

ADDRESS BY THE MOST EXCELLENT GRAND
SUPERINTENDENT GRAHAM IVES TO THE ANNUAL
CONVOCAATION OF PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPTER ON
WEDNESDAY 10TH MAY 2017

Companions, I warmly welcome you all to the Annual Convocation of Provincial Grand Chapter. I am delighted to see so many of you present and I trust that you are enjoying your day.

As always it has been a pleasure and privilege to appoint and promote companions this morning in Provincial Grand Chapter. All the honours bestowed have been well earned and I extend my hearty congratulations to you all. I know that you will all continue to work hard within your chapters, and indeed throughout the province, not only for the benefit of the Royal Arch but also for your own personal satisfaction. I hope that you are proud of what you have achieved so far and what you intend to achieve for the Royal Arch in the future.

I am very grateful for the support and companionship that I have received during the last masonic year from the outgoing Provincial Team. We have visited a large number of chapters together throughout Lincolnshire and I have enjoyed their company very much. I believe that their presence has been much appreciated in the chapters we have visited. I also thank the companions within the chapters for their kind hospitality and the friendship extended to us.

We enjoyed a fascinating meeting in Grantham on Friday 9th September 2016 in the Geoffrey Cooper Chapter of Installed First Principals. We were visited by the Bristol companions, including their Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent, Alan Vaughan. This is the only province which is entitled to undertake the “Passing of the Veils” in a “live Exaltation Ceremony”. The ceremony was very different indeed from that which we are used to and the whole Exaltation Ceremony was demonstrated.

Companions, on Monday 26th June 2017, there will be a “Talking Heads Demonstration” by companions from London. This will be at a meeting of the Lincolnshire Bicentenary Lodge of Installed Masters. I understand that this is very interesting, entertaining and informative about the Royal Arch. I am anticipating that after that visit we shall be in a position to deliver our own such demonstrations. You do not have to be a member of the Bicentenary Lodge to attend that meeting.

The Annual Investiture Ceremony in Supreme Grand Chapter was held at the end of last month. Excellent Companion Barry Humphrey was invested as Past Grand Standard Bearer and Excellent Companion Michael Dennett was invested as Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies. These appointments are much deserved and I am sure that they will both work hard for the benefit of the Royal Arch Province of Lincolnshire in the future.

Companions, please consider joining me for the Annual Convocation in Supreme Grand Chapter on the second Wednesday of November this year. If you do so I am sure that you will enjoy the ceremony and a lunch with all the Lincolnshire companions in the Grand Connaught Rooms after the meeting.

I thank Excellent Companion Terry Little for overseeing and coordinating the Royal Arch representatives within the Craft lodges. The work of the representatives is much appreciated by me and is of great benefit and support for the Royal Arch. I hope that you are all proudly wearing your Royal Arch Representative lapel badges. Please keep up the good work within the lodges and beyond.

Companions, there is a lot going on in the Royal Arch in Lincolnshire at present. I reported in my Address last year to Provincial Grand Chapter that I intended to form a small committee under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Grand Superintendent, Excellent Companion David Bird. The “Lincolnshire Royal Arch Focus Group”, as it is now formally referred to, is working very effectively. Its brief is to consider all aspects of the Royal Arch with particular reference to implementing new initiatives to attract more exaltees and also to address issues of retention. There have been a number of initiatives already. You will have seen today a new pamphlet, drafted by Excellent Companion Craig Maurier, and also a new poster linking the three Craft Degrees very closely with the Royal Arch and illustrating that the Royal Arch is the inevitable next step after the Third Degree.

A small delegation, including the Deputy Grand Superintendent, was welcomed into the Royal Arch Province of Leicestershire and Rutland last November to witness the way in which they conduct a “master masons’ evening”. I am grateful to my good friends from that province and in particular the Most Excellent Grand Superintendent Companion Peter Kinder who is present today for allowing us to witness one of their very successful evenings. As a result of our visit we held a master masons’ evening at the Grimsby Masonic Hall on Wednesday 29th March last. There were over 71 brethren and companions present including 33 master masons and 14 new exaltees. The purpose of the meeting, which was in a structured form, was to provide information to those present so that they could fully understand the Royal Arch and so that the

master masons present could make an informed decision as to whether they should join the Royal Arch. It also gave the new exaltees an insight into the meaning of the Royal Arch. It was a very successful and happy meeting. It is our intention to hold another such meeting in the south of the Province later in the year. I am confident that it will bear fruit in attracting and retaining new exaltees.

Companions, if within your chapters, you have several candidates awaiting Exaltation please do not hesitate to undertake a double Exaltation Ceremony. Once a Brother has made his mind up to join the Royal Arch the sooner he completes that final step the better.

Companions, several years ago the late Very Reverend Neil Collings, who was then the Third Grand Principal in the Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch, wrote an article: "Rebuilding the Temple – A Personal View of the Royal Arch". Some of you will have read the article but I wish to share some of the contents of it with you today. Please note that all I am about to say is credited to the works of Excellent Companion The Very Reverend Neil Collings. At the start of the article he states that he believes it is time that we as English Freemasons re-examine our roots and the things we do. It is beyond debate that by the early 18th century men were meeting in lodges throughout the country to see how they could best build communities united in a desire for true godliness, a good moral life and a passion to serve their fellow men.

They attempted to do this by enacting rituals based on the building of King Solomon's Temple. At that time many were at enmity with one another and the lodge became perhaps the only place where thinking men could sit down in true fellowship and harmony with one another. The early masons were both pragmatic and realistic. They knew that human nature was flawed and vulnerable to self-absorption and selfishness. Pure Antient Freemasonry then took its next and last crucial step which was the creation of the Royal Arch. By using the historic stories garnered from the Old Testament books of Ezra and Nehemiah they enacted the story of the rebuilding of the temple thus reinforcing the fundamental message of starting again, rebuilding communities, and this time refocused on the name of "the True and Living God Most High".

The article proceeds to indicate that life in 18th century Britain was perilous and fragile. There were problems within the Churches, enemies within and without, and a lack of moral behaviour generally. It is in this context that our masonic forebears attempted to introduce that sense of the necessity of rebuilding our society and culture, the rebuilding of the Temple of the body politic, and the rebuilding of people's lives.

Excellent Companion The Very Reverend Neil Collings then refers to certain convictions which he held dear.

Firstly, he states it is absolutely essential we establish beyond doubt that pure ancient Freemasonry constitutes the Craft and the Royal Arch, no more and no less.

Secondly, he states that Freemasons seek in no way to override or subvert the religious beliefs of an individual nor do Freemasons seek to offer some alternative way of salvation.

Thirdly, he refers to the importance of the Royal Arch and seeks to reinforce the principle of rebuilding. He states at the time he wrote the article that we were living in perilous and fragile times. Companions, that is of course even more the case today. There has never been a greater need for the rebuilding of communities and for the bringing of harmony and unity to the world. Our masonic forebears, coming from such a varied background and traditions, were able to sit down together in our Holy Royal Arch chapters and act out with sincerity and conviction the story of the rebuilding of the Temple. He states that in this way, companions, we are able to show the world that there are ways and means for men of different and divided religions, cultures and philosophies to sit down together in unity. Freemasonry he states is one of those ways and means. This tolerant acceptance is one of our highest vocations as members of the Royal Arch.

Lastly, came his conviction about us being attractive to Freemasons and giving that ability to draw other men to enquire, explore and join us. That is how “recruitment” will happen at its best. He states that if we live out in principle distinctive happiness within Freemasonry recruitment will happen naturally because we are living examples of true and faithful brothers, and companions.

Companions, the sentiments expressed at that time by Excellent Companion The Very Reverend Neil Collings are very relevant to the Royal Arch today.

Companions, I now wish to thank certain companions who have worked so hard to ensure that this meeting is successful. I thank the Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra, Excellent Companion Tony Miller, for all that he has done, and continues to do, supported by his Assistant, Excellent Companion John Hannath, and the Provincial Grand Registrar, Excellent Companion Trevor Knight. I also thank Excellent Companions Brian Roberts and Adrian Joyce for the work which they undertake in the provincial office and generally.

As always, the ceremony has proceeded smoothly and effectively due to the leadership of the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, Excellent Companion Tony Greswell. He has supported me throughout the last masonic year and travelled all over the Province and beyond. I am very comfortable in his presence and grateful to him for his companionship and friendship. He has been well supported as always by the Deputy Provincial Grand Directors of Ceremonies, Excellent Companions Terry Wright and Peter Tong. I welcome Excellent Companion Simon Butler into the team and wish him well. I am also grateful to the Assistant Provincial Grand Directors of Ceremonies.

For many years, we have enjoyed the wonderful music provided by the Provincial Grand Organist, Excellent Companion John Pemberton and today has been no exception. The ceremony is certainly enriched by his substantial contribution.

I also thank Excellent Companions Don Osborne and Mark Goddard for the sensitive and skilful way in which they have attended to the sound system. This is most important for the smooth running of the day.

I again thank the members of the Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge for all the work which they undertake leading up to the day and during the day. They have worked tirelessly for me and the Province. Well done to them all.

I thank the companions of the host chapter Ermine Chapter No. 2351 and indeed all the masons of Lincoln and elsewhere who have helped with regard to the arrangements for today and during the day.

Companions, you are all aware that the Royal Arch is very close to my heart and that on many occasions I have expressed my passion for it. It continues to be a great privilege and pleasure to serve you as Most Excellent Grand Superintendent in and over the wonderful Royal Arch Province of Lincolnshire. We have much to look forward to. I am sure that the Royal Arch will continue to flourish and go from strength to strength. I very much look forward to being in your company in the years ahead. Thank you so much for listening to me.

God bless you all.