



REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL GRAND SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 14 JULY 2020

Well, what a strange year; the first seven months was relatively “normal” but the last five months of the Masonic year have brought everything to a halt. What a backdrop to presenting my first report.

Sadly, virtually all the Banner Dedications, Provincial Demonstrations, Centenary Meetings, fifty-year Certificates to Brethren and the annual lunch were all scheduled for the latter part of the Masonic year, during the first lockdown. All these have either been postponed or cancelled and will where possible be re-scheduled for the 2021, provided we find a way out of the Pandemic!! The one event that did take place was the 50 Year Certificates being presented to RW Bro Brian Tierney in the Mark & RAM. To celebrate this milestone the Lodge considered it appropriate that Brian should go back in both the Chairs.

The most significant casualty during the year was the postponement of our Provincial meeting in July – the Executive waited for as long as possible in the hope that the meeting could be salvaged, but alas this was not to be.

The shame is that the Provincial Officers who were appointed last year have missed a significant portion of the opportunity to attend meetings and to be present at a Provincial meeting where they would have been able to stand down in the splendour of that meeting. Then, regrettably when we came out of the General Suspension the new current team of Officers who assumed their rank from the date when the meeting would have taken place have not been able to attend meetings due to the new Government guidelines and the second lockdown. No doubt the Executive will be looking into some form of compensation in due course.

Our Royal Ark Mariner Assembly in June was also abandoned, with the recipients of Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank assuming their award from 2 June.

The annual pilgrimage to the Varsity rugby union match at Twickenham in December 2019 was again very well supported as it proves a popular event on the Calendar.

Normally I would report that the Provincial Executive have visited many other Provinces to represent Hertfordshire; this did occur up to February when those meetings we could go to were very well attended.

During the early part of 2020 we reorganised the management of the Provincial data with the Provincial Grand Registrar taking over that responsibility, which has been a great success and has allowed me extra time to take on other work.

We have had a few initiatives that Grand Lodge have introduced, the major one being the Lodge Secretaries & Scribes undertaking their own input into Keystone, which they all appear to have embraced and is currently working well. We have had the advent of the Virtual Business Meetings to facilitate completing administrative matters, which was slow to be taken up initially but has now gained much more momentum. Grand Lodge also introduced a very simplified elect & install dispensation process allowing Secretaries & Scribes to apply via Keystone.

I thank all the Lodge Secretaries & Scribes for accommodating all the vast amount of Grand Lodge communications between March & July, which were sent direct to them. I want to thank you all for the help & assistance I have received from you.

I would also like to thank my Deputy Colin Dixon & my Assistant Chris Slater, who both joined the team with me last summer, for all their help throughout the year. Both have been a great support to me, especially during the hectic lockdown period. The Provincial Registrar has also been a great help to me. We also had an addition to the team with Tony Potton taking over responsibly for all the collation of data necessary for the Mark section of the Provincial Yearbook.

As we start the 2020/21 year further Government restrictions are curtailing Lodge meetings and we can only hope there is a way out of the present situation.

Jon Lydon PGJD
Provincial Grand Secretary