



Berkshire Provincial Grand Chapter

Annual Convocation 7th June 2018

ME Grand Superintendent's Address



Companions, I am delighted to address this Provincial Grand Chapter once again in celebration of another fabulous year of RA Masonry in this Province.

This is the fourth time I have addressed Provincial Grand Chapter and you would have thought by now any nerves would have subsided!

Recently, I was sharing my anxiety with a very wise senior Mason. His words gave me absolutely no reassurance saying –

- Most Grand Superintendents addresses have already been said by others!
- Much of the content gets used over and over again!
- And ultimately, how many of you will be awake to hear it!

We'll come back to those points later!

Companions, as you have seen by the reports from Scribe Ezra and Treasurer, it has been another fabulous year of RA Masonry in Berkshire, concluding with this our Annual Convocation. I would like to begin this address with my personal thanks to those Companions responsible for making this day a success;

- Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra – E.Comp Roger Jones, and Provincial Assistant Grand Scribe Ezra – E.Comp Philip Mott, who have again worked tirelessly for months organising and co-ordinating this Annual Convocation. Congratulations to you both on an outstanding success!
- Provincial Grand DC E.Comp Philip Howells and his team – thrown in at the deep end with three new Executive appointments – but I must say meticulously planned and executed with first class precision. Congratulations!
- Our Past Deputy GS E.Comp Gary Mitchell for his experience and ongoing advice in delivering this Convocation – Companions he begged for another mention from me?
- To the visiting Grand Superintendents and our distinguished guests, who I'm sure you will agree, adorned our Convocation with Colour, Energy and Companionship – thank YOU all for join us on this special day.
- But most especially, my sincere thanks go to YOU the Companions of Berkshire for your unceasing support of the RA and the incredible contribution in making **Berkshire such an amazing Province**.

It has given me great pleasure today to install my new Second and Third Provincial Grand Principals and newly appointed Deputy Grand Superintendent.

- As Third Provincial Grand Principal, Excellent Comp Rod Bancroft who is already well-known within the Province and Masonic orders in general. Rod has a driving passion for the Royal Arch and an enviable natural ability to mentor – a resource I am delighted to have on this Executive.
- As Second Provincial Grand Principal, Excellent Comp Mike Warner whose immense energy and enjoyment for the Royal Arch is infectious – a key catalyst for our further growth and prosperity.
- I am also particularly delighted that Excellent Comp Jem Whitmore accepted this appointment as Deputy Grand Superintendent. Jem has a huge affection for the Royal Arch and his enthusiasm and demeanour has earned him a tremendous following from the Berkshire Companions. These characteristics will play a key factor in helping me drive the Province forward in these modern times.

To each of the Provincial Officers I have been fortunate to invest or promote today, I extend my hearty congratulations. Your honours reflect your efforts and contribution towards the success of your individual Chapters which we the Executive, trust will now continue towards the growing success of the wider Province.

Be proud of your well-deserved appointments and use your position to promote the joys of the Royal Arch as a fundamental part of Pure Antient Freemasonry.

Companions we have our newly Exalted Companions (in the far right of the Temple). To each of you I extend a warm welcome to Provincial Grand Chapter for your first time. I hope the spectacle and grandeur of this occasion will stimulate your passions for Royal Arch Masonry and fuel your individual desires for success in your own Chapters and this wonderful Royal Berkshire Province.

Companions, the Province of Berkshire has long been the envy of some of my fellow Grand Superintendents. Why? Because of the strong bonds of Companionship shared between Provincial Grand Chapter and Provincial Grand Lodge – evident here today by the number of Craft Executive present [thank you]. Earlier this year our Province celebrated the Installation of a new Provincial Grand Master – Right Worshipful Brother Anthony Howlett-Bolton who Companions is one of the most tremendous and enthusiastic supporter of the Royal Arch I know. With a common goal to make our Masonry ever more enjoyable, we are already sharing plans and ideas to help the Holy Royal Arch and Craft Masonry prosper TOGETHER in this Province.

Excellent Companion Anthony, your enthusiasm for Masonry in general is valuable asset to this Province. I very much look forward to working with you and have every confidence that together we will succeed in our endeavours.

Companions, part of those plans hinges on Masonic Education. There is growing evidence of the desire for knowledge from younger Masons to fulfil their aspirations. The future of Masonry in general and this Province in particular, is dependent on attracting younger men and we must embrace their needs. Indeed, the Craft have already picked up this thread with the consecration of the Lodge of Enlightenment delivering knowledge and education about Craft Masonry. I am delighted to share my vision that Berkshire will have a complimentary Chapter to deliver knowledge and learning for Holy Royal Arch and the extended meaning of its ritual and ceremonies. These plans are gaining momentum and I am hope we will consecrate a new Chapter in 2020.

Looking now to Charity. Companions, your charitable contributions over the past years have been **absolutely outstanding** and I congratulate you on the way you continue to honour that truly Masonic characteristic. Our Province is once again in festival with the Craft Festival 2023 and it is my wish to further unite Berkshire and pledge our wholehearted Royal Arch support to our Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master. Indeed, the Alms collection from this convocation will be donated to the Festival 2023.

Companions, I look forward with great passion to leading this wonderful Province of Berkshire for the coming year as your Most Excellent Grand Superintendent

And in concluding this address, I must refer back to those words of wisdom I started with and

- Give grateful thanks to Grand Superintendents Colin Brown, John Keeble, Gerald Rowbottom and Michael Holland – for providing me with material from their addresses at recent annual convocations!
- Grand Superintendents Alan Berman and Graham Glazier – I trust you took some notes for your upcoming Convocations?
- And Companions – hands up if you are still awake!!

Thank you for your attention.

Ian R G Hopgood
ME Grand Superintendent
7th June 2018