

Provincial Prior's Address Saturday 3rd September 2011

Brother Knights, a short time ago a very good non-Masonic friend asked me the purpose of our Provincial Priory Meetings. My instant response was that it served the same purpose as the AGM of a company or Building Society; but on reflection I realise it is so much more than just an administrative tool to regulate our affairs.

Our Meetings give us the opportunity to recognise and celebrate all that is good within our Order; the support our members give to their Preceptories, to our Province and the Order in general, and the hospitality we enjoy and fellowship we share with the other Provinces which make up the great Knight Templar Family. Most importantly it gives people such as me a timely reminder that without that support we are as nothing.

Not surprisingly then much of my address today will highlight the support our members continue to give to our Order so willingly. I never cease to be amazed how readily you respond to any rallying call no matter from whence it comes. You may not all gather around the beauteous banner as was the custom of our Medieval Knights but your response is always positive and effective. And I start by thanking the outgoing team who over the past 12 months have progressed around the Province with me; thank you for your fellowship, I hope you have found it a rewarding experience.

Since the success of our Richard Carlile 1825 Ritual Demonstration at Winchester in 2009, the team have given many repeat performances in aid of our Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master's Anabta Appeal. Thanks to their efforts over £6,500 was contributed to that appeal, and so I thank all the members who have so readily given of their time and at their own expense journeyed far and wide; and indeed are still doing so.

I also thank Angus Steel for organising two B.B.Q's which raised in excess of £1300 for the Appeal.

The Anabta Appeal is now closed and raised in excess of the original target. The surplus money has been ring fenced to provide a maintenance contract for the equipment purchased.

At Preceptory level you have continued to give freely to the general fund of the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital without prompting and despite the financial pressure we are all experiencing; I thank you all for your generosity.

However, giving of one's time and energy is just as important as, and in many instances more rewarding, than just financial giving. This support has been rewarded by conferring the various Provincial Honours today. I congratulate all who have received appointment or promotion and trust it will encourage you to further endeavours for our Order.

This recognition has also been evident at Great Priory level where in May E.Kts. Frank Green and John Harwood received promotions from our Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master for their continuing service to our Order; E.Kts. Brian Wisbey and John Brayford received first appointments in recognition of their hard work over many years. We congratulate them and wish them great joy in their new stations.

I come now to what some refer to as “the backroom boys”. Those unsung heroes who year in and year out beaver away to ensure that both the Great Occasions such as this, as well as all the other activities within our Province run smoothly;

I thank our long suffering Provincial Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Marshal and Deputy Marshal, Commander, Deputy Commander and members of my Bodyguard; our Host Preceptory and its members, Jeff Southwick for his help with the ladies trip and Bro.Kt. David Duke who has provided our music today.

One name is missing from this list; that of E.Kt. Peter Dyke. For many years Peter has been our Provincial Guard and the man whose hard work and enthusiasm has made our annual meetings run so smoothly. Peter has decided to step down from office and although not with us today, evidence of his skills and enthusiasm will forever be present at our gatherings. On behalf of all our Brother Knights, I here record my very sincere thanks to Peter for all his years of dedicated work for the Province and wish him a happy retirement.

Bro. Kt. Chris Wotton has today assumed the mantle of Provincial Guard and Peter has offered him every support and assistance; Thank you Chris for taking on this new role.

The highlight of the past year has to be the very successful Family Church Service we held in October 2010 at St.Cross or to give it its full title, “The Hospital of St. Cross and Almshouse of Noble Poverty” a most fitting venue being the oldest charitable institution in Britain; having provided shelter and hospitality to those in need since 1132, and said to have afforded such hospitality to a number of Knights prior to their leaving on Crusade. Although not the best of weather, the Church was full, with the congregation including some of the Brothers of St. Cross. We were made so welcome and have been invited to hold our next service there in 2012. I thank all who attended and made it such a special occasion for all of us; with a special thank you to E.Kt. Geoffrey Douglas-Hiley’s sister Dru who captured the event on camera, giving both us and St. Cross a wonderful record of the afternoon.

In conclusion I thank you for your attention and presence here today. May the Great Captain of our Salvation keep you safe and well, until we meet again.