

Right Worshipful Brethren and Brethren all, I wish to begin by thanking you all for being in attendance at this my third District Meeting. For me, it is affirmation of our fraternal bond and support for this Order of the Allied Masonic Degrees. Indeed, I wish to add that it is a great pleasure and privilege to be the head of this fine District, which is the home of so many well respected Grand and District Grand Officers. I am sure that you would wish to be associated with my appreciation and thanks to all the outgoing District Grand Officers for their commitment and support during the past year and to congratulate all those Brethren, who have received District Grand Honours today. These Honours are, without doubt, well deserved and I trust that the Brethren will enjoy the responsibility and dignity, associated with the ranks. I am certainly looking forward to many of the active District Grand Officers joining me on District Team visits to Councils during the year ahead and I would be honoured if a number of those District Grand Officers could join me on visits to other Districts around the country. I can confirm that every District, by far, ensures that there is a good welcome, which is the prelude for an enjoyable meeting and festive board. The dialects, Brethren, may be different but the friendship and hospitality is universal and wonderful to behold. Thank you again to my Right Worshipful Brother colleagues for all that they do for the Order.

I would like to further express my appreciation to my District Grand Officers by particularly mentioning the Administration Team, who, under the leadership of the District Grand Secretary, has worked tirelessly again to ensure that this District Meeting is a success; the Director of Ceremonies Team for managing the fine ceremonial aspects of this meeting and visits to Councils; and, finally, the District Executive Group for exerting polite guidance and advice.

Now, at the Grand Council meeting last October, numerous Brethren of this District were honoured with appointment, re-appointment and promotion in Grand Rank be it either at the request of this District or on the direct instruction of the Grand Master.

The Brethren honoured were as follows:

1. R.W.Bro. Clive Robert Manuel was re-appointed as Deputy Grand Master;
2. R.W.Bro. Kessick John Jones was appointed President of the Executive Committee;
3. W.Bro. David Jordan was promoted to Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies;
4. W.Bro. Lew Finnis was appointed to Grand Steward (the District is only allowed to select a Brother for this position once in every five years);
5. V.W.Bro. Peter McIntyre was promoted to Past Grand Registrar;
6. V.W.Bro. Ray Walters was promoted to Past Grand Registrar;
7. W.Bro. Tony Poynter was appointed to Past Grand Senior Deacon;

8. W.Bro. Ian Mackenzie was appointed to Past Grand Junior Deacon;
9. W.Bro. Brian Holland was appointed to Past Grand Junior Deacon;
10. W.Bro. David Waters was appointed to Past Grand Standard Bearer; and finally
11. W.Bro. Ralph Craig was appointed to Past Grand Junior Deacon for South and East Caribbean.

I would be pleased if you could join me in acknowledging the appointments with a round of applause.

In respect of Kent District matters, the District Grand Secretary has mentioned in his report that the membership had increased slightly on the previous year. This is, of course, is very pleasing and shows that the District is, on the face of it, holding its own. However, the District cannot be complacent and so I wish to encourage our members, who are all well experienced Masons, to become recruiting sergeants and seek out suitably qualified Brethren. Also, wherever and whenever possible, to assist in the recruitment drive for the Craft, Holy Royal Arch and Mark Masonry – the life blood of our Order as you are already well aware. This is a big “ask” because I realise that there are many calls upon one’s time these days, calls which can be aligned broadly with family and the work place and other areas of Freemasonry. Of course, we all must respect the former but I believe that we should have due regard to the latter. I know that I am preaching to the converted when I say it is such a pity when some suitably qualified Brethren circumvent our Order when there is much, which makes it attractive: five degrees, three of which relate to Mark Masonry and two of which are associated with the Holy Royal Arch; the useful lessons imparted in each degree, the main one, for me, being humility in each; the philosophical and allegorical elements; durability along with other main streams of masonry for more than 150 years and, finally, the fellowship and camaraderie. When this Order is explained to Brethren, who are not members, I believe that it has the ability to resonate with them.

So far, each year, I have been able to say that, from my point of view, the Councils within the District are in good heart and, based upon my visits around the District, it is no different today. All Councils, without doubt, make every effort to achieve a good standard of ritual, which is so important for new members, but, of course, without losing sight of the overall need to include enjoyment in the whole experience.

Last year, many Brethren, who attended the Kent Provincial Order of the Secret Monitor, were amused when the Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler, R.Wy.Bro. Peter Wise, indicated that I was to be the candidate for a demonstration of the Secret Monitor Degree as conferred by The Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees from 1870 to 1931. The

demonstration of the degree, which will never be worked in earnest again, was ably undertaken by the 'Oscar Holland Team' from Devon. I must admit, without giving away any details, that I was a little apprehensive when I was informed that I must undergo a terrible trial, which involved me teetering on a step ladder, and that I should place my absolute reliance in the Guide. Thankfully, I was not handed a paint brush and I survived the trial to tell the tale.

With regard to charitable monies, during the past year equal donations of £400.00 were given towards the West Kent 2015 Festival and the 2020 Mark Festival. On your behalf, I wish the District to continue with further assistance for the Festivals in the near future.

Brethren, again, I would like to commend to you the website, www.amdandrsm.co.uk, which is jointly sponsored by the District of Kent Allied Masonic Degrees and the Kent District of the Royal and Select Masters. As previously mentioned by the District Grand Secretary, it is regularly updated and it contains useful information for all members and non-members alike. As another means of promoting the Order of the Allied Masonic Degrees, I have made available ball points pens for each and everyone of you, which I hope will be helpful in taking the Order forward.

In conclusion, Brethren, I wish to thank all those members of this District of Kent for their continued support and enthusiasm for the Order. Indeed, I look forward to meeting you individually in your own Councils during the year ahead. It now remains for me and to ask you all to continue to enjoy your Allied Masonry.

Thank you for your polite attention and God bless you all.

Peter Brockbank, DGP