

Provincial Scribe E's report 2023

In his report to the 2022 Annual Convocation, E Comp Tony Beaumont said "I leave you in the capable hands of E.Comp. Charlie Barker..." I don't think my hands would get me a goalkeeping contract, but I'm about there now. The learning curve has been vertical at times and it is hard to believe a year has already passed. I want to thank members of the Executive who put up with my questions, often repeated, as I wrestle with the many things the Provincial Scribe does that I never knew about ! I thank especially E Comp Tony who has spent many hours on the phone with me.

In 2022, we were all delighted to see our new Most Excellent Grand Superintendent installed as such by Most Excellent Companion Gareth Jones, Third Grand Principal, ably assisted by Companions from Supreme Grand Chapter. It was a wonderful ceremony and a great way to open the new season. This year, we will be installing E Comp Neil Hurcum as our new Deputy Grand Superintendent to succeed E Comp Clive Lambert. Both Companions work very hard to the benefit of this Province and the promotion for Neil is a just reward. In similar vein, E Comp Clive too is to be rewarded, when he will succeed V III Bro Ray Johnstone-Smith as Inspector General for the District of Somerset in the Ancient and Accepted Rite.

Our Grand Superintendent has been out and about a great deal since his installation, with the aim of visiting at least 50% of Chapters. In September 2022, he and the Provincial Team performed an exaltation at Avalon C446 and another at St Keyna C1833 in October. In November 2022, we were pleased to receive Old Tauntonian C5735 into the Province, having relocated from Metropolitan Grand Chapter on a permanent basis, and so no longer "visitors". Once their Charter had been enfaced to show that permanent removal, we were able to hold the formal welcoming ceremony in April. The Provincial Team visited Connaught C3573 in January this year, to support and celebrate their centenary of continuous working. A great evening, with so many guests that the Chapter had to relocate for the meeting ! In February, the Provincial team were very pleased to attend Fidelity & Sincerity C1966 to perform a Bible dedication ceremony. We then made another presentation of a Charter or Warrant, this time to Parrett and Axe C814 in April, and on that visit, we were also able to perform an exaltation. As well as the Provincial Team visits, there was always a Ruler leading the Provincial Fraternal visits (8 this season) and attending a Chapter Installation.

Further afield, the Executive (and others) have attended the Annual Convocations of 12 other Provinces, with 2 still to go! This extended Hand of Friendship is important in Freemasonry and so we are pleased to welcome our opposite numbers from many of those Provinces here today. Some of the Provincial Team also attended the Annual Quadripartite Convocation in Wiltshire, hosted by The Chapter of Concord C632. This is a meeting supported by companions from the Provinces of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire & Isle of Wight together with Somerset. A terrific time was had by all and Somerset will be hosting the 2023 Convocation in October, hosted by St Keyna C1833.

Socially, the Annual Provincial Ball was held at Bideford in February. The occasion was very well supported by Companions, Family and Friends. 190 people joined for pre-drinks before sitting down for the Gala Dinner on the Saturday night and the dancers filled the dance floor until late in the evening. E Comp David Parslow also organises the Annual Officers Lunch at Batch Country House. It is a great opportunity to meet the new Provincial Team. 2022's lunch was well attended and the new Provincial Team have already been invited to this year's on Sunday 11th June.

I will conclude with a thank you from me to Chapter Scribes - thank you to all Scribes that I meet or correspond with for the work you do, so often unreported. I know you work hard for the good of all.

E.Comp. Ray, to quote from another place, this is a "Happy Province" and I know that you will continue to make it so.

Most Excellent Grand Superintendent, I submit this report for your approval.

E Comp Charlie Barker, PGStB
Provincial Grand Scribe Ezra