

the SE Counties thistle

Issue 11 – SEPTEMBER 2025



Provincial Grand Lodge of the South Eastern Counties of England



The Provincial Grand Chapter and Lodge meetings of the South-Eastern Counties of England were held at the Surbiton Masonic Hall, Surbiton, on Friday the 26th of September 2025. In attendance, to Install Bro. Jack Love as our Provincial Grand Master was Bro. David Derrick Hart, Substitute Governor, accompanied by Bro. James Henry Simpson Fraser, Deputy Grand Marischal, and Bro. Grant Alexander Kavanagh, Grand Clerk. We gathered in the bar for coffee and biscuits and a catch up with old friends before the meeting.





Provincial Grand Chapter was opened by the Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Jack Love attended by the Substitute Provincial Grand Masters Bros. Ian Fraser, Leslie GROUT and Paul HollebONE. There were 24 guests present, who were announced by the Provincial Grand Marischal, Bro. Chris Eley, and welcomed by the Provincial Grand Master.

The Delegation from the Grand Lodge in Edinburgh were admitted into the Chapter and welcomed by the Provincial Grand Master.



The distinguished guests included Bro. Tom Batten, Provincial Grand Master Designate for Southern Counties; Bro. Tony Chaplin, Secretary for Southern Counties; Bro. John Dollery, Provincial Grand Master for Devonshire, Bro. Rodney Armitage, Provincial Grand Master for Hants & IOW, Bro. George Mars, Past Substitute Provincial Grand Master from Hants & IOW; Bro. Eric Hampson, Provincial Grand Master for Kent; Bro. Ian Tough, Past Provincial Grand Master for Kent; Bro. Stephen Turner, Secretary for Kent; Bro. Colin Cooper, Provincial Grand Master for Somerset; Bro. Chris Jeffery, Secretary for Somerset; Bro. Chris Hicks, Sub Provincial Grand Master for North Thames; and Bro. Michael Doxsee a member from the USA.



The Provincial Grand Master welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that he hoped they would enjoy the Ceremony of Advancement and Promotion for the candidates.

Bro Andrew Francis gave a moving tribute to Bro Bob Shepherd who passed away after a long illness in June 2025

A Ballot for Affiliation was held for Bro. John Barry Stovell and Bro. Michael Daniel Ellis which proved in favour of both candidates. The Provincial Grand Master welcomed both new members into the SE Counties and presented them with a copy of the SE Counties byelaws.



A Ballot for Advancement and Promotion into the Order was held for Bro. Edwin Keith Stephenson which proved in favour of the candidate. Bro. Stephenson was admitted into the Chapter and after an explanation of the history of the degree by the Provincial Grand Master he was Advanced to the Degree of Heredom and given the Characteristic of 'Constitutional'.

The Provincial Grand Master was assisted by the Past Provincial Grand Master Bro. Charles Stoddart and the Substitute Provincial Grand Masters Bro. Ian Fraser, Bro. Leslie Grout and Bro. Paul Hollebhone. Bro. Rod Barker acted as Constable of the Tower and Bro. Michael Doxsee acted as Banner Bearer. The Provincial Grand Master expressed his thanks to Bro. Rod who had stood in for the ceremony today at very short notice.

The other brethren who assisted with the Questions and Answers were Bro's Andrew Francis, Brian Hunter, Colin Brookman, Alastair Mackenzie, Ian Fraser, Andrew Banks, Brian Pulley and Rodney Ramage.

The Provincial Grand Chapter was closed and after a short break Provincial Grand Lodge was opened.

Bro. Stephenson was duly admitted and Promoted to the Degree of the Rosy Cross of the Royal Order of Scotland. Bro. Charles Stoddart obligated the candidate, and the Provincial Grand Master conferred the accolade.

The Deputy Grand Marischal then escorted the Substitute Governor into the chair to perform the ceremony of Investiture for the new Provincial Grand Master Bro. Jack Love. He started by thanking the Past Provincial Grand Master, Bro Charles Stoddart, for his excellent service over the past 5 years.

The Deputy Marischal then presented the Provincial Grand Master Designate to the Substitute Governor and Bro. Jack presented his patent to the Substitute Governor which was then read out to the members by the Grand Clerk. The patent was sealed on 5th February 2025 and runs for 5 years from 25th September 2025.

The Provincial Grand Master will put his current characteristic (Radiance) on hold for five years and he assumes the characteristic of 'Relief' for the duration of his tenure as Provincial Grand Master.

Bro Jack then took his obligation and was placed in the chair by the Substitute Governor. The brethren then sang the first and last verses of Psalm 121. Bro Jack was then proclaimed in the South, West and North by the Deputy Marischal.



The Provincial Grand Master then appointed and Invested Bro. Leslie Grout as his Deputy and Bros. Ian Fraser, Paul Hollebhone and Barrie Selway as Substitute Provincial Grand Masters. The remaining Officers of the year were obligated by the Provincial

Grand Master and invested with their collars in the South. The brethren then sang two verses of Psalm 100 to conclude the ceremonies of Appointment and Investiture.

- Bro. Charles Stoddart proposed that Donations of £250 be made to Sage' a Dementia charity based in Tangmere;
- The Hunter Centre, a Dementia charity based in Haslemere;
- Sompting Community Farm, a Horticultural charity based in Sompting;
- The Sussex Craft 2028 Festival and
- The Surrey Craft 2030 Festival.

These donations were approved by the Brethren,

After the collection of Alms, the Delegation from Grand Lodge retired along with some of the distinguished guests. After the regular business of Provincial Grand Lodge had been completed the Provincial Grand Master closed Provincial Grand Lodge and the National Anthem was sung.



The Hunter Centre





After refreshments in the bar, with an opportunity to catch up with everyone the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master and the Substitute Governor were piped into the dining room by two Pipers, Bro. Chris Harris and Bro Ralph Potter.

The Haggis was then paraded round the dining room led by the two Pipers and the Address to the Haggis was given by Bro. Andrew Francis in his very special way.



The brethren of the Province of the South Eastern Counties and their guests sat down to a most convivial festive board.

After the meal the Worshipful Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Leslie Grout, proposed the Toast to the Provincial Grand Master. The RW Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Jack Love, responded accordingly.





The next meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge will be held at Chichester on Friday the 5th of December 2025



