

DISTRICT GRAND CHAPTER OF SOUTH AFRICA, NORTH

Of Royal Arch Masons of England



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GRAND SUPERINTENDENT'S ADDRESS ANNUAL CONVOCATION – 5 OCTOBER 2013

Welcome to you all to this 111TH Annual Convocation of District Grand Chapter, and in particular, to those who have travelled long distances to be with us. I extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests and trust they have enjoyed our proceedings. I would like to acknowledge the presence of E Comp Randhir Ramloll who is here today for the first time as the Charter First Principal of the Chapter of Friendship No. 1696, in Mauritius together with Comp Ajay Nunkoo, Charter Princ. Sojourner..

I acknowledge the presence of E.Comp Gerald Fotinakis, Past Grand Superintendent and thank him for his attendance. I congratulate those Companions who have received District Grand Rank today. In particular, I congratulate E Comp Tim Smith on his appointment to 3RD District Grand Principal and wish him well in his future duties. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to E Comp Hans van Gaalen who has stood down as 3RD District Grand Principal. He has carried out his duties in an exemplary manner and I wish him well in his well-earned retirement.

I know you will also join me in congratulating the following who received Grand Rank earlier this year: E. Companions Joe Moore and Geoff Williams received first appointments to PGStB. E. Comp Hilly Rosin was promoted to PGStB and E. Comp. Gert Ruppung was promoted to PAGSoj.

Companions, 2013 is a significant year for the Royal Arch. In about 10 days time, on Wednesday 16 October, Supreme Grand Chapter will be celebrating its Bi-Centenary. The Royal Arch Degree can be traced back much further than 1813, but there is no exact date for the origin of the Royal Arch.

Supreme Grand Chapter has taken the date of Union between the two Grand Lodges in 1813 as the date for the basis of the Bi-Centenary celebration. Leading up to the Union, one of the Grand Lodges worked 3 degrees and the other 4 degrees. To affect union, a compromise was made and the Royal Arch was included in the act of union. As a consequence we find that in our Constitution, the Royal Arch is firmly anchored to the Craft and is considered an integral part of our regular Freemasonry. So whilst we could have specifically celebrated the Union of two grand lodges this year, our high rulers have decided to celebrate 200 years of the Royal Arch since the Union, and to wait until 2017 to celebrate 300 years of English Freemasonry an event that will be significant in Freemasonry throughout the World.

On 16 October, a major celebratory event will occur at Freemasons' Hall in London, comprising a demonstration of the Royal Arch ceremony, a luncheon, a Convocation of Supreme Grand Chapter followed by a banquet. Provinces in England and Wales and Districts overseas throughout our Constitution are also being encouraged to hold local celebrations.

This District Grand Chapter will be celebrating the Bi-Centenary on Saturday 30th November at Freemasons' Hall, Park Lane, Johannesburg. Celebrations will begin at 10:30 for 11:00 with a demonstration of the ceremony of "Passing the Veils". The ritual for this ceremony was sent to us by Supreme Grand Chapter to be demonstrated on special occasions. I am grateful to Tim Smith and his team who have been preparing for this demonstration. This will be followed by a finger lunch to which ladies and non-Royal Arch masons are invited. Notice of the celebratory event has been sent out to all Masons in the District and I look forward to your support.

Companions, to mark the Bi-Centenary a District Royal Arch tie has been produced and is available from the District Office and from the front foyer today. There is a small mark-up on the cost of the tie, which will form a contribution to the Bi-Centenary Charity Appeal of Supreme Grand Chapter.

As mentioned last year a strategic working party under the Second Grand Principal recommended the adoption of the strap line "from Initiation to Exaltation" to promote the Order and a repositioning statement was adopted that "The Order of the Holy Royal Arch is an integral part of Pure Ancient Masonry, being the completion of Craft Masonry, and the essential next step in Freemasonry for all Master Masons".

In this respect, I am pleased to announce that a new pamphlet has been produced explaining the Royal Arch specifically for the Master Mason. The pamphlet is sent out with each Master Mason's certificate. A letter is also included from myself congratulating the Brother on his becoming a Master Mason and pointing out that his next step is the Royal Arch with an invitation to join the Order.

There are two lectures which I would like to see developed in the forthcoming year. The first is a clear explanation of the Exaltation Ceremony and the symbols of the degree aimed directly at the newly exalted Royal Arch Mason. I realise that there are books on the subject and indeed several lectures, but we require a clear basic explanation of the ceremony. Secondly, that a lecture on Royal Arch Masonry should be delivered to Master Masons in a Craft Lodge. This could be done in cooperation with the Lodge Mentor.

Companions, this Royal Arch District is in excellent shape. Membership has again increased for the third successive year. Today we welcome the Chapter of Friendship No. 1696 as a new addition to the District, being the 40th Chapter in the District. Three weeks ago I had the pleasure of leading a team to consecrate the Chapter in Phoenix, Mauritius. I would like to place on record my appreciation to my Deputy, E Comp Cleve Wiehahn, E Comp Brian McDermott, 2nd District Grand Principal, E Comp Hans van Gaalen, 3rd District Grand Principal, and E Comp Tim Smith who carried out the duties as consecrating DC and the rest of the consecrating team who travelled to Mauritius. The consecration went-off extremely well and I thank those involved with the consecration for their time and effort. This chapter will primarily serve members from both the Lodge of Friendship and Phoenix Lodge, recently moved to Phoenix Mauritius. I am pleased to report that there are several candidates waiting for exaltation and we wish E Comp Randhir Ramloll, his co-Principals and the other Founder Members of this Chapter well in their future endeavours. To help start this Chapter on a good footing, E Comp Brian McDermott, 2ND District

Grand Principal and E Comp Leighton Shaw have agreed to assist in the exaltation of their first set of Candidates.

Early in the new year, we are also looking forward to consecrating another Chapter – an Installed First Principals’ Chapter to meet at Park Lane, Johannesburg. Indeed, the notice of the petition is in the papers of business for the next Convocation of Supreme Grand Chapter to be held on 16 October and we await their final decision.

In conclusion Companions, I would like to thank the District Grand Directors of Ceremonies, E Comp Steve Cousens and his team for the Ceremony today. In addition, sincere thanks are extended to District Grand Scribe Ezra, E Comp David Pickard, together with Mrs Fern Rowles and the administrative staff at Park Lane. I look forward to seeing you all at the Craft meeting later this afternoon.

E Comp Prof E Guy Charlesworth
Grand Superintendent
Johannesburg, 5 October 2013