

The Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of England
and Wales and its Districts and Councils Overseas



MINUTES OF THE ESPECIAL ASSEMBLY AND
SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF GRAND COUNCIL

held on Tuesday, 3 October 2023, at Freemasons' Hall,
60 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5AZ

PRESENT

GRAND MASTER

M.III.Comp. Kessick John Jones, IX

DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

R.III.Comp. His Hon. Ian Douglas Gavin Alexander, KC, IX

GRAND PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR OF THE WORK

R.III.Comp. Paul Anthony Norman, IX

PAST DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

R.III.Comp. M. E. Herbert

PAST GRAND PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR OF THE WORK

R.III.Comp. Lt Col. J. C. Chambers

CUSTODIANS OF THE NINTH ARCH

R.III.Comp. J. D. Phillips, IX

R.III. Comp. N. D. Milburn, IX

R.III.Comp. W. F. Clemens, IX

R.III.Comp. G. Smith, IX

R.III.Comp. B. A. Vickers, IX

R.III.Comp. A. Long, IX

R.III.Comp. M. B. Jolley, IX

R.III.Comp. G. J. Davies, IX

DISTRICT GRAND MASTERS

R.III.Comp. V. J. Driver District Grand Master for London

R.III.Comp. J. Harvey District Grand Master for Northumberland

R.III.Comp. R. S. C. Mitchell District Grand Master for Lancashire

R.III.Comp. C. G. Lewis District Grand Master for Middlesex

R.III.Comp. D. J. Blackburn District Grand Master for Surrey

R.III.Comp. N. T. Woodward District Grand Master for North and East Yorkshire

R.III.Comp. G. L. Gill, *SLMM* District Grand Master for South and East Caribbean

R.III.Comp. Dr A. Beckerton.....	District Grand Master for Derbyshire
R.III.Comp. G. H. Jones, <i>CStJ</i>	District Grand Master for South Wales
R.III.Comp. D. G. Sanderson.....	District Grand Master for Cumberland and Westmorland
R.III.Comp. K. L. Downes, <i>JP</i>	District Grand Master for Wyvern
R.III.Comp. T. M. Sharpe.....	District Grand Master for Kent
R.III.Comp. B. F. Marchant.....	District Grand Master for Sussex
R.III.Comp. M. J. Wilson.....	District Grand Master for East Midlands
R.III.Comp. F. J. Shaw.....	District Grand Master for Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight
R.III.Comp. M. Graham.....	District Grand Master for Durham
R.III.Comp. T. Hancock.....	District Grand Master for Oxon, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire
R.III.Comp. R. J. Potts.....	District Grand Master for Essex
R.III.Comp. Gp Capt. P. J. Brindle.....	District Grand Master for Hertfordshire
R.III.Comp. F. McPherson.....	District Grand Master for West Yorkshire
R.III.Comp. B. Hughes.....	District Grand Master for Cheshire and the Marches
R.III.Comp. P. J. Wellings.....	District Grand Master for Warwickshire
R.III.Comp. K. R. S. Surry.....	District Grand Master for Somerset and Wiltshire
R.III.Comp. S. J. Bradford.....	District Grand Master for North Midlands
R.III.Comp. G. F. Spencer.....	District Grand Master for East Anglia
R.III.Comp. G. M. Peard.....	District Grand Master for Devon and Cornwall

DISTRICT GRAND INSPECTORS

V.III.Comp. H. O. Watler.....	District Grand Inspector for Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
V.III.Comp. K. M. Rondel.....	District Grand Inspector for Channel Islands

PAST DISTRICT GRAND MASTERS

R.III.Comp. J. R. Collison, P.Dist.G.M., North Midlands (2004–2009)
R.III.Comp. S. B. Crutchley, P.Dist.G.M., Cheshire and the Marches (2009–2021)
R.III.Comp. Prof. D. K. Wilson, P.Dist.G.M., Durham (2011–2017)
R.III.Comp. J. C. Jacobson, P.Dist.G.M., Essex (2012–2019)
R.III.Comp. D. J. F. Rawlins, P.Dist.G.M., Warwickshire (2013–2021)
R.III.Comp. D. B. Nelson, P.Dist.G.M., Somerset and Wiltshire (2013–2021)
R.III.Comp. P. T. Coles, P.Dist.G.M., East Anglia (2014–2022)

GRAND OFFICERS OF 2022/2023

R.III.Comp. D. S. Rose.....	Grand Councillor
V.III.Comp. Dr V. Thomas, <i>JP</i>	Grand Chaplain
V.III.Comp. K. Young.....	President of the Executive Committee
R.III.Comp. R. A. Williams, <i>OStJ</i> , P.G.Chan.....	Grand Recorder
V.III.Comp. G. D. Seeman, P.Pres.E.C.....	Grand Director of Ceremonies
R.III.Comp. C. G. Maiden, P.G.Chan.....	Grand Lecturer
R.III.Comp. R. L. Gan, <i>JP</i> , IX, P.G.P.C.W.....	Grand Historiographer
III.Comp. The Revd T. J. N. L'Estrange.....	Deputy Grand Chaplain
V.III.Comp. D. M. Heath.....	Deputy Grand Recorder
III.Comp. A. C. Jennings.....	Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
III.Comp. P. W. Hutchinson.....	Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
III.Comp. M. R. Burt.....	Grand Captain of the Guard
III.Comp. N. B. Hawes.....	Grand Conductor of the Council
III.Comp. A. R. Davis, P.G.Cond.C.....	Assistant Grand Chaplain
III.Comp. A. J. Baverstock (Dep.G.D.C. 2023).....	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
III.Comp. W. A. Caughie.....	Grand Sword Bearer
III.Comp. J. J. Chambers.....	Grand Standard Bearer
III.Comp. Dr R. A. Scott.....	Grand Organist
III.Comp. L. G. Clement, P.A.G.D.C.....	Deputy Grand Organist

III.Comp. G. Hutchinson	Grand Steward
III.Comp. K. D. Bennett.....	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. A. J. Clark.....	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. M. R. Constant.....	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. L. A. Darby	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. A. H. Hopkin	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. D. Kellet	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. S. P. Lancaster.....	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. D. J. Lee.....	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. C. Moore	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. D. A. Potter.....	Grand Manciple
III.Comp. P. Busby	Grand Sentinel

PAST GRAND CHANCELLORS

- R.III.Comp. H. K. Emmerson
- R.III.Comp. Dr J L W Wright, *RD*
- R.III.Comp. T. F. Jackson
- R.III.Comp. A. C. Sweeney
- R.III.Comp. P. R. Clement
- R.III.Comp. G. L. Flight
- R.III.Comp. P. W. Tarrant
- R.III.Comp. G. F. Redman
- R.III.Comp. T. F. Auber
- R.III.Comp. R. A. H. Morrow
- R.III.Comp. M. F. Barnes
- R.III.Comp. B. W. Price
- R.III.Comp. N. A. B. Grout
- R.III.Comp. Justice (Ret) M. P. H. Rubin
- R.III.Comp. D. Baum
- R.III.Comp. I. S. Currans
- R.III.Comp. J. Moulson
- R.III.Comp. J. H. Prizeman

PAST GRAND COUNCILLORS

- R.III.Comp. E. Trodd
- R.III.Comp. W. S. Daw
- R.III.Comp. J. E. Vince
- R.III.Comp. A. G. Simey
- R.III.Comp. M. Chellappa
- R.III.Comp. B. Wayne
- R.III.Comp. D. G. Viggers
- R.III.Comp. F. C. Spencer
- R.III.Comp. P. R. A. Baker
- R.III.Comp. G. E. Bonham
- R.III.Comp. S. J. Warwick
- R.III.Comp. A. W. Llewellyn
- R.III.Comp. R. A. Dunleavy
- R.III.Comp. G. A. G. Barker
- R.III.Comp. D. A. Garston
- R.III.Comp. P. J. Purves
- R.III.Comp. D. Smith

and many other Grand Officers, Past Masters and Companions.

Report of Proceedings

1. OPENING

Grand Council was opened in Ample Form by the Most Illustrious Grand Master.

2. SALUTATION OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER.

The Most Illustrious Grand Master was saluted under the direction of the Grand Director of Ceremonies. The Most Illustrious Grand Master then thanked the Companions for their salutation and welcomed them to the especial assembly to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Order in England and Wales with the following address:

‘Companions, I must underline the fact that we are here today to celebrate the magnificent milestone of 150 years. Further details of our history are to follow, but I thought it might interest you to know what else happened during the year of our birth: the first Kennel Club was established in the UK; Alexandra Palace was destroyed by fire; Levi Strauss was awarded a patent for making denim jeans; the first typewriter was sold; Heineken opened his first brewery in Amsterdam; and Ulysses S. Grant was sworn in for a second term as the US President. A lot has happened since then so I will waste no further time in keeping you from the celebrations and entertainment.’

3. INVESTITURE OF GRAND OFFICERS 2023/2024 AND RECIPIENTS OF THE GRAND MASTER'S SPECIAL AWARDS IN RECOGNITION OF THE SESQUICENTENARY

The Grand Recorder read the names of those Companions whom the Most Illustrious Grand Master had appointed to and promoted in Grand Rank. The Most Illustrious Grand Master invested those present.

ACTIVE OFFICERS

Grand Chancellor.....	His Hon. Judge Keith Charles Cutler, <i>CBE</i>
Grand Councillor.....	David Stewart Rose
Grand Chaplain.....	Dr Vivian Thomas, <i>JP</i>
<u>Grand Treasurer</u>	<u>John Norman George Howitt, P.G.Coun.</u>
President of the Executive Committee.....	Keith Young
Grand Recorder	Ryan Andrew Williams, <i>OSTJ</i> , P.G.Chan.
Grand Director of Ceremonies.....	Graham David Seeman, P.Pres.E.C.
Grand Lecturer.....	James Stewart Allen
Grand Historiographer	Richard Ludwik Gan, <i>JP</i> , IX, P.G.P.C.W.
Deputy Grand Chaplain	The Revd Timothy John Nicholas L'Estrange
Deputy Grand Recorder.....	Daniel Mark Heath, P.G.Lect.
Deputy Grand Directors of Ceremonies.....	Paul William Hutchinson Alan John Baverstock
Grand Captain of the Guard	Terrence Douglas Sheern
Grand Conductor of the Council	Philip Charles Ablott
Assistant Grand Chaplain	Anthony Russell Davis, P.G.Cond.C.
Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	Richard Gordon Brown Mark Anthony Thompson-O'Connor
Grand Sword Bearer.....	William Agnew Caughie
Grand Standard Bearer	Mark Philip Spencer Bajona
Grand Organist	Dr Robert Andrew Scott
Deputy Grand Organist.....	Lewis George Clement, P.A.G.D.C.
Grand Steward.....	Ian Dingwall
Grand Manciples.....	David Leslie Armstrong Jeffrey Michael Green Robert Slobodan Latic David Anthony Stanford
Grand Sentinel.....	Paul Busby

PROMOTIONS

Past Grand Chancellor

Dennis Baum
Ian Stanley Currans
Dr Boo Khean Khoo

Christopher Gavin Maiden
John Moulson
John Herbert Prizeman

Past Grand Councillor

Gerald Anthony Granville Barker
David Alexander Garston
Phillip John Purves

David Smith
Roland John Wade

Past Grand Lecturer

Paul Ackland-Snow
Ronald Ernest Sydney Bentley
Sydney Lynton Brailey
John Robert Bryant
John Bamborough Gibson
John Charles Gough
Daniel Mark Heath

Brian William Hithersay
Anthony Thomas Lapsley
Edward Harry Long
Alexander Sillars McLaren
Leslie Eustace Bindon Nanton
Walter Horatio Scott, KC
Michael Leonard Ward

Past Grand Captain of the Guard

Dennis Arthur Joseph Berry
George Leonard Brown
Andrew Christian Chape
Philip Charles Clare
Christopher Martin Lee Davies
Robert Forbes Fairbairn
Terence Gilbert
Kenneth Roy Gooden

John Alan Loat
Mark Richard Saunders
Malcolm Robert Summers
Bryan John Wakely
John Christopher Welton
Charles Martin Wilson
Roger Charles Wortley

Past Grand Conductor of the Council

Colin Arthur Adams
Alexander James Allan
Leslie Baker
Richard Lloyd Barker
Dr Stephen David Bassett
Roderick James Bradley
Richard Charles Callaby
Jason Cameron-Potter
Jeffrey Lionel Conway
Mark Samuel Livermore Corcoran
Philip John Cuff
Dr Rudolph Othneil Cummings
Mark Eric Gannaway
Michael Eric Gerschel
Geoffrey Raymond Gill
Stephen Charles Hallberg
John Stanley Bennington Hayes
Christopher Hicks

John Neville Johnston
Thomas Anthony Lewis
Terence Clive Lewis
Balbir Singh Lotay
Geoffrey Mankin
Simon McCarthy
Paul Anthony Milner
John Reginald Roberts
Ian Douglas Russell
Primus Felicien Suffren
David Sunderland
Michael George Taylor
Rex Cecil Tester
Peter David Warner
Nigel Wilkinson
John Winter
Peter Edward Worby
Stephen Wright

PAST RANKS (FIRST APPOINTMENTS)

Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies

Paul Anthony Brennan	John Alan Impett
Nigel Malcolm Bridges	Roy Kaye
Kevan Charles Brooks	Trevor Narey
Barry Brian Cleaves	John James O'Dowd
Joseph Myers Edmondson	Carney Leanzo Robinson
Merrill Martin Elliott	Gordon Joseph Rochford
Anthony Edward Elsey	Dorian Gerald Rowbottom
Wg Cdr Peter Nigel Isom Harborne	John William Anthony White

Past Grand Sword Bearer

Edward Thomas Allcock	John Barry Hayward
Christopher Terence Ballard	Johnny Ho
Colin James Bolton	Victor Noel McLachlan
Edward Cholerton	Isaac Miller
Maurice Myers Evans	Peter Lyndon Nicholson
Peter Fagg	Robert Paul Owens
John Barry Goldsmith	Kyle Merrick Whitbread
John Stuart Hancock	

Past Grand Standard Bearer

Trevor Charles Burton	Matthew Richards
Hugh James Everitt	Alvan Kenneth Rolle
Patrick Jean Jaillet	Mervyn John Setchell
Dennis William Kinnersley	Ralph Jackson Short
Ian Duncan MacGregor	Anthony Lancelot Stephens
Anthony Potton	Christopher William Gordon Stewart
Herve Richard	Peter David Stanlake Wollington

Past Grand Steward

Charles Robert Dillette	Leslie Alexander Martin
Howard Harris	Harvey Andrew Roland

The Grand Master's Special Awards

PROMOTIONS

Past Grand Chancellor

John Boyington, *CBE*

Past Grand Councillor

Ronald James Bridger	Geoffrey William Hawkins
Anthony Carney	Ronald Joseph Murtagh
Roger Deacon	Sir Paul Michael Williams, <i>OBE, KStJ, DL</i>

Past Grand Lecturer

David Alderson	Gary Douglas Taylor
Stephen Roberts	Robert Christopher Vaughan

Past Grand Conductor of the Council

Roy Leslie Blunden	Kenneth William Healey
Lucjon Leon Finnis	Sterling Bryan Soares

PAST RANKS (FIRST APPOINTMENTS)

Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies

Anthony Francis John Ball
John Nigel Bruce
Trevor Clarke
Luis Hui
Andrew Edward Inglesfield

Patrick McCaw
Stephen Glen McConnell
Christopher John Rogers
Andrew William Stephens

Past Grand Sword Bearer

Howard Nicholas Emmett
Philip Andrew Falla
Sam Sammakia

Colin Sansom
Arthur George Belphester Thomas

Past Grand Standard Bearer

Kieran John Hughes

4. THE HISTORY OF THE ORDER

The Most Illustrious Grand Master called upon R.III.Comp. Richard Gan, IX, P.G.P.C.W., Grand Historiographer, who addressed Grand Council as follows:

'Most Illustrious Grand Master and Companions, to abridge a book of over 150,000 words into a ten minute talk is a nigh on impossible task, as you will see when you receive a copy of the book. Which is why, today, I am going to concentrate on the events that led up to the inauguration of Grand Council in 1873 and not as often mistakenly stated in 1871.

'First, a little context: in 1870 Mark Grand Lodge had been in existence for 14 years, and had just short of a hundred lodges under its control. It was, however, facing a number of difficulties, not least from the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland which had established 19 Scottish Mark Lodges in England and, adding insult to injury, had even formed a Scottish Mark Province in Lancashire.

'In addition, there was potential competition for members from three recently formed Orders: the Red Cross of Constantine in 1865; the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (SRIA) in 1867; and the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Misraim in 1870. In that regard the Mark was not alone. Two other major Orders were also facing similar pressures: the Knights Templar, re-established after the death of the Duke of Sussex in 1843, and Supreme Council 33 Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Rite [Rose Croix] was formed in 1845.

'Negotiations between the Mark, KT, and the Rose Croix, based largely on self-interest, started in December 1869, and led to a **Treaty of Alliance** signed in 1871. It provided for the mutual recognition of each other's sovereignty, and the ability to prevent the recognition of any new potentially competitive sovereign bodies. It also had one other key provision which I will return to later.

'In an attempt to try increase the attraction of belonging to a Mark lodge, and to encourage the remaining independent Mark lodges to join Mark Grand Lodge, it was agreed in December 1870 by Mark Grand Lodge that, in addition to the degrees of Royal Ark Mariner, it should introduce the degrees of **Excellent, Most Excellent, and Super-Excellent Master**, and one or two others – in other words, the degrees of the **Royal and Select Masters**. The Grand Master of the Mark, the Reverend George Portal, was empowered by Grand Lodge 'to organise a body for the government of such degrees...', in other words a Grand Council.

'The most likely source for the inspiration for the introduction of the Cryptic degrees into England, was from a book originally published in New York but reviewed in *The Freemason* in April 1870. It was called *The Text Book of Cryptic Masonry*, written by Jackson H. Chase, and it contained the complete ritual of the Order. What was not disclosed at the

time is that it had come to the attention of Revd Portal and Frederick Binckes, Grand Secretary of the Mark, that a certain Morton Edwards was in possession of what become known as the 'The Duke of Clarence Warrant of 1793'.

'Although entirely spurious, the warrant purported to give Edwards authority over not only the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner, but also that of the Degree of Excellent Master. In order to prevent any claim by Edwards, who may have allegedly had hold over the Cryptic Degrees, it was vital that Mark Grand Lodge should establish its own Grand Council before Edwards could do the same – I suppose on the basis that possession is nine-tenths of the law! Time was of the essence, but there was a complete absence of any members of the Cryptic Degrees in England. This meant that Portal had to look further afield, and this is the reason why, in February 1871, an approach was made to both the Grand Council of the State of New York, and the Grand Chapter of the State of New York, to introduce the Cryptic Degrees and that of Most Excellent Master into England.

'Thus, it was that in **July 1871**, none other than the same Jackson H. Chase, who conveniently also happened to be the Grand Lecturer of both the Grand Council and the Grand Chapter of New York, together with Albert Goodall and three other Companions, arrived in London to form four councils under the auspices of the **Grand Council of New York**, with a view to them ultimately forming themselves into a Grand Council of England.

'The arrangement had been brokered by Portal through his colleague Nathaniel Philips at Supreme Council in London, and the latter's opposite number, the Grand Representative of Supreme Council in New York, Albert Goodall – who said that networking was a modern innovation! Portal, of necessity, had played things very close to his chest, and he appears not even to have kept his Grand Secretary Binckes in the loop. Of course, something like that would never happen today, would it? The net result was that at very short notice, Binckes, using all his contacts, had to find some forty candidates to share between the four proposed new Councils. The Founders included eighteen Mark Grand Officers, of whom sixteen had been present at the meeting of Mark Grand Lodge in June 1871. One can just imagine Binckes doing the rounds before and after the meeting doing his best to persuade his Mark colleagues of the benefits of joining this brand-new Order. Something of the sort I am sure still goes on nowadays. If you think about it, the consequence of his friendly persuasion is the reason why most of us are here today.

'Some further context helps explain what happened next, or rather what didn't happen next. The protocol observed in the Cryptic Degrees and indeed other Orders of Masonry in the USA, both then and now, is that the constitution – or what we would now term consecration – of a council is a two-stage process. Having petitioned for a new council, the prospective founders are granted a dispensation to operate as a council for a probationary period – usually one year. After a year in operation the putative council would receive a visit from the Grand Lecturer, who would need to be satisfied that the council was viable, had a sufficient number of prospective candidates, and that the petitioners were carrying out the ritual to an appropriate standard. Only then would a warrant of constitution be granted by Grand Council on the recommendation of the Grand Lecturer.

'The first part of the two-stage process took place in London in July and August 1871 when the four councils were initially formed by Jackson H. Chase. The procedure for the second part was accelerated and the new councils' warrants were issued without charge by the Grand Council in New York in February 1872 to **Grand Master's Council No. 57, Constantine No. 58, Macdonald No. 59, and Mark No. 60.**

'In addition, and contrary to popular belief, the Grand Council in New York did not inaugurate our Grand Council. The intention right from the outset was only to constitute the four councils – the accepted minimum number required to form a new Grand Council being three. This would then enable the members of the four councils, when they considered it appropriate, to vote to form themselves into a new Grand Council, with the full knowledge and blessing of the Grand Council of New York. It should now be clear

that our own **Grand Council** could only have legitimately inaugurated sometime after February 1872, once the four councils had been granted warrants and been properly constituted and consecrated, and which we now know happened in **July 1873**.

'The last two final pieces of the jigsaw can now also be put into place: the first is as to why did Portal and Binckes fabricate the Minutes to make it appear that Grand Council had been inaugurated by Chase on August 1871? Incidentally, the first public notification of the so-called "inauguration" appeared in *The Freemason* on 26 August – after Chase had set sail for New York, and was thus unaware of the claims being made. The second is as to why, notwithstanding the fact that the necessary warrants had been granted in February 1872, was our Grand Council not legitimately inaugurated until July 1873?

'The answer to the first is in part answered by a quote from Chase himself, when on the completion of the formation of the four councils on 21 August 1871 he stated that: "The four Councils had taken the preliminary steps toward forming the Grand Council of England ... in order to occupy the territory and prevent the organisation of other Councils without the proper authority". It took me some time to realise that the latter statement referred to none other than Morton Edwards.

'The answer to the second part also involves Morton Edwards. From 1870 it took Portal and Binckes three years to finally give Edwards his comeuppance. When it happened it was entirely self-inflicted – rather reminiscent of Al Capone who was convicted for tax offences and not for his main crimes and misdemeanours. Edwards, for reasons best known to himself, but no doubt financial, notwithstanding that he was not even a member of the Order, installed, for a not insubstantial fee, a somewhat naive Mason as a Knight into the KT. It will be recalled that in 1871 the Mark had entered into a tri-partite treaty of alliance with the Ancient and Accepted Rite and the KT. When the Brother concerned complained, the KT, through a provision in the treaty, formally requested the Mark to instigate disciplinary proceedings against Edwards, which it willingly did. Edwards, rather than relinquish his membership of the Mark which he was desperate to retain at almost any cost, struck a deal with Portal and Binckes, whereby he agreed to give up any interest he purported to have over both the Royal Ark Mariner and the Cryptic Degrees. This he confirmed in a humiliating letter, the contents of which were dictated to him by Binckes and published in *The Freemason* in December 1872.

'Not surprisingly, the Grand Council in New York had for some time after February 1872 been putting pressure on Portal and Binckes to complete the process of constituting the four Councils in London. What is now clear is that Portal, who was in possession of the necessary warrants as early as August 1872, was not prepared to move things forward, to jeopardise the future, until he was certain that the threat from Edwards had been neutralised. Which is why it was not until May 1873 that Binckes started to progress matters with an interchange of correspondence with the Grand Council in New York.

'Finally, in July 1873, in the presence of Albert Goodall, who was no doubt there to ensure that the proper procedures were observed, Frederick Binckes acting with the authority of the Grand Council of New York, formally constituted the four new councils. The members of which then voted to form themselves into a Grand Council, which was subsequently inaugurated by Binckes, who then proceeded to install the **Revd George Portal** as the first **Grand Master**. At which point the four Councils became **Grand Master's Council No. 1, Constantine No. 2, Macdonald No. 3, and Mark No. 4**. Which is why, of course, we are all here today to celebrate the sesquicentenary of the Grand Council of England and Wales and its Districts and Councils Overseas.

'I hope this short talk has been of some interest, and that you will find the information contained in the history of the Order, *150 Years of Cryptic Masonry*, which you will all receive a copy of after the meeting, even more enlightening.

'Most Illustrious Grand Master and Companions, thank you for your attention.'

5. DEDICATION OF THE NEW ARK OF THE COVENANT AND EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS ENGRAVED THEREON

The Most Illustrious Grand Master announced the dedication of the new Ark of the Covenant. The Grand Director of Ceremonies then formed an escort to collect the Ark and to carry it into Grand Council.

The Most Illustrious Grand Master called upon the Grand Chaplain to read from the Book of Exodus 37:1–9. R.III.Comp. David S. Rose, G.Coun., then addressed Grand Council as follows:

EXPLANATION OF THE SYMBOLS ENGRAVED ON THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

'Most Illustrious Grand Master and Companions, as we heard in the biblical explanation of the raising of the Ark from the Book of Exodus, the Ark that lies before us dates in its origin from the time that the Israelites, in the wilderness of Sinai, following their exodus from their Egyptian bondage, were commanded to build a Tabernacle that would also house the Ark of the Covenant – the resting place of the Shechina, “the Divine Presence” , as described in the Degrees of our Order. Some of you may, of course, have been enlightened by alternative sources of origin, perhaps from the 1981 film *Raiders of the Lost Ark!* This Ark was carried with the people as they moved, after 40 years sojourn, towards and crossing the River Jordan, resting initially in Gilgal as recorded in the biblical book of Joshua and so dramatically and memorably represented in one of our Orders of Masonry.

'In the Books of 1 Samuel and 1 Kings, the Tabernacle, with the Ark, rested under the kingship of David in Hebron and Jerusalem. Solomon, David's son and chosen successor, aided by Hiram (Churam) King of Tyre, who supplied men and materials, and by Hiram (Churam), the widow's son of the Tribe of Dan, the gifted artisan, replaced the Tabernacle with his magnificent Temple with the Ark placed therein. The date was then traditionally respected as 3,000 years after the Creation. Commemorating this move, our early leaders in Masonry appended to each side of the “resemblance” of the Ark the initials of those significant characters, namely the three Grand Masters who dedicated the Temple at Jerusalem: on the east face, **King Solomon**; at the north, **King Hiram** (Churam); on the south, **Hiram Abif**; with the date in the west, as set out in our ritual (and for ease of reference in our sesquicentenary programme).

'The use of initials is familiar to us: in the Ritual of the Holy Royal Arch, the sojourners, having returned from their captivity in Babylon, discovered in the hidden vault the Altar of Innocence, the Double Cube, inscribed with the initials of the three Grand Masters “**SKI, HKT, HAB**” [Solomon, Hiram and Hiram Abif]. Interestingly, in studying Masonic meanings of familiar words, there is the distinction in translation into, first, Greek then English of the original Hebrew words for Ark, Arch and Arc. The initials on this Ark are in Hebrew characters. The Hebrew alphabet comprises 22 letters. Let me add that the initial identification of letters is said to have been derived from the Phoenicians. As with many Semitic languages, the reading of Hebrew characters is from right to left. In fact the Ancient Egyptians not only read their symbols from right to left, but also from left to right and even from top to bottom.

East Face—Solomon, King of Israel, is explained in the Hebrew as being composed of the first letters of the three words “Sh'lomo, Melech Yisroel”:



• **Shin** – the first letter of the alphabet for Solomon is the twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It has significance in other Orders as many will know;

• **Mem** – for “Melech” (King), the thirteenth letter of the alphabet; and

• **Yad** – “for Israel”, the tenth letter of the alphabet.

Being he who conceived, built, consecrated and dedicated the Temple, it is understandable that it would be the initials of Solomon facing towards the east.

North Face—On the north face lie the initials of Hiram (Churam), King of Tyre, who provided men and materials for Solomon. As well explained in the Lecture in the Craft First Degree, in the Advancement Ceremony of the Mark Degree, and in our own Degrees, Cryptic Masons learn of HKT's [Hiram's] significant contribution to the building of Solomon's Temple. Hiram, King of Tyre – Hiram (Churam) Melech Tzur:

חמצ

ח Chet – (Churam) the eighth letter of the alphabet;

מ Mem – as before “Melech” (King); and

צ Tzadi – the first letter of “Tzur” Tyre, the port city of The Lebanon.

This eighteenth letter as a word translates as “righteous” רצדק, and from its root etymology: Tzedaka “charity” צדקה – so fundamental a principle of Masonry.

South Face—on the south face, Hiram Abif is commemorated – Hiram (Churam), the widow's son. Reading right to left, the letters flow as “H BA”:

חבא

ח Chet (H) – Hiram (Churam);

ב Beit – the second letter of the word “Ben” בן, “the son of”;

א Aleph – the first letter of the word “Almana” הנמלא , meaning “widow”.

‘Yet, when this is read left to right it is “H AB” (A Biff). The interpretation of the suffix “abi” is disputed. Scholars record this to mean “master” but also “father”. There are conflicting interpretations of Hiram (Churam) even in the VSL: in the Book of Kings, chap. 7; in the Book of 2 Chronicles; and the New King James version of the bible translates “Churam abi” as “Churam my master craftsman”. Anderson referred to Hiram as a highly placed and important person in his 1723 Constitutions – 300 years ago – and “decided on AB”. Hiram Abif ... we so follow.

West Face—Now, proceeding finally to the fourth “west side”: each Hebrew letter corresponds to and has assigned a value and a number.

שגא

The fourth “west face”, “highlighting 3,000 years since The Creation of the World”, challenges us. We are familiar with alternates to the Sumerian / Arabic numerals. We have Masonic letters and numbering (see the Mark ritual). Consider also the Roman letters/numerals (I, V, X, L, C, D, M). Here, with the Hebrew, we refer back to the earlier reference: “each letter corresponds to a number”. In the study of the Kabala there are deep mystic links interpreted through this “gematria” connection. It can be said that the three initials can be read in two ways:

ש Shin – reading right to left, the first of the two letter, already described in the explanation of the East Face (Solomon) השל is, in like manner, the first letter of the word for “three” (Sh'losh) שולש;

א Aleph – the second letter, is the first letter of the word “Alaphim” אלפא, translated as “thousands”. So, 3,000 is understood;

ג – What then of the third character “with the dot”? Reading left to right, in the Hebrew tradition the “dot” above a letter signifies that it is to be read as a date, not a number or a word. On graves in Europe, one regularly see this “dot”. The letter “**Gimmel**” ג, which “lies below the dot”, is the third letter and in gematria “the number 3”. This, when read with the middle character **א** “Aleph”, the first letter, as above, of the word alephim אלפא, together read “Three Thousand”. Thus, as always in Freemasonry, we have a choice: sharing the middle “Aleph” אג or אש, whether reading right to left or left to right, we achieve the same answer: 3,000.

‘I trust this has clarified any uncertainty of the initials around our Ark of the Covenant and will stimulate interest in further study. In conclusion, Companions, may the wisdom of SKI [Solomon], the generosity of HKT [Hiram] and the creative talents of HAB [Hiram Abif] long inspire our Companions to greater achievement through their example. Thank you, Most Illustrious Grand Master and Companions.’

The Most Illustrious Grand Master, then dedicated the Ark to the service of Cryptic Masonry and called upon the Grand Chaplain, as follows:

ORATION

'Here the Shekinah, or Divine Presence, rested and was visible in the presence of the cloud over it. Hence the Bath-Kol issued and the voice of God was heard. I suspect that many of us, at some stage in our lives, when lost for words, or in the depths of some despair, in search of any inspiration, a sudden thought or sentence appears when least expected, and we wonder – now where did that come from? We have all felt that spiritual awareness as we witness or take part in that awe-inspiring journey around the Ark of the Covenant in the Royal Master ceremony, and we are told “and between the wings of the cherubs issued the Bath-Kol, the voice of God”. We are told that this might occur to a chosen few, to one, or to many, as opposed to a prophet, who proclaims the will of God, whether we wish to hear it or not!

'The Old Testament records on many occasions: Elijah heard God speaking to him in a still, small voice; Isaiah heard the voice of one crying in the wilderness; some will claim the voice was heard in the thunder or the roar of the sea. How do WE hear it today? Might it be our conscience, if we know we have done something wrong... “A voice came from Heaven” is a phrase used in the Talmud and could therefore be heard by the righteous as well as sinners, common people as well as the prophets of the Most High. We read that God was heard by Abraham in the burning bush; by the Israelites as they crossed the sea of reeds; by Saul, David, Solomon, Paul, on the road to Damascus; at the baptism of Jesus – “this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.”

'But, the Shekinah more indicates the actual presence of God, in a pillar of fire or cloud, the presence of the Glory of God. Shekinah is an old Hebrew word meaning “one who dwells” and throughout the New Testament there are many references of the word becoming flesh and dwelling amongst us and we beheld His Glory. When one or two are gathered together in my name, there shall I be amongst you. The Shekinah is invoked in Friday night prayers, before the meal; it appears in the Kabbalah as the feminine Jewish divine; and also in the Koran, meaning tranquillity, peace or calm. And, as we contemplate this beautiful Ark before us today, we can still experience the presence of our Great Creator, we could, still, hear the voice of God, but how many stop to listen?

'Bless, O Lord, this Ark set before us, made by the skills of men, guided by your Holy wisdom, to be revered by us and for future generations, that we may continue to enjoy your gifts and thereby remain always in mind of the needs of others. So mote it be.'

6. RECOGNITION OF GRAND MASTER'S COUNCIL NO. 1 AS TIME IMMEMORIAL

The Most Illustrious Grand Master directed the Grand Director of Ceremonies to assemble the members of the Council present on the floor of the Temple. The Grand Recorder read the Charter of Recognition and stated that, henceforth, the Council would be known as **Grand Master's Council TI**. The Most Illustrious Grand Master then presented the Council's Thrice Illustrious Master with the Charter of Recognition and a Breast Jewel.

7. CHARITABLE APPEAL IN CELEBRATION OF THE SESQUICENTENARY

The Most Illustrious Grand Master invited the Grand Principal Conductor of the Work to give a brief snapshot of the charity appeal to mark the occasion of the sesquicentenary.

R.III.Comp. Paul Anthony Norman, G.P.C.W., IX, addressed the Companions as follows:

'Companions, early in 2021 the working party, tasked with the detail for today, met on many occasions, and, as you can imagine, talked a great deal! From those discussions came much of what you have witnessed, and I very much hope enjoyed.

'An idea began to surface concerning the legacy of the event and what could be the lasting tribute to 150 years of existence. It was suggested we have a fund-raising appeal. The idea was tossed around by the Grand Master, the Deputy Grand Master and myself,

and it was agreed that I would prepare a paper for discussion by the working party. The first hurdle was to convince the working party that this legacy appeal had legs. After some serious debate, the project took a leap forward when I was asked to flesh out the original proposal. This time the project began to gather some momentum and we began to identify the who, when and how. My next task was to identify three national charities with a regional structure, mirroring our Districts. Well, I thought that was going to be an easy task – how wrong could I be! Eventually three were nominated, and, after asking the working party for advice, one was roundly rejected and two were agreeable. I never did find that elusive third charity. It was about this time that the Grand Master agreed that the project could proceed, so we began some soft research. By that I mean we sought consultation from a wider and very diverse audience! This proved to be educational and enlightening, which resulted in a change of thought and direction.

'I am delighted to tell you that our Most Illustrious Grand Master accepted the office of **Appeal President** and is and continues to be an active supporter of the Appeal. Now we had a solid foundation to move the project on and appoint a **Festival Chairman**. This had to be someone with a background in and an understanding of the Masonic world and the Cryptic way. The Grand Master asked R.III.Comp. James Newman, Past Grand Chancellor and a past Chairman of the Masonic Foundation, if he would take on this task. He willingly agreed and has been most helpful in guiding us to today's launch.

'The appeal, which begins today and concludes on 1 October 2024, will provide a legacy for us and our successors, raise awareness amongst our Masonic brethren of our sesquicentenary, and give back something to the communities in which we live and work, providing a special endowment to reflect on.

'How will we achieve this? Every District and unattached Council is tasked with being involved. I appreciate that we all have many calls for charity, both in time and money, but I make no apology in asking you for an extra effort for this special year, and I can promise you it will be for the sesquicentenary year only.

'So now you know “why”, I would like to explain a little about “how”. Every Companion can individually contribute directly to our special **Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) relief chest**. Contributions must be made by bank transfer to the relief chest using the correct payment details. Due to the short length of our appeal, monthly standing order contributions will not be possible. However, multiple payments will be accepted. The MCF has been chosen because it specialises in collecting small amounts, offers a good rate of interest, collects gift aid, employs specially trained officers who deal with appeals every day and also can provide a level of support not available by simply opening an account in a bank. Full details of how to pay into the fund will be available shortly and the festival chairman intends to hold a Zoom meeting with District Grand Masters to share with them the detail of how, what and why.

'The Festival President and Chairman are united in the thought that there should be no extras, festival ties, pins or badges. Those have a cost which of course is borne by the appeal. It was decided that 100% of the donations would be available for your chosen charities. So now you know the “how”, the appeal is a challenge for each District to manage. The Grand Master hopes they will use the opportunity to embrace all Companions and interested Brethren by inviting them along to events. The focus must be on having a good time, a laugh, a good dinner or party and contributing to the **150th Anniversary Appeal**.

'So now to who benefits: I stated earlier that three charities were chosen and discarded. In light of this it has been decided that Districts, Councils or Companions may apply for grants for their favoured local charities. An **application form** will be available to complete online from **September 2024**. The only request is that nominated charities are registered with the charity commission. Each **grant application** will be looked at by a panel of Masons representing a broad membership. Successful applicants and sponsors

will be notified via email in December 2024. At the Grand Council meeting in April 2025, the recipients will be acknowledged and a final total announced.

'Those still awake will have noticed that I have as yet not mentioned an appeal total. I can announce that our appeal total for each companion is £25. Naturally many of you will give more, some of you may choose to become patrons of the fund, details of which will follow. Companions, I am greatly heartened by the responses so far from the District Grand Masters, who together with your support ensures the target of **£150,000** is well within our reach.

'Grand Master, thank you for granting me the privilege of addressing this sesquicentenary meeting, I assure you, Sir, we will not let you down.'

8. ADDRESS BY THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER

The Most Illustrious Grand Master addressed the Companions as follows:

'May I begin by welcoming you all here today on this very special occasion, and say how delighted I am at the tremendous size of this gathering. I congratulate those who received Appointments and Promotions to Grand Rank today and those who received theirs in April, and whom we have today acknowledged. In either case, Grand Rank in this Order is an achievement to be very proud of and serves not only to recognise your past contributions, but also as an inducement to further efforts. I also congratulate Sam Sammakia, now an Illustrious Companion for his winning design in the lapel pin competition, which when you all receive yours later in the goodie bag, you will see features a subtle representation of a broken triangle.

'As this is a special meeting, I will not be giving you the usual snapshot of Grand Council's activities of the year – you will have to curb your curiosity until next April. However, we did install a new Dist.G.M. for Devon and Cornwall in July, and would ask R.III.Comp. Gary Peard to stand and be recognised. This was in consequence of the retirement of R.III.Comp. Jan Olszewski, who served that office with distinction for nine years. I have personally thanked Jan for his sterling service over many years and wish him happiness and a great improvement in his health during his retirement. Also, sadly, this will be the last Grand Council meeting attended by R.III.Comp. Robert Mitchell, as Dist.G.M. for Lancashire, who has asked to retire from his post early next year, after almost a decade of glorious contribution to our Order. Robert, I will of course write to you formally in due course, but in the meantime, we are all extremely grateful to you and thank you so much. I have appointed Ill.Comp. Geoffrey Catterall, P.G.Cond.C., to succeed Robert and will be pleased to install him on 17 February 2024.

'I now go on to the most pleasant aspect of today's proceedings, to welcome our visitors from our Sister and Daughter Constitutions from overseas and the Heads of our Companion Orders, and I ask you to save your tumultuous approbation until after I have concluded an inevitably long list.

From our Daughter Grand Councils:

'Starting with the Grand Council of France, M.III.Comp. Guy Bertherat, Grand Master; and you are accompanied by R.III.Comp. Bernard Girod, Dep.G.M.; R.III.Comp. Gerard Leymonie, G.P.C.W.; and two of my personal guests: R.III.Comp. Dr Christian Amine, P.G.P.C.W., and R.III.Comp. Dominique Paquet. Bienvenue a vous tous!;

From South East Asia, the Grand Master, M.III.Comp. Dr Boo Khean Khoo, has unfortunately been unable to attend due to his health, but Illustrious Companions Dr Harry Yoon Hiap Chin, P.G.Cond.C., Anthony Downes, Dep.G.D.C., and Ian Philip Ellston are all in attendance. You are all most welcome and I thank you for your hospitality during my enjoyable visit in June;

From the Grand Council of India, M.III.Comp. Stephen Hindes, Grand Master. You are accompanied by M.III.Comp. Madavan Chellappa, Past Grand Master; your Deputy Grand Master R.III.Comp. Bharat Epur; and R.III.Comp. Routhu Umashankar, P.G.Coun.

From our Sister Grand Councils:

'From Masonry in Finland, Ill.Comp. Kimmo Hellgren, another of my personal guests;
From the Grand Council of Florida, R.Ill.Comp. Max Bornstein, District Deputy Grand Master;
From the Grand Council of Greece, M.Ill.Comp. Dimitris Mamas, O.S.T., Past Grand Master, M.Ill.Comp. Dimitris Mamas, Past Grand Master, and R.Ill.Comp. Andreas Spyropoulos, P.G.P.C.W., my personal guest, and thank you, Andreas, for the wonderful hospitality we enjoyed in Rhodes last week, and many congratulations on a most successful synod and conference;
From the Grand Council of Idaho, Past Grand Master M.P.Comp. David Grindle;
From the Grand Council of Indiana, R.Ill.Comp. David Ulrich, Grand Recorder and R.Ill. Comp. Michael Doxee, Grand Steward. Good to see you!;
From the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the State of Missouri, M.Ill.Comp. William Gene Snyder, Past Grand Master;
From the Grand Council of New Jersey, M.Ill.Comp. Sean Harold McNorton, Grand Master;
From Grand Council of New York, M.Ill.Comp. John A. Gallant, Past Grand Master, who we welcome and thank for letting us borrow the Degree of Anointed Kings which we of course transposed into the Silver Trowel;
From the Grand Council of Ontario, M.Ill.Comp. Prince D. Selvaraj, Grand Master;
From the Grand Council of Texas, R.Ill.Comp. Larry Tucker, Past Deputy Grand Master.

Overseas guests from our own Constitution:

'From Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, the Grand Inspector V.Ill.Comp. Harding Walter, accompanied by Ill.Comp. Sterling Bryan Soares, P.A.G.D.C.; Ill.Comp. Richard Haylock Coles; Ill.Comp. Billon Delroy Young-Chin, JP, P.G.Cond.C.; Ill.Comp. Kenneth Roy Gooden, P.G.Capt.Gd.; Ill.Comp. Bryan Lewis Ashenheim, C.O.R.; and Comp. Robert Sheldon Whorms;
From the District of South and East Caribbean, the District Grand Master, R.Ill.Comp. Llewelyn Gill, *SLMM*, with V.Ill.Comp. Leslie Eustace Bindon Nanton, P.G.Lect., V.Ill. Comp. Ralph Maxwell Craig, *JP*, P.G.Lect.; Ill.Comp. Stephen Brian Cobham, P.G.Capt. Gd.; Ill.Comp. Albert Henry Daniels, P.G.Cond.C.; Ill.Comp. Arthur George Belphester Thomas, P.G.Swd.B. – a recipient today; Ill.Comp. Winston Anthony Edwards, P.G.Swd.B.;
From South Africa, Ill.Comp. Leslie Alexander Martin, P.G.Stwd.

From our Unattached Councils:

'Royal Victoria Council No. 119 (Nassau) – Ill.Comp. Charles Robert Dillette;
Flanders Council No. 177 (Belgium) – Ill.Comp. Jean Verbist; Ill.Comp. Pierre Frederic Ambrody; Ill.Comp. Geoffrey Declan Kavanagh; Ill.Comp. Philip Charles Clare; and Ill. Comp. Dennis William Kinnersley;
Koning Salomo Council No.293 (Netherlands) – Ill.Comp. 'Loek' Aloysius Captijn, P.G.St.B.; Ill.Comp. Frank C. J. Poot, P.G.Cond.C.; Ill.Comp. Pieter Jan Nagel;
La Crypte Du Lemman Council No. 300 (Switzerland) – Ill.Comp. Herve Richard, P.G.St.B.;
Jeanne d'Arc Council No. 341 (Belgium) – Ill.Comp. Michael Watkins Fahey.

Heads of our Companion Orders:

'R.Ill.Comp. John Prizeman, P.G.Chan. – Pro Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons;
R.Ill.Comp. Paul Raymond Clement, P.G.Chan. – Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master of the Great Priory of Knights Templar;
R.Ill.Comp. Graham Flight, P.G.Chan. – Grand Sovereign of the Red Cross of Constantine;
R.Ill.Comp. Thomas Jackson, P.G.Chan. – Grand Master of the Allied Masonic Degrees;

R.III.Comp. Andrew Christopher Sweeney, P.G.Chan. – Grand Supreme Ruler of the Order of the Secret Monitor;

R.III.Comp. Ian Stanley Currans, P.G.Chan. – Grand Summus of the Scarlet Cord;

V.III Comp. Dr Paul Mycock, P.G.Lect. – First Grand Master Mason of the Operatives;

R.III.Comp. Christopher Maiden, P.G.Chan. – Grand High Priest of the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests and Order of Holy Wisdom;

V.III.Comp. Dr Vivian Thomas, *JP*, our G.Chap. – Grand Master of the Grand Priory of the Knights Beneficent of the Holy City;

R.III.Comp. Tony William Llewellyn, P.G.Coun. – Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia;

Comp. Revd Dr Simon Alexander Thorn – Grand Prior of the Ancient and Accepted Rite.

'I am also delighted to welcome our Past Deputy Grand Master, R.III.Comp. Michael Herbert. We also have two of our Past Grand Principal Conductors of the Work: John Chambers and Richard Gan. Companions, our honoured guests!

'As I said in my introduction, a lot has happened since our inception. A long, long time, Companions, and time is naturally an essential part of our lives and actions. So, I thank you all for giving up your time, for making time for both today and for your Districts, Inspectorates and for your Councils, all the time. Because time is an equal opportunity employer. Each human being has exactly the same number of hours and minutes each day. Rich people cannot buy more hours and scientists cannot invent more minutes, and you cannot save time to spend on another day. Even so, it is amazingly fair. No matter how much time you have wasted in the past, you will still have an entire tomorrow. Let us grasp that tomorrow, Companions, and see this wonderful Order safely into the magnificent era of its Bicentenary.

'Companions, I cannot conclude this meeting without drawing attention once again to the great debt of gratitude we owe to those who administer and direct and lead Cryptic Masonry on occasions such as this, not to mention throughout the year. I refer to our District Grand Masters and Grand Inspectors for their unstinting commitment to their charges and to the Order. I am also delighted, to see a goodly number of Custodians of the Ninth Arch and Past District Grand Masters in attendance. To the Celebration Committee, thank you all, it was hard work but, in the end, you produced an Oscar winning performance!

'To the Grand P.C.W., for his ingenuity and enthusiasm regarding our Charity Appeal, which I commend to you all. To the Grand Recorder and his staff for their industry and endeavour, always delivered with courtesy and professionalism. To the Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team, and in that I include as well as the Deputies and Assistant G.D.C.s, the Manciples, and the Grand Sentinel, for the organisation and preparation prior to this meeting and for the immaculate execution of ceremonial expertise during it. To John Vasquez and his associates here at Freemasons' Hall, for their valuable assistance and support. And, finally, to Richard Gan for his excellent book on our history.

'The following quotation has been attributed to several people: Eleanor Roosevelt, the cartoonist Bil Keane and the comedienne Joan Rivers. Whoever said it, it is quite appropriate: "Yesterday the past, tomorrow the future, but today is a gift. That's why it's called the present." Companions, continue to enjoy your Cryptic Masonry. It is very special so please keep it that way. This has been a wonderful day of celebration. The Roman playwright Plautus said a very, very long time ago: "Let us celebrate the occasion with sweet words and wine". Well, I cannot guarantee the sweet words, but I can promise you the wine, so I will not delay you from it any further. Finally, Companions, be of one mind, live in peace, and may the Supreme Master of the Universe delight to dwell amongst you and bless you for evermore. I thank you for your attention.

9. CLOSING

Grand Council was closed in Ample Form.