



REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL GRAND SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 13 JULY 2021

As I review the last two years as your Provincial Secretary I could never have imagined what was to lay ahead when I took office in July 2019; specifically over the last 16 months with the dreaded Covid bringing all Masonry to almost a complete stop and the new ways of operating in the Mark. As I said last year, what a backdrop for presenting my first report and it is the same with my final.

Sadly, towards the latter part of last year we all had expectations of things getting back to normal when the next wave struck and all hope of a normal resumption disappearing until July this year.

It has not been possible to carry out our usual activities again throughout this last period and there is now a backlog of Banner Dedications, Centenary Meetings, and fifty-year Certificates to Brethren. In addition, we lost completely during the last year the Provincial Demonstrations and the annual lunch plus the pilgrimage to the Varsity rugby union match at Twickenham. So, it is with some optimism I suggest that all these will start to recommence from September 2021 and plans have been drawn up, so the Executive & active Officers can expect to be rather busy next year. This will be enhanced with an increased number of installation meetings necessary to catch up, as well as the regular meetings that will come on stream later. Normally I would report that the Provincial Executive have visited many other Provinces to represent Hertfordshire, but like everything else this has not been possible for them.

There have been a few changes over the last two years! Grand Lodge have introduced a lot of new ways of working, some driven by the Covid impact on abandoned meetings, with the introduction of the new initiative of a VBM which has helped Lodges keep abreast of administration. For the Provincial Secretary all these have entailed a considerable increase in workload, and I know this has been a major impact on all the Lodge Secretaries & Scribes too, and I thank them all for their efforts to keep things up to date.

Within the Executive we took the decision at a very early stage to postpone our Provincial meeting from July to September this year to avoid the risk of having to cancel, in the hope that things will be back to normal. We decided to hold a VBM on our regular date to conclude various aspects of administration, so we can focus at the face to face Provincial Meeting on confirming that business and to give the Provincial Grand Master the opportunity to congratulate those being honoured this year, as well as to welcome everyone back to meetings and dining together in reasonable numbers. The meeting this year at Bushey is a one-off before we hopefully return to the Royal Masonic School for Girls at Rickmansworth for 2022.

Within the Provincial Executive we have been meeting during the whole Covid period fortnightly by zoom conference calls, and you will no doubt be aware of all the new initiatives introduced such as the Mark in Time newsletter and the significant fundraising that has taken place outlined by the Provincial Charity Steward in his report, and there could well be more on the way!

Due to various circumstances there is to be a complete change to the Provincial Secretariate this year. I am standing down for personal reasons and it is with some sadness I finish my twelve years in active office in the Province but can look back with some satisfaction on my achievements. My Deputy Secretary Colin Dixon wanted to step down last year, but we managed to twist his arm for one more year before retiring. The Assistant Secretary, Chris Slatter is moving over to the ceremonial side and I wish him well in his new role. I congratulate Tony Potton and the new team who will take over after the Provincial meeting in September and wish them all every success.

I would like to thank the Provincial Grand Master and the other on the executive, both past & present who have given me support & help over my term in the various offices held. Most importantly I thank my wife Sandra without who's support to me over the years I could never have taken on all the roles which I have. Lastly, I thank all those who I have got to know in all the Lodges in the Province over the years in this wonderful degree, and the many friendships that I now have.

Jon Lydon PGJD
Provincial Grand Secretary