

June 2025

Companions, I wish to thank each one of you for your attendance here this evening. It is great to see such a turn out, and your support is greatly appreciated.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge each and every one of you for your dedication, enthusiasm and hard work throughout the year. You are all a credit to Masonry in general and Royal Arch Masonry in particular. You continue to strive to improve your capabilities in Ritual, your charity contributions and workload behind the scenes and your benevolence to your fellow human beings. All fundamental attributes when being a Freemason.

Health and Wellbeing:

Companions, Health and Wellbeing remain a main priority and creating a positive environment is essential. Experiencing good mental and physical health allows us to cope better with stressful situations and make more meaningful contributions. District Chapter and Provincial Grand Lodge continue to work together building on opportunities and providing appropriate support. The Health and Well Being committee decided to focus on certain particular needs of the Brethren, their families and friends this year, and to this effect, decided on concentrating on Cancer Focus and Nutrition. An open day was held in Galwally House on the 11 April. The main events on the afternoon included health checks, skin mapping, hearing checks, cancer awareness and a Nutritional Education session. Such was the interest in the nutritionist session we booked a further two sessions in May. One in Newtownards and one in Banbridge. We are indebted to Catherine Culbert for her professional insight, knowledge and suggestions for our improved health and well being. Companions, we never inquire nor do we want to know the outcome of anyone's consultation, but on the occasion of Galwally House we were informed by the specialists that seventeen people had been referred for further consultations with their GP's or specialists. To say the afternoon was a resounding success would be an understatement. So please Companions, keep supporting and encouraging others to attend these events when published. Once again, I thank the Health and Well Being Committee, chaired by our DAGK, for their sterling and unrelenting work in trying to improve all our lives.

DOC Seminars.

We are in the process of arranging, Director of Ceremonies seminars, to be held in Newry on the 7th October, Newtownards on the 27th October and Galwally House, on either the 14 or 15 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.

Inspection Committees:

Shortly we will be hearing and voting on a Notice of Motion to reconfigure the existing five Inspection committees to three. A lot of work has transpired in getting us all to this point, and I would personally like to thank all those who took part in these negotiations, especially the Chairmen and Registrars of the five committees. Their willingness and acceptance that things have to change to improve and their contribution has been invaluable. So hopefully from the 1 September the three new Inspection Committees will be up and running and everyone should benefit from the more cohesive way of working.

Certificate of Recognition:

Supreme Grand Chapter have finished writing the guidelines for the Certificate of Recognition process which will include a Companion's eligibility criteria. The details and application form can be found on the Districts Website.

By setting eligibility criteria for all recognised certificates, (Registrar, Treasurer, Director of Ceremonies, Almoner, Chaplin), it is crucial to recognise Companions loyalty and commitment throughout the years. It is important to send a message to Companions that they are valued and recognised at the highest level within Supreme Grand Chapter.

Next Convocation:

The next District Grand Chapter convocation will be on the Wednesday 3rd September 2025 in Newforge Country Club Belfast

at 19.30hrs. This is a new venue for a District Convocation so please come along and see what you think.

On Friday 19 September 2025 the Companions of South Down are holding, what has become an annual event, a Charity Golf Competition in Kilkeel Golf Club at 1.00pm.

On Sunday the 28th September Maze ML 356 will be hosting a Church Service to commemorate their Bi-Centenary in Hillsborough Presbyterian Church at 3.00 pm. I appeal to each and every one of you, but more especially, if you are a present or past District officer, Ex King, High Priest or Chief Scribe, to make a special effort to attend.

We have been invited by Banbridge RAC 124 to hold our December Convocation in Banbridge, venue yet to be decided, an invitation we have graciously accepted. If there is any other Chapter who is celebrating a special occasion and wish to host District please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Companions, it gives me the greatest of pleasure to appoint Ex Com David Woodrow, Saintfield RAC No 35 as a District Auditor. David comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience and I am delighted to have him on the team.

Lastly, Companions, I thank you for your attendance and attention this evening and wish you and your families a pleasant and enjoyable summer.

As is now customary, I leave you with a Quote:

Nothing is impossible, the word itself says "I'm possible"

May the Supreme King of Heaven and Earth Bless each and every one of you.

Have a safe journey home.