



PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF EAST LANCASHIRE

PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER'S ADDRESS TO PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE

19 November 2020

Brethren,

It is nothing short of a tragedy that our Annual Meeting of the Province cannot take place in King George's Hall, Blackburn in the usual format.

Nonetheless, I take this opportunity to send you all my very best wishes and my warmest regards to your families and those you love in this dramatic period in our lives.

Twelve months ago, none of us could have contemplated that the Pandemic would arise and have such a devastating effect on millions of people both nationally and internationally.

Despite the many challenges which we, as Freemasons in this Province face, (which is replicated throughout the land and indeed the world), we have seen so many excellent examples of Brethren who have risen to the challenge of extending help and comfort to those less fortunate than ourselves who have faced unbelievable hardship and loss of human dignity.

I yield to no one in the admiration I have for the countless acts of kindness which so many of you have displayed, making life for many who are suffering in the current "lock down" more bearable than would otherwise be the case.

In so many ways this has always been the "hallmark" of Freemasonry throughout our long history and our legacy teaches that "when the chips are down" we will always rise up and give succour and support to those in need.

I am all too well aware of the frustration that you will feel that we cannot meet together in the way we would wish. Despite countless "Zoom" meetings at every level and constant communication with each other, it remains a poor substitute for face to face meetings and enjoying each other's company in our usual way.

I simply ask you to be patient and share my optimism that we will get through this tragic period. In continuing to support your Lodge, you support something much bigger and this reminds us all that we are more than just member of a Lodge, we are custodians of an Order; that carries with it a weight of responsibility which cannot be underestimated.

Brethren, I am mindful that since meetings were suspended on 17 March 2020, and during the period of local restrictions since the suspension was lifted on 17 July 2020, a number of Brethren across the Province have achieved personal milestones in their Masonic journey – Golden Jubilees and in some cases Diamond Jubilees. Whilst it has not been possible to celebrate those occasions, I would wish to reassure those Brethren that we are putting in place appropriate arrangements to recognise those milestones.

I wish to place on record my sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Provincial Secretariat, the Craft Cabinet, the District Officers, the Provincial and Lodge Almoners, Charity Stewards and Mentors and all those who have ensured that despite the enormous difficulties they face, have been determined to maintain stability and optimism across this Province. The Province has tried to help Brethren, Lodges and Halls in whatever way we can. Take, for example, the documents that were distributed when, perhaps a little prematurely, we thought that meetings would be able to resume – "A Strategy for Transition to the New Normal in the Province of East Lancashire" and "The Return to Business – A Guide for Masonic Halls". These were very well received both in the Province and more widely and I would wish to thank all those that contributed to their production.

In like manner I wish to thank those acting Provincial Officers who will retire today for their support and fortitude over the last twelve months; their patience and understanding in such a turbulent year has been an enormous source of comfort to me.

I also congratulate those whom I have been pleased to appoint today.

Finally!! in the certain knowledge that we will get through this devastating period with hope and optimism for the future, I believe that we will find strength and imagination for the steady work of rebuilding our lives and communities.

We know we need to recognise how much we depend on the skill and patience of so many who have been doing the undramatic and necessary work in all kinds of Public Service.

Above all, I believe that as Freemasons, there is the clear recognition that at the root of all things, through our acts and thoughts and hopes, lies a healing compassion that can never be extinguished.

I pray that it will not be too long before we can all meet again.

In the meantime, please stay safe.

RWBro Sir David Trippier, *RD, JP, DL*

Provincial Grand Master