

Address by the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master Graham Ives to the 224th Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge on Wednesday 10th May 2017

Brethren, welcome to the 224th Meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge. This is a great day of celebration when we all join together in force and reflect upon the joys, happiness and success of Freemasonry in Lincolnshire. It is therefore heart-warming to see so many brethren present from within Lincolnshire and also to be joined on our special day by our distinguished guests who greatly enhance the enjoyment of our meetings. I sincerely hope that you are enjoying the day as much as I am.

The main purpose of the meeting is the appointment and promotion of brethren to Provincial Grand Rank. It is always a great pleasure and privilege for me to undertake this duty. Today has been no exception and I warmly congratulate all who have been so appointed and promoted. I know that you will continue to work hard within your lodges and indeed beyond.

I place on record my grateful thanks to the retiring Provincial Grand Chaplain, Worshipful Brother The Reverend Ian Walker. He has been my Provincial Grand Chaplain since I was Installed in June 2008 and we have worked very happily together in many Ceremonies since then.

Worshipful Brother The Reverend John Spriggs retires today from his office of Provincial Grand Orator. His contribution has been brilliant and I congratulate him very much upon all that he has done in this office.

I also thank the outgoing Provincial Grand Tyler, Worshipful Brother Michael Leonard, for his loyal and consistent work in this office over the last 5 years.

Worshipful Brother Tony Miller has been invested as Provincial Grand Secretary and Worshipful Brother Stephen Hallberg has been invested as Provincial Grand Treasurer. I am sure that those Offices are safe in their hands and I am looking forward to working with them.

I am also delighted to formally welcome as Provincial Grand Chaplain Worshipful Brother The Reverend John Spriggs, Past Assistant Grand Chaplain. Again, I look forward to working with him in the future.

I thank the outgoing Wardens, Worshipful Brothers John Lambert and David Price, for representing me at all the lodges during the course of the last year. They have both undertaken their high offices with distinction and have been extremely conscientious and helpful.

I thank the outgoing Provincial Team for supporting me on all my official visits. It has been a busy and eventful year. We have travelled the length and breadth of the Province together in great force. There have been Installation Meetings, Dedications of various items of lodge furniture and we have generally had a wonderful time. I thank the brethren of the lodges for the friendship and hospitality extended to us on these visits.

The highlight was to Dedicate the new Masonic Building in Skegness on Friday 17th February 2017. This was a magnificent and memorable occasion for me and I trust all those who were present. I warmly congratulate the Skegness brethren on a wonderful achievement in producing an extremely impressive masonic building. I am sure that they will enjoy the building for many years to come and I am confident that it will attract and retain new members. Well done indeed. It is a facility for all of us to enjoy.

The Grand Lodge Investiture Ceremony was held last month in Freemasons' Hall. Worshipful Brothers Noel Fisher and Alan Turner were appointed to the rank of Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies. Worshipful Brothers David Metcalf and Timothy Miller were appointed to the ranks of Past Grand Standard Bearer. Worshipful Brother John Grimwood, the Provincial Grand Almoner, was promoted to the senior rank of Past Junior Grand Deacon. I am sure you will all agree that these appointments and promotions are much deserved and I know that these brethren will continue to work hard in the future for the benefit of Freemasonry and the Province of Lincolnshire.

The Investiture Ceremony in Grand Lodge is a great spectacle but places for attending that meeting are limited. However, brethren, I invite all those who are eligible, to join me at the Quarterly Meetings of Grand Lodge on the second Wednesdays of June, September, December and March. If you are able to do so please contact at the relevant time the Deputy Provincial Grand Master who coordinates the arrangements for the meeting and the splendid lunch in the Grand Connaught rooms afterwards.

This year we are celebrating 300 years since the formation of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717. That year marked the commencement of organised Freemasonry. There are to be great celebrations throughout the country. The main event will be held at the Royal Albert Hall on the 31st October which will be followed by a dinner at the Battersea Evolution. All the tickets allocated to Lincolnshire have been taken up.

As you all know we shall be celebrating the Tercentenary in Lincolnshire with three main events. The dance and picnic in the main hangar of the East Kirkby Air Heritage Centre on the 3rd June has sold out. This will be a very enjoyable and successful occasion.

There is to be a music concert at St. Botolph's Church in Boston on Saturday 1st July. This is in the iconic Lincolnshire building, commonly known as "The Boston Stump". Music for this will be provided by the young people of the Lincolnshire music groups and they will play a varied programme to suit all tastes in music. The concert is being arranged by the Lincolnshire Masonic Social Committee in conjunction with the Tercentenary Committee. I do hope that the Church is filled to capacity. Please purchase tickets through the Secretary of the Lincolnshire Masonic Social Committee, Worshipful Brother Barry Topliss.

The main event in Lincolnshire will be a Service at Lincoln Cathedral on the 28th September when full regalia will be worn. This will be a magnificent spectacle and I very much hope that the Cathedral will be overbrimming with brethren, their family and friends. It will be an opportunity for the community to see the splendour of Freemasonry and for us to enjoy participating in this historic event. Hence, unless you have already done so please make arrangements to purchase tickets through the Tercentenary Committee. The Service will be followed by a lunch in these splendid surroundings. I am delighted to formally announce that we shall be graced by the presence of the Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master Peter Geoffrey Loundes. We are indeed very fortunate to have him with us in such a busy year for the Rulers in Grand Lodge.

As part of the Tercentenary celebrations in Lincolnshire a book has been produced. I thank those involved and in particular Worshipful Brother The Reverend John Spriggs. Copies are for sale today. Part of the proceeds of sale will go to our charitable funds. I encourage you to make the purchase either today or on another day.

It is wholly appropriate that I extend my grateful thanks for the hard work being undertaken by the Tercentenary Committee under the chairmanship of the Deputy Provincial Grand Master.

Today marks the retirement of the Provincial Grand Mentor, Worshipful Brother Reginald Brittan. He was invested by me to this very important Office in the year 2010. Worshipful Brother Brittan has worked tirelessly during the course of the last seven years or so to ensure that mentoring is a success. He has attended mentoring seminars outside the Province and he has provided support and structure to the lodge Mentors and brethren within the Province. He has certainly made sure that mentoring is a success in Lincolnshire and he has taken it forward with enthusiasm and great effect. I am very grateful to him.

Worshipful Brother David Buckenham has been invested as his successor today. Mentoring is so important for the future of Freemasonry. I did ask Worshipful Brother David Buckenham for his preliminary thoughts and his vision and objectives for the future. He anticipates that mentoring will take on an even greater impetus to successfully guide, encourage and develop the brethren. It already achieves this but he has a number of objectives which it is anticipated will increase focus to deliver and retain new members.

He has already held a very successful workshop for Mentors at the Lincoln Masonic Centre on the morning of Saturday 4th March 2017. So, I very much welcome him to our team and wish him well. I am sure that you will give him all the support he needs and embrace his vibrant initiatives.

Worshipful Brother David Wheeler, the Provincial Membership Officer, has been working very hard and effectively. He has been providing presentations to lodges on membership issues and would welcome any invitations to make such presentations. He is confident that the approach being taken in Lincolnshire will start to produce results. The applications for membership through the website of the United Grand Lodge of England has been placed on a structural basis. As at the 7th March 40 applications had been received since September last year of which 18 were being actively progressed. Hence, there is much to be gained on membership issues by these procedures which are very carefully considered and monitored.

A successful Provincial membership workshop was held on Saturday 18th March 2017 in the lodge room at Horncastle. It was very well supported and under the guidance of Worshipful Brother Wheeler it was a successful and productive workshop. The response of the brethren was extremely encouraging and constructive.

I have high hopes both with regard to membership and mentoring.

There is also much going on in the Royal Arch in Lincolnshire at present. The Deputy Grand Superintendent, Worshipful Brother David Bird, chairs the

recently formed Lincolnshire Royal Arch Focus Group. It is already working effectively. On the 29th March there was a very successful master masons' evening in the Grimsby Masonic Hall. The purpose of the evening was to explain to master masons, and indeed new exaltees, the meaning of the Royal Arch with particular reference to the indissoluble link with Craft masonry. The presentation was to enable brethren to make their own minds up as to whether they should join the Royal Arch but to be in a position to make an informed choice based upon the truth. It is only when a brother is exalted into the Royal Arch that he completes his journey through pure and antient Freemasonry. It is the next regular step after the Third Degree. Hence those brethren who have not yet joined the Royal Arch please consider doing so or at least attending one of the said master masons' evening. There is to be another one in the south of the Province in or about the Autumn of this year.

I am delighted to welcome to Provincial Grand Lodge the Worshipful Masters of the lodges in the Province. They are here in great force and their importance and presence is recognised by them being seated in a designated area of the lodge room. I am sure that they are all enjoying a wonderful year as Masters of their lodges and they are so important the future of Freemasonry in Lincolnshire. I would be grateful if they would stand so that we can all appreciate their presence and wish them well.

As always it is very important that I express my gratitude to a number of brethren who have made today such a success. I thank the outgoing Provincial Grand Secretary, Worshipful Brother John Warwick, and the incoming Provincial Grand Secretary, Worshipful Brother Tony Miller, for all that they have done during the weeks leading up to the meeting and during of course today. They have been supported by Mrs Gene Reader in the provincial office and Worshipful Brothers Stewart Oxborough, Stephen Swaby and Keith Appleton.

Brethren, as you are aware Mrs Gene Reader is retiring at the end of June after over 19 years of loyal and devoted service to the Province of Lincolnshire. She is a friend to all of us and we wish her well in her retirement. We shall miss her but it is a comfort to know that if we have any difficulties which she can help with in the future she will only be too pleased to do so.

I thank the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, Worshipful Brother Noel Fisher, for his substantial contribution in the preparation for the meeting and indeed today. I have enjoyed working with him very much and I greatly value his friendship. I thank his Deputies, Worshipful Brothers Phillip Odling and Wayne Hodgkinson. I also thank the Assistant Provincial Grand Directors of Ceremonies for their support. It is extremely important to the success of the meetings that the

ceremonial aspects of today are dealt with calmly and efficiently. This has certainly been the case today.

Worshipful Brother Don Osborne, assisted by Worshipful Brother Mark Goddard, have ensured that the sound system has proceeded in its usual sensitive and efficient manner. Worshipful Brother Mark Goddard has worked for a number of years in this respect and he has ensured a smooth handover to Worshipful Brother Don Osborne.

What a joy it has been, brethren, to listen to the music of the Provincial Grand Organist, Worshipful Brother David Shepherd. I thank him for all that he does today and generally throughout the year. His role is very important and much appreciated by me and others.

The day would not proceed smoothly without the assistance and support of the brethren of the Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge. Some of them have worked long hours as car park attendants, escorting our distinguished visitors, and ensuring in every respect that the day proceeds smoothly and happily. Thank you all so much.

This meeting has been hosted by the brethren of the Witham Lodge No. 297 and I thank the brethren of that lodge, the brethren of Lincoln generally and indeed all the brethren who have worked so hard and effectively. As always Worshipful Brother Martin Pettit has contributed quietly and effectively.

Brethren, the Victoria Cross was created in 1856 to commend acts of valour following the Crimean War. It remains Britain's highest military honour. Over the intervening century and a half, there have been 1354 awarded – the majority to soldiers of the Great War. Of the 628 recipients of the Victoria Cross during the First World War recent research has revealed that 64 of them were Freemasons. On Tuesday 25th April 2017 The Grand Master, His Royal Highness The Duke of Kent, unveiled Memorial Stones in a very moving ceremony to honour Freemasons awarded the Victoria Cross during the Great War at the Tower Entrance of Freemasons' Hall. Why have so many Freemasons been awarded the Victorian Cross? The historian Mark Smith, a medals expert and a Freemason, thinks the fact that so many Freemasons received the Victoria Cross is down to in his words "the type of person who wants to become one. They are friendly and generous people, who have a sense of responsibility". I am very proud to be a Freemason.

I shall have been your Provincial Grand Master for 9 years in June of this year. I continue to be on that magical journey which I have often referred to. It continues

to be a great joy to walk hand in hand with so many friends. I am as enthusiastic now as I was when I was Installed in June 2008. I was determined that there would be no periods of “drift” during my term of Office and I believe that with your considerable help I have fulfilled my objectives in this respect. I shall ensure that we continue to embrace new, but only reasonable initiatives, in the future and that I shall act with vigour and enthusiasm for the benefit of the Province. I am so happy and privileged to be your Provincial Grand Master.

I thank you all very much for your support and friendship. Brethren thank you so much as always for listening to me, have a safe journey home and I hope that you will be able to reflect upon what has been certainly for me a very happy and successful day.

God bless you all.