

Provincial Grand Conclave
Saturday 24th February 2024 - Tapton Hall Sheffield

Distinguished Guests and Brethren,

Having already welcomed our Distinguished Guests and visitors, I now welcome the Brethren of West Yorkshire – As always, your support is very much appreciated and does not go unnoticed.

I feel very fortunate in the fact that the rulers of most other Orders are active members of this Order and are here today and I thank you all for your continued support.

Today we have invested the Provincial Officers for the ensuing year and others have received Promotions. These appointments are in recognition of your commitment to your Conclaves and the support you give by visiting other Conclaves.

I congratulate each of you on your preferment and I look forward to working you during the year ahead.

As well as the appointments and promotions conferred today, I did have the great pleasure of making a field promotion to Wy Bro Eric Stocks at Bawtry Conclave in August to Past Provincial Grand Guide.

Today several of the Provincial Officers have retired from their post – I would like to thank: -

- Wy Bro Paul Levey, for his 7 years of service – the last two as Provincial Visitor.
- Wy Bro Tobias Reece, after 5 years of service – the last two as Provincial Visitor.
- Also standing down are Wy Bro's Tony Breckon, Stuart Riley, Brian Butterfield, Ian Tillett and Marios Adamou.

However, I must make special mention to V Wy Bro Paul Bowen who is standing down after 21 years as the Provincial Organist – owing to taking on high office in the Royal Arch in East Lancashire. Brother DC, could you please escort Paul to me – Promotion to PProvGC

You have all given tremendous support to the Province over the years and I hope that, although no longer in office, this support will continue.

Brethren, once again I am able to look back and reflect on more than 40 Conclave meetings. And it is pleasing to see that numbers attending

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meetings are now increasing – almost back to where they were prior to the pandemic restrictions. I was fortunate to attend 12 Conclave Installations during the year and it was pleasing to see five Supreme Rulers receiving their Commissioning during the year.

I am always grateful to those brethren who take time to visit other Conclaves and we have enjoyed many memorable evenings.

The popularity of the Provincial Visits has resulted in four visits this year – to Odersfelt, Bawtry, Claro TF and Pheonix Conclaves and there was also the Visit of The Grand Visitor to Dore Conclave – all of which were extremely well supported.

I am grateful for the Provincial DCs for their assistance in ensuring the smooth running of the ceremonial at these special occasions.

Following a five-year break – at the beginning of February the annual Provincial Sunday Lunch took place at Blenheim House, with 80 members and family in attendance and as a result it is intended that the event will take place at the same venue next year.

The close liaison with our neighbouring Provinces of East Lancashire and North/East Yorkshire continues and long may this continue.

In January the Dennis Slights Conclave was consecrated at Goole – this Conclave is part of N&E Yorkshire; I was delighted that many members of the Province joined me for this very special occasion. Dennis was known to many of us and was a great supporter of this Province – the naming of this new Conclave ensures that his memory will live on.

Last year I reported that RWy Bro Maurice Bendig, the first PGSR of this Province, was presented with his 60-year jubilee Certificate. As you know sadly Maurice passed to the Grand Conclave above shortly after the presentation. He is a tremendous loss to the Province and to the Order in general.

Last November at Grand Conclave the Most Worthy Grand Supreme Ruler was pleased to confer preferment on 7 Brethren of this Province - can I ask these Brethren, if present, stand, when named, and remain standing to receive acclimation.

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Receiving Active Office

V Wy Bro Paul Bowen

Reappointed as Grand Organist

Promoted in Grand Rank

To Past Grand Visitor

V Wy Bro James Wood

To Past Ass Grand DC

Wy Bro Jack Acton

To Past Grand Sword B

Wy Bro Ian Wilkinson

Wy Bro Dennis Schiff (by courtesy of East Lancashire).

First Appointment to

Past Grand Bow Bearer

Wy Bro David Sunderland

Wy Bro Mark Jacobs

I extend my sincere congratulations to these recipients, and they are to be congratulated. (Be seated).

In September I was joined by the Charities Manager from Mark Masons Hall -Darren Coleman-Heald to present a cheque for £1000 to The Sheffield branch of the Support Dogs Association – a small local charity providing care for children and adults with autism, epilepsy, and disabilities.

Brethren, we can only continue to make donations such as this with your generosity and support - for which I am grateful. To this end I would encourage brethren to make use of the small envelope on your seats for today's collection.

In the coming year we will undertake Provincial Visits to Dore, Bishop Blaize, Lux Diei, and Chantry Conclaves and the Grand Visitor will be attending Bawtry in July - I would expect to see the Provincial Officers appointed today support these important events.

I would also like to see our brethren joining me in supporting the annual meetings of other Provinces – details of which can be seen on the web site.

I also encourage SR's to visit and support other Conclaves during their year in the chair.

Inductions into the Order continue to rise (with 11 this year) and as a result our numbers are rising. It is also good to see that Conclaves who have not inducted a candidate for many years are now welcoming new

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members – this demonstrates the popularity and relevance of our Order – but as always, we must not be complacent.

I have said this on many occasions, but we must continue to promote our Order, by supporting the meetings of other Orders - many of which are represented here today.

Brethren the Order of the Scarlet Cord – our sister Order – draws its membership from our Order. Its numbers are increasing, and I would ask all brethren to consider if they are able to give their support by becoming members of that order – if so, you will receive a very warm welcome.

Before I finish brethren, I would like to mention our Provincial Grand Counsellor – Wy Bro Ian Wilkinson. Ian had a very serious fall just over a year ago. At that time, we were told that it was unlikely that he would make a full recovery.

During the year he continued to improve and following yet another operation it gives me great pleasure to welcome him here today.

Finally, Brethren, I must give my personal thanks to those who have made today and the last 12 months a success.

1. To Wy. Bro. Richard Drury-Smith - organiser of today's meeting.
2. To Wy. Bro. Neil Davies, David Spivey, and John Clough for their support at Installations and organising today's ceremonial.
3. To my predecessors R Wy Bro's Stewart Carley and Graeme Hutchinson for their continued support and guidance.
4. To Wy Bro. Alan Webster my Deputy, for his tremendous support to me and all our Conclaves.
5. And to all of you who take time to visit and support other Conclaves.

Brethren, once again I thank you for your support - continue to enjoy our wonderful Order and the friendship which that brings, and I wish you all a safe journey home.