We have achieved so much in recent years, and the ability we have collectively to make a tangible difference to the success of the Mark Province of Kent cannot be underestimated.

We need however to be ever innovative, and work with new ideas to continue the excellent work of our predecessors. As a Province we have introduced new initiatives over the last couple of years, one of these being the introduction of Group Chairman who are Dr Bob Fisher, David Merrick, Peter Brockbank and Pat King, this year we will be launching a number of further initiatives to help support Lodges to be as successful as possible. We will be making changes to our website, enabling all Lodge events including meetings to be advertised safely and securely within our members only area, which we hope will encourage cross visiting and the sharing of good practice and great ideas. There will be a renewed offer from my Support & Demonstration Team for Lodges in need of support, or who might like to host a demonstration. If you have a candidate that does not have a good ceremony, he is extremely unlikely to become an advocate for the order in general and your Lodge in particular. The Magic of the Mark Presentation will also be made readily available to Lodges who can demonstrate that they have potential candidates who are interested in the Mark Degree, this could be hosted by a Lodge or by a group of Lodges in the same Geographical area.

To support and drive all of these initiatives forward, the Provincial Membership Committee will have a renewed focus and drive under the Chairmanship of W.Bro. Steve Hyland. This will enable us to offer the right levels of support across all key aspects of membership, from Recruitment, through to Reinvigoration and always being mindful of the Retention of our

existing members. We already have an outstanding lead in W. Bro. Bob King in the role of Retention officer and we will be bolstering this by bringing in other capable individuals to support the other strands of the membership package. If you as an individual want to be part of this exciting work, or if you think that you might have something special to offer, please do get in touch with W.Bro. Steve Hyland who will be delighted to hear from you.

During the year we have continued to update and improve the extremely informative Provincial website, this useful and easy to navigate platform is full of handy and helpful information, as well as the latest news articles and events that are going on around the Province. Please make sure that you activate your membership, so that you can benefit from the excellent work undertaken by the Comms Team.

At the Meeting of Grand Mark Lodge in June and September a number of our brethren were either appointed promoted in Grand Rank and if present I would ask them to stand as I read their names: -

Promoted To: Grand Senior Deacon **W. Bro. David Barden**; To: Grand Junior Deacon; **W.Bro. Julian Trought**; To: Grand Steward **W. Bro. Christopher Methererell**; To: Past Grand Overseers: **V. W. Bros Mark Estaugh, Graham Higgs & Neil Johnstone**; To: Past Grand Senior Deacon; **David Austin**. To. Past Grand Junior Deacon; **David Merrick**; Appointed to Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies **W. Bro. Barry Devereese & W. Bro. Peter Hargreaves**; To: Past Grand Standard Bearer **W. Bro. Ray Heath** and to Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearer **W. Bro. Adrian Foulkes**. Congratulations to you all

During the year the Kent Mark Benevolent Fund has been active in making donations to worthy causes and I would like to congratulate those lodges who have attained patronage levels for the KMBF and their page in the 2023/2024 Red Book now indicates that level of patronage. Since 2022 the KMBF has Match Funded Lodges to the tune of £3000, and there still remains £1000 of this years allocated funds to be distributed, so if your lodge wishes to apply for a £200 match funded donation to a local charity then speak to the Provincial Charity

Steward also during the year on your behalf, they donated £10,000.00 to the Turkiye/Syria earthquake appeal.

A date for your diaries is Saturday 18 November at Manor Road Chatham where we will be holding a Charity Stewards and Almoners breakfast meeting, the Provincial Charity Steward, Provincial Almoner and Trustees from the KMBF will be giving presentations on how they can assist in helping you to help others. Full details will be available on our website.

Today I wish to announce a new initiative for the KMBF to focus on. Following the Grand Lodge Quarterly Communication in June, when the launch of the Grand Master's Key Stone Fund was announced, I wish to place on record my earnest desire for the Province to work towards supporting this via the KMBF. This wonderful new enterprise whose purpose is to grant awards to individuals to offer encouragement and financial support with their educational, vocational, and sporting achievements, is something that not only as an Order, but also we as individuals should all be aspiring to, it is the Trustees intention to start making grants early next year. To that end I express a wish that today's collection should be set aside to kick start our efforts towards this goal.

Brethren you are all aware that these Provincial meetings do not just happen, and I wish to put on record on your behalf my grateful thanks to the Provincial Secretary Harry Maton and his team who were literally thrown in at the deep-end and also the DC and his team in their first full Provincial meeting.

In conclusion brethren I want to remind everyone that we are first and foremost members of the Craft, and a healthy and successful Craft has the potential to be a huge benefit to the future of the Mark Degree, in time they will become the life blood which will sustain the growth of our Order and make this an even stronger Province. This will reaffirm Kent as the premier Province in the constitution.

Thank you, Brethren, for the support and encouragement you have shown me, and may the Great Overseer of the Universe bless you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter". The letter "P" is large and loops around the "e". Below the name is a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line.

Peter Williams

Provincial Grand Master

30th September 2023