

Companions, as we approach the end of the Installation season, I would like to personally thank all those who were involved in the organizing and degree giving at these Convocations. Their time, effort and skills need to be recognised and hence praised for their endeavours. Most of us, turn up, to enjoy the ritual and festivities afterwards, not realizing or forgetting, the amount of work that has gone into the preparations. So, to all, Registrars, Installing Officers, Ex Kings and not forgetting the Class leaders, thank you for your tireless work, commitment and dedication to your Chapters and R. A Masonry in general. Also, may I on behalf of the senior officers of District Chapter thank every Chapter we have visited so far this season, for their hospitality and the manner in the way we have been received. Exemplary would be the word I would use. Companions it is greatly appreciated.

As part of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy we will be continuing with our healthy eating campaign. We are in the process of finalising dates in October for Part three of Catherine Culbert's talks on the subject. Anyone who has attended them in the past have found them very enjoyable and informative.

We, as a District, will be hosting Supreme Grand Chapter on Wednesday 16th September 2026 in The Mourne Country Hotel Newry. As on the previous occasion when Supreme Grand Chapter was in Newry, we will be hosting a Health and Wellbeing event before the convocation. Notification will be circulated well in advance.

On Thursday 14th May 2026, we will be embarking on a joint venture with The Provincial Grand Lodges of Down and Antrim, The District Grand Chapter of Antrim, The Grand Council of Knight Masons and the Provincial Pories of South and East Ulster in facilitating a talk on Men's Health, called "Below the Belt". Dr Harry Wray, the recently installed District Assistant King of LDT&F has kindly offered his services regarding the subject matter. It will be held in the Lisburn Masonic Centre and I would encourage as many as possible to attend, as these are subjects close to every man's health.

The three regional Inspection committees are bedding in very nicely, with positive feedback coming from all quarters. Their next task will be to forward the names of the nominated officers from their appointed Regions. This will now be done on a numerical rotational system, with the qualifying chapters to be selected for their appropriate office by the Regional Inspection committee.

I am glad to report that the vast majority of Chapters attained the full attendance for last year. Well done to those Chapters. As you are all well aware, attending District Chapter is part of the duties of the Excellent King and Council, so it shouldn't be a shock to learn that attending District Chapter is part of your remit. The District Inspectors will be shortly advised of those Chapters, who sadly, have been fined. By not affixing your signature to the signing in sheets, renders you as a non-attendance. This sadly effects all within the Chapter for elective Offices.

We are delighted to have accepted an invitation to host District Chapter in September in Newforge Country Club to help Friendship RAC 447 celebrate their 140th Anniversary. We are also open for invitations from any Chapter who are celebrating an anniversary or other special event, and would like to host District, please do not hesitate to contact the office regarding arranging the same.

Once again, a big thank you to all who attended the Carol Services in Comber and Banbridge. What wonderful afternoons they were and the charity collections, truly outstanding.

Congratulations to Banbridge District Charity Committee and the Charity Committees of North Down for two great occasions.

Due warning Companions, two church services have been arranged for the incoming months. The first one, is to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Abercorn ML 114 in Westbourne Presbyterian Church on Sunday 10th May 2026 at 3 pm. The next, is to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Morning Star Millisle ML 193 in Millisle and Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church on Sunday 14th June 2026 at 3pm. Please make a special effort to attend both these services.

Regarding the District website, if any Chapter or Companion has any photos or news items, regarding Installations, presentations etc, we would encourage you to send them into the office so we can input them onto the site. As I have said before, "Yesterday's news is history" So we need to keep one step ahead in the game.

After our December Convocation, the Senior Officers met and discussed the possibility of commencing our Saturday Convocations at 12 noon, as it appears to work very well for Provincial Grand Lodge. We will trial this at our March Convocation in 2027. It will not take place at our bi-annual Installation Convocation.

It is my intention Companions, to bestow the Rank of Honorary Past District Grand Chief Scribe on Ex Comp Ian Ritchie at our June Convocation in Lisburn in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the Down Masonic Widows Fund. I am sure Companions you will agree with me, this is a richly deserved honour.

Thank you once again for your attendance here this afternoon.

In closing I leave you with a quote.

"Life has no remote. Get up and change it yourself."

I wish each one of you and your families, God's Richest Blessings, health and happiness, and have a safe journey home.