



Address by the Deputy Grand Superintendent in Charge, E Comp Clive A F Lambert
Annual Provincial Convocation
Friday 22nd October 2021

Companions.

As we are all only too well aware, this has been yet another very strange and difficult year. We are still dealing with the effects of the ongoing Covid pandemic, and how we can restart our Royal Arch Masonry in a safe and secure manner, and we are also dealing with the very sad loss of our Most Excellent Grand Superintendent - Excellent Companion Barry Keith Woodside.

With regards to Covid I must state again that your health and the health of your family, friends and loved ones must come first. No one should feel under any pressure, or misplaced loyalty, to attend if they do not think it is right or safe for them to do so. And when we do attend, some changes (for safety's sake) may be inevitable – as we have done here at today's Provincial Convocation.

With regards to the very sad and sudden death of our Most Excellent Grand Superintendent - I must thank all those Somerset Companions who attended either Barry's funeral in Truro, or the memorial service held last week in Taunton. I hope that the attendance at these services was some comfort to Barry's dear wife Peggy, and all his family. I would also like to thank Excellent Companion Tony Beaumont and Companion the Reverend Jeremy Hellier for all their hard work in organising and leading the memorial service.

I have already had the great pleasure of welcoming all of our distinguished guests and in particular the heads of the other orders, and I thank them again for their continued help, support, and Companionship. This has been very gratefully received by this Royal Arch Province in general, and also very much by me personally. I must particularly thank Excellent Companion David Medlock, our Provincial Grand Master, for his support and initiatives in promoting the indissoluble link between the Craft and the Holy Royal Arch, and the Royal Arch's unique position as the climax of Pure Antient Masonry. Initiatives such as a Chapter presence at both the Craft Fraternal visits, and the Craft Provincial meeting have been very well received, and have both proved very successful. And I am sure the move to ask Lodge Royal Arch Representatives to wear Supreme Grand Chapter ties will also help raise their visibility within their respective Craft Lodges.

It now gives me the greatest pleasure to extend this welcome to all of you here today. I hope that you have enjoyed your time here so far and that this enjoyment will continue later, both in the Bar and at Lunch.

I sincerely congratulate again all those Provincial Officers that I have had the great pleasure of reinvesting, and to thank them all for all that they have done for the Holy Royal Arch in the past, for what they are doing in these very difficult times, and all that I am sure they will continue to do in the future. I would like to reiterate that the manner in which you were reappointed was in no way meant to demean your appointment and achievement. It was purely a decision that was made for this Convocation to try and protect the health of all those involved as best we can.

I would particularly like to congratulate the 2nd & 3rd Provincial Grand Principals. I am sure we will have an excellent future with Excellent Companions Neil and Geoff in these key offices, and once again I would like to thank Excellent Companion Tony Cooper for taking on the role of Provincial Director of Ceremonies, and to reiterate my most sincere thanks to Excellent Companion Chris Moore for all he has done for the Holy Royal Arch. I must also thank the past 2nd Provincial Grand Principal, Excellent Companion Ray Beckingham, for all his hard work both in this role, and also as Provincial Learning and Development Officer – but more of that in a minute.

In April, in Supreme Grand Chapter, Excellent Companion Chris Summers was promoted to Past Assistant Grand Sojourner, Excellent Companion Matt Westley was promoted to Past Grand Standard Bearer, Excellent Companion Adrian Halliwell was appointed as Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies, and Excellent Companion David Medlock was reappointed to the acting rank of Assistant Grand Sojourner. I am sure you will all join me in congratulating these Companions on receiving the recognition they all so greatly deserve.

During the lock down, and in the absence of physical meetings, Excellent Companion Ray Beckingham and his team of Excellent Companions Maldwyn Davies and Neil Hurcum researched, produced, and presented some excellent and thought-provoking talks and topics for discussion, and I thank them for all their hard work in doing this, and you for your attendance of these Zoom calls. I am sure these video calls and presentations will become an important and regular part of not just Royal Arch Masonry, but Freemasonry in general. They will give us another option to maintain social contact with Companions, and an excellent means to increase our understanding of our wonderful Royal Arch degree. They will also give us a mechanism to support the Lodge Royal Arch Representatives, and also provide groups such as the Adair Club with a greater insight into the Holy Royal Arch, and its place as both the foundation and keystone of the whole Masonic structure.

Companions, as you are becoming only too well aware, my report is a bit like a reply at the Oscars – a list of thankyou's! However, I must try and make it clear that in these very difficult times we have managed to keep going due to the unstinting help and support of very many Companions. I cannot name you all, but I offer my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you. However, there are some very key people who I feel I must mention.

Excellent Companions Ray Beckingham, Geoff Lester, Neil Hurcum, Tony Beaumont, and Tony Cooper. Your support during Barry's illness, following his sad death, and throughout the Covid situation has enabled us to make the necessary changes, and to keep things running.

Companions, today's Annual Convocation would not have taken place without a great deal of hard work by relatively few Companions. I thank our Provincial Grand Janitor, Excellent Companion Ray Johnstone-Smith who has transported the Provincial equipment from Bridgwater Masonic Hall and will be returning it afterwards, and also the Companions from Wrington Vale Chapter No. 1199, under who's banner today's Convocation is being held, in bringing the remainder of the equipment, and for all their help in setting up this room.

I thank the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies Excellent Companion Tony Cooper and his team, and the Provincial Grand Treasurer Excellent Companion Tel Hayes, who will hopefully be paying the bill for us today!

Most of the workload as usual has fallen on our Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra, Excellent Companion Tony Beaumont, ably assisted by Excellent Companion Jim Nicol. I would also like to thank the Provincial Grand Organist, Companion Barry Renwick, for the wonderful music that he produces on all occasions - not just today.

I thank each and every one of you for what you have done to make today such a success. I also extend my thanks to all of the Staff here at The Webbington Hotel & Spa for the wonderful support that they provide to the Provincial Grand Chapter of Somerset, not only today, but on several other occasions during the year.

In conclusion, Companions. Yes, this has been a very difficult year, but the joy, friendship, and warmth of the Holy Royal Arch and its Companions carries on unchanged. In fact, we will come out of these strange times even stronger than before.

Companions I thank you for your company here today, and for your company, hospitality, and friendship at your various Chapter Convocations where I have been privileged to attend, and I look forward to your company at lunch later on.

Companions let us all thank the True and Living God Most High for his many blessings and may he be with us all, both now and in the future.

Clive Lambert PGSwdB

Deputy Grand Superintendent in Charge

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