

District Grand King's ("DGK") Remarks
6th June – Mourne Country Hotel, Newry

Companions may I thank you all for your attendance here this afternoon. It's great to see such a good turn out and the room so well filled.

It is an honour and a privilege to serve this, the District Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Down. The DGK stated that he looked forward to the fellowship, and also the challenges ahead. Since the last meeting of District Chapter we have been blessed with the Constitution of a new Chapter on the 29th April, The Kingdom of Down Installed Kings, No. 79, a first for Ireland. He wished them well and every success for the future.

The District had held Road Show meetings with most of the Chapters in Down. We received honest comment from each Chapter attending and have a greater understanding on the problems faced by each Chapter.

What are we about, we need to re-invigorate ourselves and re-educate ourselves about Royal Arch Masonry. To that effect District have taken the first step by contacting the Royal Arch Chapter of Research through MEC Alan Ferris and have asked them to prepare a paper on the history and relevance of the Offices in Royal Arch Masonry. We will of course refer this to the Grand Chapter of Instruction before publishing.

The Classes of Instruction are there for all our benefits, we cannot lose or deviate away from what has been passed down to us from generation to generation. Please support your local Class of Instruction, the Class Leaders give up their time and knowledge for our benefit.

District has also initiated Director of Ceremonies seminars later in the year, the information has already been sent to Chapter Registrars, and each Director of Ceremonies. These seminars are not only for DoC's, they are for anyone interested floorwork, becoming a DoC, or those who enjoy Ritual. These will be informative and hopefully enjoyable meetings.

The District Grand Kings Council has also begun to look toward Charitable giving's within the Chapters, that is to say, above and beyond Masonic Charities. To this end the DGK is looking to encourage Chapters within their own Inspection Committees to come together, and work together, to help local Charities and in so give yourselves a boost by giving yourselves something to do. The main aim is Communication with each other. Not long after the Road Shows the DGK had been approached about a Charitable case, a 13 year old special needs Olympian gymnast girl who needed assistance with her funding. Her family had no connections with Freemasonry and following a three week fundraising a cheque for £1450 was presented to the young girl and her family. The DGK thought that this was great and that we should do more to help others where we can, not forsaking the Masonic Charities.

Further to this another Chapter requested that they also raise funds, this time by way of a Golf Competition in support of Daisy Hill Lodge. The Golf Competition will be held at Kilkeel Golf Club on Friday 15th September and this information has been circulated. As long as District knows what you plan on doing, then promote yourselves as Royal Arch Masons.

We are looking into the roles and responsibilities of our Inspectors. They are our liaison officers, but are also there to help. We will be reviewing the way in which they make their reports. The title of Inspector will not disappear, but we do not want Chapters panicking when an Inspector appears at their Convocation. They are our first line of Communication, so please open up to them, they are there to help us as well.

Health and Wellbeing started during Covid with Zoom meetings and we have entered into an ongoing agreement with the local Health authority for support and advice. We have since held successful meetings with many Companions attending, the last one being held in Banbridge. The next one will take place in the Masonic Hall Newtownards on Tuesday 10th October, bring a friend.

Something close to the DGK's heart, Church Services, Magherally RAC 203 will be celebrating 50 Years and have arranged a Church service in celebration. This will take place on Sunday

25th June in Bannside Presbyterian Church at 3:30pm. The DGK urged all Companions to make a special effort to come along and show our appreciation to the Church for letting us use their facilities by packing it out. It is only one Royal Arch Church service in the year, let us support it.

The DGK noted that as his new reign begins, new ventures take place. Some of the Officers have sadly decided to stand down, after many years of service. He wished to personally thank the following Inspectors, MEC Arnold Imrie, MEC Robert Cupples, MEC Norman Farquhar & VEC David Coey for their time and dedication over a period of nine to sixteen years.

Three new Inspectors would be appointed, EC John Gibson of RAC 556, EC Victor Morrow of RAC 1009 and EC Jeffrey Spiers of RAC 144.

Also, with the elevation of REC Fleming, the position of the District Assistant Grand Registrar was now vacant. To this role the DGK was appointing VEC Adrian McQuillan of RAC 697.

This would leave a vacancy in the Almoners role, the DGK announced that he was appointing Derek Martin of RAC 173 as a new Almoner.

All these new Officers would be invested at the District Convocation on Wednesday 6th September, in the Queens Hall, Newtownards.

The DGK thanked all for their patience, stating that he had been pacing the house preparing for this, his first "nerve racking" meeting. He emphasized that we are all in this together and that the Companions are not there for the District, but that the District was there for them. We look forward to the challenging time ahead.

The DGK closed with reference to a reading;

There comes a time in your life when you walk away from all the drama and people who create it. You surround yourself with people who make you laugh, forget the bad, and focus on the good.

Love the people who treat you right, Prey for the ones who don't.

Life is too short to be anything but happy, falling down is part of life.

Getting back up is living.

Jose N. Harris (Author of Mi Vada)