

Right Eminent Knights, Very Eminent Knights, Distinguished Visitors and Brother Knights All.

Well were did that year go.

Unlike my predecessor John, who at his first Provincial meeting as the Provincial Prior spoke about the unknown 'Can of Worms' that no one had warned him about, I am rather more fortunate in that over the 6 years as his Sub Prior I have been able to share that can of worms with him, so it has come as no surprise.

Not that there has been much to worry about, there are always times, like you, I am sure, when we have cause to cast our eyes to the heavens and say 'Oh Wonderful Masons'.

I am glad to say that hasn't happened very often because of the great team of Knights that I have in this Great Province of Essex who have supported me during my first year as Provincial Prior.

That includes our Immediate Past Prior John, he may have been in Purdah for a year, but his telephone hasn't.

We have had a successful year as a Province. The Provincial visits made by the Sub Prior Mark and myself have been happy and enjoyable occasions with strong support from the Provincial Officers and of course my Bodyguard.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Bodyguard and my active officers of the year for their continued support.

That support is never taken for granted and I sincerely thank you all.

The POI continues to be well supported with 30 to 40 Knights at each meeting and I would add that it is not the same 30 or 40 who attend. The overall membership continues to increase year on year.

POI is of course the first step for any Knight wishing to become a member of the Provincial Bodyguard, if you are interested Brother Knights, just ask.

Brother Knights the Jerusalem Eye Hospital is dear to us all and I am pleased to advise you that at the Benevolent Meeting earlier today, it was decided to make a donation at this time of £2600 a further donation will be reviewed at our Provincial Malta meeting in October.

This a great reflection on the generosity of the Knights of this Province and its Preceptories and our continued support for this wonderful charity.

Our Membership moves forward and in the first 5 months of this year we have received 17 new Knights as candidates into our Order along with 12 joining members.

Well done Brother Knights, but we must keep this up, as the Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master said, in his address at Great Priory:

“Surely we all know just one, just one member in Chapter who believes in the Trinitarian Christian faith that would like to join the Knights Templar”.

This would double our membership to over 1000 Brother Knights. Please give it some thought and assist both your Preceptory and the Province.

The Church service continues to be a great success and this year the church was as full as we have ever seen it.

We had a very successful Malta meeting, chaired by our Sub Prior E.Kt. Mark Harrison who along with Knights of the Province gave a ceremony to be rightly proud of. The ritual was first class. The names of E.Kt. Malcolm Peter and E.Kt. Chris Smith are both justly worthy of mention.

For those Knights who enjoy Social Media along with our web site we now have a Facebook Group, under the control of Mark the Sub Prior. If you are on Facebook and would like to join, the name of the group is 'Essexkt'.

Brother Knights I would now like to move on and offer my thanks to all those who have made today possible and a success. Not just my Vice Chancellor Chris Smith, my Provincial Marshal Tony Masella, the Provincial Registrar Sid Philpin but to all those who have helped before the day and to those who have taken part during the day my sincere thanks.

Congratulations to my Bodyguard for a fine display of silent drill. Many of the Knights taking part today are relatively new to the Order and are taking part for the first time. Well done, I am Proud of you all and commend you for having the drive to put yourselves into a team to perform where there is no hiding place.

My congratulations to all of the Knights receiving Provincial Honours and Promotions today. These are all well deserved, not just for what you have done so far but, I have no doubt, for what you will continue to do, for both your Preceptories and for the Province.

There have been some notable departures, and among them I would like to thank E.Kt. Maurice Webb for his exemplary service as Provincial Almoner over the last 9 years, Maurice has set the level required to be a Provincial Almoner and he will be a very hard act to follow.

I congratulate E.Kt. Dale Rayner who will succeed him in this role.

My thanks also go to E.Kt. Tony Littleford who has served as the Bodyguard Commander and has looked after the Knights of the Bodyguard for the last few years.

He will be succeeded by E.Kt. Peter Dawson and I wish him every success, I know I will have his full support and have no doubt he will achieve much in his new role.

We have a new Warden of Regalia Kt. Carl George, so if you would like to donate some Regalia or indeed to buy some regalia, he is the man to see. All profits will go to the Benevolent Fund to benefit the Jerusalem Eye Hospital.

Brother Knights in October last at the Malta meeting I mentioned the Provincial Support Team, we are still looking for new members who could give help on one or two occasions a year when a Preceptory may be low on numbers for a meeting. This does not have to be roles where ritual is required.

E.Kt. David Chapman is looking after the team, I am sure he would be pleased to hear from any Knight wishing to help and to extend his role in the Province.

Brother Knights the Great Priory meeting takes place next week on Wednesday 15th at Great Queen Street and although it is too late to book to dine, it isn't too late to go along and support the Order and those getting Great Priory Ranks and Promotions from the Province. Who are;

E.Kt. Mark Harrison as Past Great A de C.

E.Kt. David Carlton as Past Great A de C.

E.Kt. Viv Oliver as Past Great Warden of Regalia.

E.Kt. Trevor Darby as Past Great Chamberlain.

And being promoted too Past Great Registrar

E.Kt. Terry Morgan who will become a very.

My Congratulations to you all, the Honour is justly deserved for all that you have done and indeed for what, I am sure you will continue to do for our Province.

You may also keep an eye out for three members of the Province who have been asked to attend the Great Priory meeting by the Commander of the Grand Masters Bodyguard. They are

E.Kt. Peter Dawson, E.Kt. Dale Williams and Kt. Dan Moodey.

I hope you all have a Great Day.

Brother Knights I am sure it will not have escaped some of your notice that in 2030 the Province will celebrate 100 years since its consecration in 1930.

It is our intention to move towards that celebratory year by starting in 2025 a five year programme moving towards a substantial donation to the Jerusalem Eye Hospital and a bumper year of enjoyment when we celebrate this wonderful occasion.

A committee is being formed and will be in place by the 1st January 2025 to get the ball rolling for the next five years, it will also work alongside the Entertainments committee for fund raising and events.

Commemorative items and memorabilia will be produced over the 5 year period and you will be kept informed as and when these become available.

Brother Knights any ideas or suggestions regarding our 5 year programme will be most welcome and if you feel that this is something that you might like to be involved in speak to the Sub Prior, Vice Chancellor or myself.

Brother Knights we live in an ever changing world, both within our Masonic Orders and in the wider outside world, this may be a good time, as today is Ascension Day, to reflect and think upon part of the Obligation that we have all at one time taken:

“I furthermore solemnly promise that I will faithfully defend and maintain the Holy Christian Faith against all unprovoked attacks of its enemies.”

Brother Knights It only remains for me to again thank all those who have taken part today, to all those who work behind the scenes to make our meetings a success, to our Honoured Guests and to you Brother Knights for your attendance,for your continued support of this Province and of Myself and in helping to make this such a wonderful Province to be a member of.

Brother Knights may the Great Captain of our Salvation be with us and our Families until we all meet again.

Thank you Brother Knights.

R.E.Kt. Roger L. Smith
Provincial Prior