

The District Grand Master's address to District Grand Council on Saturday 28th March 2015.

I was very grateful for the support at the Installation meeting last March, in addition to the Grand Council team led by the Grand Master we had 12 District Grand Masters together with 30 other distinguished guests combined with other guests and members of the District of Surrey totalling 134.

I wrote to congratulate those members who received Grand Rank in April last year and attended the Investiture. I have also written to those who will receive promotions and appointments this year -

Promotions

Michael Flint, **PGLect**
David Willmott, **PGLect**
Tony Wright, **PGLect**
John Bryant, **PGCaptGd**
Jim Jones, **PGCondC**
Peter Kipps, **PGCondC**

First Appointments

Jack Love, **PAGDC**
Nigel Thomson, **PGSwdB**
Mike Neville, **GMan**

In addition, Ill.Comp. Louis Keats continues as Deputy Grand Chaplain. I doubt we will be allowed so many next year.

I was pleased that so many District Officers accompanied me on visits across the District. I have visited every Council so far with one exception I was leaving Pride of Surrey till earlier this month but sadly my Mother died and I could not attend. There is an excellent photographic report on the web site though.

My thanks to the District Executive for their support not only in visiting and supporting our own Councils but also in supporting other Districts at their annual meetings. Between us we have, so far, attended fifteen other District Meetings. We were all impressed by the welcome and friendliness of Cryptic Masons wherever we went.

The meeting of Weald of Surrey Council last July saw five Surrey Companions and one Hertfordshire Companion receive the Thrice Illustrious Master degree and their silver trowels.

We will be holding a District Barbecue on Sunday 21st June organised by our Deputy District Grand Master and the coming year will also see Simon McCarthy organise our first ever District Golf Tournament.

I am concerned, as no doubt we all are, that our numbers have decreased, albeit slowly over the past few years. Sadly this reflects the situation and generally we will be making every effort to reverse this trend in the years ahead.

They say it pays to advertise and we have taken note of the success experienced by other Districts in using advertising banners and I have commissioned some for Surrey. I am grateful to Ill Comp Alan Trotter for his undoubted skills and modesty. We are also bringing up to date an information leaflet/flyer about the benefits of membership.

At the start of this year I deliberately lured back into the team for one year members who had previously carried out important roles in the District. Ill Comp Louis Keats, **DepGChap** as Deputy District Grand Master, Ill Comp John Fleetwood as Chaplain and Ill Comp Tony Wright as District Grand Director of Ceremonies, to provide a sound footing for my first year. I am very grateful to each for their support. I have found what I hope will be sound replacements to take the District forward.

As regards Charity we have two major Festivals currently in progress in Surrey – the Surrey Craft 2019 Festival in favour of the RMBI and the Surrey Mark 2022 Festival for the MBF. As most of our members will be contributing heavily to these two major Festivals I will not be adding to the pressure. I have stated that if Companions want some direction I would welcome any contribution in aid of the Alzheimer's Society.

I am grateful too to R Ill Comp Arnold Long for the support he has given me. last year he rang me from the garden, so it is great to see him here today. I hope you all continue to enjoy your Cryptic masonry.

Thank you Companions and God bless.

David J. Blackburn, District Grand Master.