



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 the Surbiton Masonic Hall on Wednesday the 2nd of April 2025.



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





The Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Charles Stoddart, attended by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master Bro. Jack Love, and Provincial Officers entered in procession, led by the Provincial Piper, Bro. Ralph Potter, seen here with the Provincial Mareschal, Bro. Chris Eley.

Provincial Grand Chapter was opened by the Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Charles Stoddart. There were 34 members present.

Also in attendance were Bro. Eric Hampson the Provincial Grand Master for Kent, Bro. George Mars a Past Substitute Provincial Grand Master from Hants & IOW, Bro. John Stovell from Hants & IOW, Bro. John Wickes the Deputy Provincial Grand Master from Hertfordshire,

Bro. Chris Jeffery the Secretary from Somerset, Bro. Clive Newman a past JW from Middlesex, and Bros Timothy Hatton and Mike Hall from the City of London.

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.

A Ballot for Advancement and Promotion into the Order was held for Bro. Adrian Charles Mori and Bro. Ian Watling Pettett which proved in favour of both candidates.

Bro's Mori and Pettett 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 Heredom and given the Characteristics of Adrian 'Frequency' and Ian 'Balistic'.

The Provincial Grand Master was assisted by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Bro. Jack Love. and the Substitute Provincial Grand Masters, Bro. Ian Fraser, Bro. Leslie Grout and Bro. Paul Hollebhone.



Bro. Rod Barker acted as Grand Introducer and Examiner, Bro. Alastair Mackenzie acted as Grand Guarder, Bro. Andrew Banks acted as Deputy Marischal, Bro. Rodney Ramage acted as Chaplain, and Bro. Nigel Harding acted as Sword Bearer.

The Provincial Grand Master expressed his thanks to those who had stood in for the ceremony today, some at very short notice.

Other brethren assisted with the Questions and Answers as follows: Section X Bro's Ian Fraser and Brian Hunter; Section X1 Bro's. David Morrow and Rod Barker; Section X11 Bro's. Ian Fraser and Andrew Banks; Section X111 Bro's. David Warren and Rodney Ramage.

The Provincial Grand Chapter was closed and Provincial Grand Lodge was opened. Bros. Mori and Pettett were duly admitted and Promoted to the Degree of the Rosy Cross of the Royal Order of

Scotland. Bro. Charles Stoddart obligated the candidates and conferred the accolade.



The Provincial Grand Master obligated and invested Bro. Ian Fraser as Substitute Provincial Grand Master.

The Provincial Grand Master gave a most interesting explanation of the Diploma before presenting Bros. Andrew Banks, Kevin Gamble and Chuck Chi Lap Li with their copies.



The Provincial Grand Master informed the brethren that he had received a patent from Grand Lodge confirming Bro. Jack Love's appointment as Provincial Grand Master from 20th of September 2025.

It is hoped that he will be invested at Surbiton on Friday the 26th of September 2025.



The Provincial Grand Master closed Provincial Grand Lodge and after the customary photographs we retired for refreshments.



After refreshments the Provincial Grand Master and Deputy Provincial Grand Master were piped into the dining room by the Piper, Bro. Ralph Potter.



The Haggis was then paraded round the dining room led by the Piper.





The Address to the Haggis was given by Bro. Chris Harris in a very special way.



The brethren of the Province of the South Eastern Counties of England and their guests sat down to a most convivial festive board together before wending their way home.



Burns Night 2025



What a great night at Guilford Masonic Centre at the Burns Night supper sponsored by the Royal Order of Scotland, S E Counties, and the Mark Province of Surrey.



We got there early just in case parking was a tad tight, but we were fine and entered the bar to find many a friend on what turned out to be a superb evening.

It is a smart place to go to on a Saturday night out and the drinks, pre meal, were a good intro to a very pleasant evening. I must admit that my week had been quite busy, and I did have reservations. It is so easy to stay at home and watch the gogglebox but, spurred on by the occasion, out we went. We were well rewarded.



A good selection of alcohol-free drinks, including Guinness, was on offer and there were plenty of bar staff in situ to stave off any long queues. The room was soon well occupied with many a new face to me and several acquaintances.

This was a combined effort with the Mark and the Royal Order of Scotland combining, with the result that over a hundred ladies and gentlemen were in attendance with even one young lad

celebrating his birthday.



Yes, we did sing! Ladies were wearing very attractive, tartan accoutrements and several gentlemen sported kilts or trews. Must get a decent dickie bow!!

The dining area was immaculately laid out and staff were very accommodating, so in we went.

The meal was preceded by the arrival of the haggis with all the ceremony that such a distinguished affair brings. Two pipers led the way with the Haggis held high and followed by a man waving two bottles of whisky.

It's a slightly different event to what we normally see at a masonic meeting but



very effective. The Masonic, Scottish words were pronounced over the "item". It was threatened by the presenter, sliced open with appropriate wording and then escorted away by the entourage. There was a raucous wording given this year by Andy Harris as he attacked the haggis with, not the rather insignificant knife provided by the startled chef, but by Andy who had come prepared with a rather long, serious piece of steel.

Throughout, the piper played his music and then led the way to the kitchen for this Scottish fare to be served up to the assembled guests with traditional neeps and tatties. I wonder if our Yorkshire pudding should be so introduced. It was very entertaining and colourful. Not being a neeps man, I was relieved that the latter were melded in quite nicely with the tatties.



My partner enjoyed her haggis soaked in whisky (hers and mine) and dessert was a typical Scottish affair with oats added to it.

There was more to come. V.W.Bro. Bill Caughie, as is tradition, led the toasts including one to the lassies. His dry humour had the assembled gathering in tucks of laughter as he very bravely inserted a few non woke lady jokes, his wife being present too.

We were treated to a fine response by Ena Hanks, in a more controlled and decisive manner. Both speakers poked a little fun at the opposite sex but both firmly acknowledged the need for the presence of "the other half".

It was a fine way to end this celebration of that unusual figure, Rabbin Burns. Now, there was a man. Oh, the raffle raised a significant amount for charity too.

Article and photos by Michael Fenech



The next meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge will be held at the Normandy Centre, Horsham, on Wednesday the 4th of June 2025.

The following meeting will be held at the Masonic Hall, Glenmore House, Surbiton, on Friday the 26th of September 2025.

