



ADDRESS BY THE MOST DISTINGUISHED GRAND SUMMUS

Companions, welcome once again to Grand Senatus. You always come in great numbers but this year your support is exceptional. Travelling to and from London and accommodation here is an expensive business but its money you spend willingly in support of our Order and I thank you once again for your continued dedication and commitment. Every year I tell you that the Order is bigger in terms of individual members, memberships and the number of Consistories than it was the previous year and this is the story again today. We recently passed the magic 3000 figure for individual members and we are a whisker shy of 4000 memberships...we might even achieve that on Saturday. I'll tell you in a little while about our 7 new Consistories. The progress we have made over the past 20 years has been nothing short of extraordinary and all the result of the enthusiasm of so many people; lots of them were rewarded yesterday with promotion in Grades and many of them will have new Grand Ranks today.

So my first task is to congratulate those appointed and promoted a little earlier, as well as those who received the 4th and 5th Grades yesterday. A Grand Rank or Grade promotion is a very special reward for past services. The selection process can be arduous for a number of people. We ask for nothing in return save your continued efforts for the Order...especially in terms of introducing your Master Mason friends into the OSM. Explain to them it's a three-step journey, Secret Monitor, Prince and Scarlet Cord Companion.

Our system of ranks and Grades allows us to promote people on a fairly regular basis. So aspire to the next level; see how far you can get. Grand Summus maybe! (Good luck with that!)

But now for a retrospective of the events of the past 12 months.
Consecrations.

Back in September we were in Sunderland for the consecration of Orationes Accipiamus Consistory, a name chosen I am sure, solely with the intention of making my life difficult. Sunderland a centre of Latin scholarship...who knew!

At the end of the month we were in Tours in France for the consecration of Lemincum Consistory, enjoying the tremendous hospitality as always of our French Companions. In early October we enjoyed a seaside excursion....to Exmouth in Devon to consecrate Unitas Consistory and then straight off to Bangor in North Wales for the consecration of Red Dragon.

West Yorkshire was next, where the Maurice Bendig Consistory came into being.....what a great way to honour the memory of a tremendous Freemason.

2026 (March in fact) saw us in Ely in Cambridgeshire for the Consecration of Elysium Consistory and a couple of weeks later we were in Sandbach in Cheshire where we consecrated Saxon Cross.

So, another successful year in the spread of our Scarlet Cord units.

What about the Provinces?

Back in October, we made a quite significant change to our Provincial structure, when we created the Province of the Borders. This comprises (currently) our Consistories at Brampton, Dalston and Berwick, although we are very hopeful that that will soon increase to 4. Alan Buntain is the first Provincial Grand Summus. Alan is just back from Australia so I'm going to wake him up by asking him to stand!

We then took the opportunity of amalgamating East Lancashire and West Lancashire into a new Province I imaginatively named Lancashire under Paul Joynson (please stand). This has, I understand, knitted together nicely.

Our thanks once again to retired Provincial Grand Summi Geoff Gill (please stand) and Allan Shields. Geoff is now spending more of his time in that haven of warmth and relaxation Thailand and Allan in, well in South Shields.

At the back end of November I was down in the Province of Somerset and Dorset to dedicate their splendid new banner.

And in February a team from this side of the pond attended the USA Allied Degrees Masonic Week in Washington, where we conferred the 5th and 6th Grades on a number of their Companions, as well as having much fun in witnessing several other ceremonies (some wackier than others), braving freezing temperatures and watching the Grand Recorder ringing the bells at Washington Cathedral no less. It's a delight to welcome the Chairman of the Scarlet Cord Committee Yasser Al-Khatib to Grand Senatus today.

As to the future, what's coming up?

Tonight a small team flies to Paris, in readiness for a longer flight tomorrow to Brazzaville in the Congo. On Saturday we consecrate two Consistories there and in consequence shading another country scarlet on our "where we are map."

It seems very likely that September will see us in Paris, to turn that success story which is the Inspectorate of France into a District.

And there are more Consecrations on the horizon, not least two in that other success story Kent.

As always, details of all these events will appear on our Facebook page and on the weekly MMH Freemasonry at 86.

Anything else?...surprise me Companions.

On the charitable front our members have been very active as always, with many local charities and good causes benefiting from the generosity of our members.

And I must mention the generous donations that Provinces, Consistories and individuals have made to the Mark Grand Master's Keystone Bursary Fund. Thank you. A special word of sympathy for David McMorris, who in trying to buy an OSM version of the jewel, in the box which says unit number, meaning how many jewels do you want, put his Conclave unit number, 434. He's now faced with a bill of £65000.

It's now that time when we welcome Heads of Orders here and our visitors from overseas, and I'll ask you to refrain from applauding until they're all introduced.

From the Knights Templar, Grand Master and PDepGSummus R Dist Comp Paul Clement

From the R & SM, Grand Master and PG Chancellor, R Dist Comp Kessick Jones

From the OSM, Grand Supreme Ruler and our former Grand Summus M Dist Comp Andrew Sweeney.

From the Knight Templar Priests, Grand High Priest and PG Vice-Chancellor R Dist Comp Chris Maiden.

From overseas:

(as per detailed agenda)

To them and anyone else we have missed, you are all most welcome. Companions, our distinguished guests.

I finish this address as I always do, with thank yous to a lot of people. Continuing thanks to our Consistory Recorders, Treasurers and DCs who do so much to enable us to enjoy our Scarlet Cord masonry at a local level. And to our Provincial, District and Inspectorate Heads and their executive teams, whose contributions are immense.

Thanks to this year's Grand Officer ceremonial team, the members of which have been quite outstanding in their commitment, as were so many of their predecessors. The Grand Recorder Dan Heath has been hugely supportive, a great travelling Companion and occasional sparing partner. To all the team here at MMH, especially for Chris Griggs who has done much of the work for yesterday and today, for our new Grand Watchman Mick West and his team and personal thanks and goodbyes to Paul Busby and Zsolt Baranya. To our splendid GDC Phillip Purves. Phillip's Deputies this year have been excellent in their duties and are consequently re-appointed and the Grand Tzaddikim have added much lustre to our ceremonies everywhere.

To Frank of course and again to Howard.

Finally, a special thank you to those attending Grand Senatus for the first time today. (Please stand). We hope you've enjoyed the experience enough to want to start coming every year from now. If you have, tell me about it. If you haven't, go and see the Grand Recorder.

The Scarlet Cord continues to be a highly successful Order because of you, each and every one of you. May the God of our Fathers keep you safe until we meet again. There have been more than a few words here, but thank you for listening to them.