

**Address by the Metropolitan Deputy Grand Master  
at  
The LGR Investiture  
October 2005**

Can I begin by welcoming you all here today – both those being invested and their guests. We are also delighted that Rex Thorne, who as Chairman of London Management was so instrumental in the formation of Metropolitan Grand Lodge, is able to be with us. I would also take the opportunity of thanking Brian de Neut who has so ably acted as Deputy today.

Brethren, last week we were all commemorating the Bicentenary of a famous naval victory, and in particular the heroism and devotion to duty of the commander of the English fleet. I think that some of the national pride engendered by that celebration is relevant to us today as we recognise the promotion being awarded to many worthy London masons.

While much has changed in our society in the last 200 years – and a great deal has also changed in the outward form of our Masonic practice over the same period - I would suggest that the pride which we all feel in our national heritage – and in our Masonic traditions - has altered very little. A strong sense of duty to our fellow masons should motivate us all, and those of you who have received honours today can be justifiably proud of your achievement.

But if pride is to remain a virtue and not to lead to complacency we all need to look forward and re-dedicate ourselves to improving the outlook for London masonry. Although Metropolitan Grand lodge is in its infancy, London masonry is certainly not, and in places it is beginning to show some of the strains that accompany mature years !

As holders of London Grand Rank you have worked hard for, and are respected members, of your lodges, and should now take the opportunity to look in a critical but constructive fashion at how your lodges can be made even better.

In this respect there are some key areas worthy of your urgent attention:

*Membership:* ensuring that candidates are of the right quality and that they understand fully before they join the obligations as well the privileges of belonging to our fraternity.

*Mentoring:* making sure that new members are guided through and beyond their 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree and made to feel welcome by all the lodge members.

*Almoners role:* all members being aware of the needs of older members and their dependents; and checking on the reason for non-attendance of those who are in good health.

*Lodge democracy:* involving **all** members in crucial decisions affecting the running of the lodge – e.g. place and time of meetings and dining ( not just a group of senior past masters whose interests might be quite different to those of the younger members **who are the future of the lodge**).

As senior masons, you should now be raising your sights and appreciating the importance of a **London** Masonic identity over and above that of your lodges and your Groups. A common approach for all London issues is vital – hence the introduction shortly of a Welcome Pack for all London initiates, which, although it may be accompanied by a letter from the Group Chairman, will ensure that all our new members start off on the same footing.

Ambition – by which I mean wanting the very best for your fellow masons as well as yourself – if it is channelled correctly – can be a positive force in just the same way as can pride. I make no bones about saying that further advancement in London will only come if you now widen your commitment to our order beyond the confines of your own lodges. In this context I would particularly commend membership of one of our Installed Masters lodges which are present in all our major centres. Not only will you meet a wider circle of Masonic friends, and enhance your understanding of our order, but you can do so at minimal cost now that membership of such lodges is to be exempted from Grand Lodge dues and the Grand Charity levy. You should also give the most serious consideration to joining the Royal Arch, if you have not already done so, and also to enjoying the benefits of LGRA membership.

Touching on London Charitable giving, there is one stark fact which I wish to bring to your attention. Across the country, and I have no reason to believe that London is any different, somewhere between one-third and 40% of our members do not give to our charities on a regular basis. I return to the point I made at the very beginning that new members should be in no doubt from Day 1 of their obligations to charitable giving. This should not be an optional extra. Many of you are Charity Stewards and you have my full authority to use your persuasive powers to bring home this message!

The balance of charitable giving by London lodges and chapters is beginning to shift in the right direction, with a clear focus during 2005 on our major Appeal for the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution. In excess of £500,000 has been donated since last December and I congratulate you all on this encouraging start. As the message gets through to all our members, I would like to see us contributing £1m plus to the RMBI for **each** of the next three years.

For non-Masonic charities, I hope you are all now aware that we would like donations to be sent to the London Masonic Charitable Trust, our own charitable vehicle for assisting those in need in London. As well as welcoming donations to the Trust, we are also open to ideas from any London lodge or individual as to those London causes which you consider worthy of our assistance. Today's collection will therefore be on behalf of the LMCT.

Please give careful consideration to these suggestions for your charitable giving, brethren, and where possible I would like to see at least 75% of your annual lodge donations going to our Masonic charities, with a very definite emphasis on the RMBI.

Brethren, the organisation of an event such as today's, with morning and afternoon sessions and a luncheon to plan, is complex and I would like to express my gratitude to our Secretary, Andrew Henderson and his staff for their diligence. The smooth running of the ceremonial side of affairs relies heavily on the Metropolitan DC, Guy Elgood, and his team and we offer them our grateful thanks. In addition the Metropolitan Grand Stewards have played a very active role and I give them my thanks - and also my congratulations on the formation of their new lodge which I have no doubt will be shining beacon in London masonry for the future

Brethren, I thank you for your attendance today and for your continuing efforts in support of London masonry. I would urge you all to re-double those efforts to the benefit of your lodges and can I wish you all every happiness in the Masonic year ahead.

RJ Race  
Metropolitan Deputy Grand Master  
27<sup>th</sup> October 2005