

DGK's Remarks — Wednesday 6th September 2023 at Queens Hall, Newtownards.

Companions, it has been 125 days since I was installed District Grand King. People often ask, after the first 100 days in a new job or career. What have you changed, where do you see the organization doing, what have you achieved, what pitfalls do you envisage? Well Companions, thanks to the Roadshows and the work carried out by my predecessor, they have given myself and the team a good starting point to further improve on the procedures we currently have in place. To re-evaluate them and to embark upon projects that are needed to enhance everyone's enjoyment and participation within Royal Arch Masonry.

To this end, I have asked my Deputy to resurrect the Task Group, to look at ways of communicating and engaging in more efficient ways both as Chapters and as members. Also, to look at the health of Chapters from a member's point of view. What their overall picture is of Royal Arch Masonry and what can be put in place to improve on that experience. He will also be working on a more hands-on approach with Classes of Instructions in seeing what we can do as a District to aid and support them in their very important work. The Classes of Instruction will of course be starting back soon, and I would encourage all Companions, whether in Office or interested in Degree work to attend.

We have arranged, as you are aware, Director of Ceremonies seminars, to be held in Newry, Newtownards and Galwally House, on the 19 September and 17 and 26 October. Again, I would encourage all our Director of Ceremonies and those interested in ritual to attend one or more of these, as I can assure you, they will be very informative and enjoyable. Our 4 Director of Ceremonies and Representatives of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Instruction will be in attendance, to demonstrate, guide and answer all questions regarding Royal Arch Ritual. So please let as many as possible avail of this opportunity to brush up on our ritual.

Again, following on from the Roadshows, I have asked the District Grand Treasurer and his Assistant, to arrange seminars in early 2024, probably February, to discuss with the Treasurers any difficulties they may be facing. Also, to plan together and respond effectively as possible, to any future challenges. The Team will provide advice and guidance, as we are all committed to maintaining and improving our already high standards.

We also intend to run seminars for Registrars and Almoners. We, The District King's Council, are of the opinion that when we are all better equipped with the right tools and education, we will all enjoy what we do better.

Not forgetting about the District Assistant Grand King, I have asked him to review the Roles and responsibilities of the District Inspectors. Society has changed, modern living as changed, people's views on Masonry have changed. So, to that effect we believe that our Inspectors are perfectly placed to help, encourage, and advise on most matters when required. We will be looking at re-educating them and ourselves in what we believe are the best ways in meeting the needs of the Chapters and Companions.

The next Health and Well Being event will be held in Newtownards Masonic Hall on 10th October between 12.30 and 3.30 p.m. Please support this event, as it is for the benefit of all. Brethren, Companions, family, and friends. Provincial Grand Lodge and District Grand Chapter are working closely together regarding Health and Well being. We both see this as a very important initiative in maintaining our duty of care for our members. I would like to thank all those who sit on the Committee for their hard work and expertise.

Companions, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those Companions who attended the Church Service in Bannside Presbyterian in June. It was great to see such a good turn out, and I know Magherally RAC 203 were very

appreciative of the support. There is another Church Service on Sunday 15 October 2023 in Drumgooland Parish Church Ballyward to mark the 100 Anniversary of Mount Lebanon ML 203. Once again can I ask you to make a special effort to come along and support ML 203 and to give thanks to the SKH & E for giving us the grace and ability to do what we do daily.

For those who may not have heard, the young lady, who the Chapters and Lodges of the North Down area supported in the Special Olympics in Berlin, returned home with two gold medals and a silver. What a wonderful achievement. Well done to everyone.

The Companions of the South Down Area will be holding a Golf Competition in Kilkeel Golf Club on Friday 15 September, in aid of the Daisy Lodge, Newcastle, which is a purpose-built therapeutic centre for children affected with cancer. I have been informed that there are some times still available. So, if there are any budding golfers out there wishing to play and support this wonderful charity, please contact VEC Richard Graham or EC Graham Forsythe.

Companions, it is great to be back at Labour and I am sure you are all looking forward to another productive Masonic season. For those who know me well, I always try and close with a few words of inspiration. I was lucky enough to be in attendance when a team was rehearsing for an exemplification during the summer recess and what struck me the most from the degree was when after recovering the lost symbols and they were presented to the Ex King, he addresses the candidate regarding each of the symbols found. This one in particular, The book is assuredly the VSL — long lost — now symbolically recovered made me pay attention. The Instructor then later on explains that if the candidate does not know the contents of the book then it is effectively lost to him. So where better to get inspiration.

So, from the VSL I will end with these few words.

We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us. If it is serving then serve, if it is teaching then teach, if it is to encourage then give encouragement, if it is giving, then give generously, if it is to lead, do it diligently, if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Companions thank you one and all for your attendance and support.

District Grand King

MEC Roy J.F. Humphries