



the SE Counties thistle

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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 Surbiton Masonic Hall on Wednesday the 3rd of April 2024.

We gathered together in the bar for coffee and biscuits and a catch up with old friends before the meeting.



As well as many Substitute Provincial Grand Masters from other Provinces, there were several Heads of Surrey Orders, and members of the Surrey Craft Provincial Executive.





Provincial Grand Chapter was opened at 13:35 by the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Charles Stoddart, attended by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master Bro. Jack Love, and Substitute Provincial Grand Masters Bro. Ian Fraser, Bro. Rod Barker, and Bro. Leslie Grout.



The Provincial Grand Master welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that he hoped they would enjoy the Ceremonies of Advancement and Promotion for the two candidates. A Ballot for Advancement and Promotion into the Order was held for Bro. Andrew Vincent Robert Smith and Bro. Dean Sharpe. All two ballots were taken together and proved in favour of the candidates.

Bro's Smith and Sharpe were admitted into the Chapter and after an explanation of the history of the degree by the Provincial Grand Master they were Advanced to the Degree of Herodum and given the Characteristics of Andrew 'Wordsmith' and Dean 'Illumination

The Provincial Grand Master was assisted by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master Bro. Jack Love and Substitute Provincial Grand Masters Bro. Ian Fraser and Bro. Rod Barker. Bro. Leslie Grout acted as Senior Warden, Bro. Steve Jones acted as Marischal, Bro. Colin Brookman acted as Deputy Marischal and Bro. David Warren acted as Banner Bearer.

The Provincial Grand Chapter was closed, and Provincial Grand Lodge was opened. Bros. Andrew Smith and Dean Sharpe were duly admitted and Promoted to the Degree of Rosy Cross of the Royal Order of Scotland.



The Provincial Grand Master then had much pleasure in presenting Diplomas to four Brethren who were newly admitted into the Order.



The Provincial Grand Master closed Provincial Grand Lodge and the customary group photos were taken.





After refreshments in the bar, with an opportunity to catch up with everyone....



.....the Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and Substitute Provincial Grand Masters 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.





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 of Cock-a-leekie Soup followed by Haggis, Neeps and Tatties.

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

The next meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge will be held at Horsham on Wednesday the 5th of June 2024.



What's better than a Burns Night



The answer is what you would expect - two Burns Nights! I had the pleasure of two Haggis meals, one at my Hampshire Craft evening in Aldershot, and now this one. Which was the better? My dear friend, Barrie, did say at the Aldershot one, that the Guildford one would surpass the previous night's affair but I think they were about equal. The Aldershot one was on a smaller scale and only involved my mother lodge. Tonight's was a bigger do with the Royal Order of Scotland and Surrey Mark Masons joining together.



The setting was Guildford Masonic Centre. The parking was well ordered, and the venue was soon full of friends and new faces. Smart, casual, and well attended with nearly one hundred brethren and guests in attendance.





The call was made at about seven in the evening and we all proceeded to our respective tables. Our mood was enhanced by the arrival of the Bagpiper and the Haggis..... and the chap at the back waving bottles of Whisky.



I am a poor eater of food relying on the basics only, so I met the challenge of "La Panse du Brébis Farcié", the haggis, with some interest! It was fine and not dry and tasteless. My partner suggested that it was even better when doused with the provided whisky, so she had mine as well.



This is always a fine affair and was appropriately welcomed with the continuous clapping of our attendees. We met a few new faces and stood for the Selkirk Grace. "Some hae meat and canna eat,....." which set the tone for the evening.





We were honoured with the presence of a good friend of the Farnham Mafia, St Andrews 806, in the form of Ray Seeley. His easy manner and the occasional comment from his lady wife together with Barrie, members of his family and David, accompanied by Lesley, his wife, made for a very pleasant get together. And the meal was of the usual high standard associated with the Guildford Masonic Centre. The main course was meat or fish followed by a Scottish dessert resembling an Eton Mess but given a more “in theme” name.... Cranachan.



The evening proceeded with a speech by our Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Charles Stoddart, and then as is the custom, a perceptive delivery by the Mark Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. John French.



Both visited all our tables spending much time with guests and adding to the atmosphere of the evening in a way typical of both these energetic and welcoming leaders.

We were treated to a fine, very amusing toast to the Lassies by Bill Caughie, and even more robust response from the chosen Lassie, Jo Lawrence. Great humour and fine delivery.



The Raffle happened towards the end of the meal as is customary. It raised a significant amount of money which was gratefully received and will be faithfully applied. My partner, Anne, won a HAGGIS.

What a lovely evening. They even served non-alcoholic beer, so I was able to drink and drive.

Yes, it was as good as the previous evening’s entertainment and took place in a very attractive and cosy venue. As Douglas MacArthur sort of said... “I came through and we shall return!”



Article by Michael Fenech

Around the Companion Orders

The Royal Order of Scotland was well represented at several meetings of the other Orders in Surrey, and other Provinces.



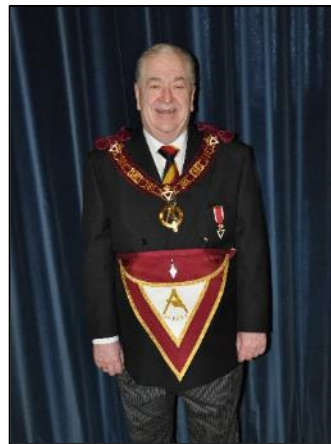
Some of us travelled down to Botley to attend the Provincial Grand Senatus of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, and the Channel Islands



Then it was the popular Jack Love County Club Dinner at Guildford



After that we had the Annual Meeting of the Mark Province of Surrey.



Then the Annual Meeting of the Royal and Select Masters, District of Surrey, where one of our new members, Bro William (Bill) 'Crimestopper' Caughie, was obligated, invested, installed, and proclaimed as District Grand Master.

Our Deputy Provincial Grand Master was also seen at a meeting of the Masonic and Military Order of the Red Cross of Constantine; followed by a meeting of Waverley OSM Council.

