

**Address by RWBro Sir David Trippier, Provincial Grand Master
At the Annual Meeting in
King George's Hall, Blackburn
Thursday, 18 November 2021**

Brethren,

As you know this is my very last Address to you as I retire as Provincial Grand Master today.

As many of you will realise, having served in that capacity for 10 years, it is for me, something of an emotional occasion and I leave the Office with mixed feelings.

On the one hand, I am sad to retire for many reasons. On the other hand, I think it is absolutely right that **all** Provincial Grand Masters and Grand Superintendents are limited to a maximum period of 10 years to allow their successors to establish themselves, to exercise the leadership which I hope has been secured and maintain the stability of the Province in the future.

There was a time, not that long ago, when I thought that because of the spread of Coronavirus and the consequent lockdown that we may not have been able to meet in person and that I would simply disappear into the blue yonder in a mild “puff of smoke” and that would be it.

Fortunately, at long last, we have been able to meet together and I am eternally grateful to you all for being here today. I am also most grateful to all those that have been involved in The Return to Business and Together Again East Lancashire projects that have enabled us to reach this position.

Some of you will probably relish the fact that I am going and keen to witness my departure at first hand – just to be sure!! That I understand!!

Believe it or not, there has been a considerable advantage in being in lockdown, for the last 20 months and confined to our homes with our wives or partners. It has given my wife the opportunity to tell me where I have been going wrong for the last 46 years of our marriage.

At this point I wish to congratulate all those that I have appointed, reappointed or promoted in Provincial Grand Lodge today. In every case your preferment is well deserved and I trust that you will enjoy your Office; I know that your continued commitment to the Province is assured.

You will have noticed that for the first time the Provincial Grand Membership Officer, WBro Mo Afsa will be formally invested. I encourage every Lodge to

follow the example of the Province and appoint a Brother to this vital and important position.

This address gives me the opportunity to express my sincere thanks to so many individuals and groups of people for their support, their unfailing patience, their kindness, humour and above all their friendship.

But before I do that, it is essential that I formally launch the 2026 East Lancashire Festival. You have already heard the excellent address given by WBro Les Hutchinson, the Chief Executive of the Masonic Charitable Foundation who has spelt out the challenge, which we in this Province, are determined to meet to ensure that this forthcoming Festival will be a huge success.

It is important that I should inform you all of what has been planned for our Festival Banquet to be held on 26th February next year.

It will be a Black Tie Event held in the Concorde Centre at the Runway Visitors Park at Manchester Airport.

There will be a champagne reception and a 3 course meal under Concorde. Tours aboard Concorde during the evening.

There will be Special Guests and VIPs from the United Grand Lodge of England and the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

Tables for 8 with Covid secure arrangements.

Brethren, I strongly urge you to attend this huge event. I can promise that it will be a very memorable evening.

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to WBrother Chad Northcott and his Festival Committee for all the work they have done so far in preparation for our launch today and the work they will continue to do to ensure that the 2026 Festival will be an outstanding success.

On a completely different note during the worst effects of the Pandemic, so many of you have been personally involved in relieving the hardship experienced by so many who have been directly or indirectly affected by Covid 19.

I yield to no one in my admiration for the superb efforts you have made and

I have witnessed at first hand, the support and compassion you have shown during this monumental crisis.

There is hardly a Lodge or Chapter or District who have not been engaged in this challenge.

All those efforts have been made with the huge financial support given by the MCF and our very own East Lancashire Masonic Charity.

I have had the privilege of serving on the National Covid 19 Response Group along with Les Hutchinson and have always served on the Board of the ELMC, as President.

Just about every single Application we have made to the MCF has been approved along with the success of our neighbouring Provinces within the Regional Communication Group (now known as the North West Corner Group) which includes West Lancashire, Cheshire, North Wales and the Isle of Man.

All this support during the Pandemic for those less fortunate than ourselves served to nail the lie that Freemasons only support their own and the voluminous publicity we have enjoyed as a result of our efforts has ensured that we now see an increase in the number of new initiates coming forward to join us.

This together with the recent launch of the National Digital Marketing Campaign underlines the critical importance of attraction or recruitment in Freemasonry. Even at this early stage of that Campaign, it is clear that in this Province and in so many other Provinces' we will see a marked upswing in membership of our Order.

For several years, I have sat on the National Membership Working Party which meets monthly and have been impressed by the many initiatives introduced which, to be blunt, are long overdue. The Members Pathway is just one of those initiatives and I applaud the fact that so many Lodges have embraced the opportunity to address the challenges, which they face. I have been impressed by the percentage of those Lodges who have adopted a Lodge Plan, more that 80% of Lodges have done so, and remind those who haven't – that Provincial Grand Lodge, through the Membership Strategy Group, stands ready and willing to assist in any possible way.

I now wish to thank the many Members of this Province who have ensured that my tenure as Provincial Grand Master and Grand Superintendent has been both a privilege and a pleasure.

As soon as I was appointed, I received the unreserved support and encouragement from the Provincial Secretariat. I have served with two Provincial Secretaries, VWBro John Farrington and WBro Martin Roche.

Their assistance and loyalty has been outstanding as has been the support I have received from the permanent staff of Andrew Holland, Susan O'Neill and Anne Donnelly. (Exactly the same must be said of Julie Ward and Karen Hall in Hewlett Court). That support has also been extended to me by the volunteer staff at Ashday Lea.

You could be forgiven for believing that as I appoint all the Members of the Craft and Royal Arch Cabinets, their support and loyalty should be a "given" but that is not why I appointed them. I appointed them for their leadership qualities and the simple fact that I thought they would individually and collectively be inspirational in the areas they were responsible for.

They have always lived up to my expectation and I am so grateful to them all whether they be Deputy Provincial Grand Masters, and here I must mention by name VWBro Derek Thornhill who was my Deputy for seven years, Assistant Provincial Grand Masters, Deputy Grand Superintendents, Provincial Grand Principals, or Assistants to the Provincial Grand Principals. They have also taught me a lot. I now realise that a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity whereas an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

Without exception, they have all become friends of mine and I treasure their friendship.

Exactly the same can be said of the District Chairmen who are closer to the Coal Face and deal with challenges which don't see the light of day because of their success in averting them.

There have been some dramatic events within this Province which required the unanimous support of all the people I have just mentioned including the two Cabinets.

Events such as moving the Headquarters of the Province from Manchester to Ashday Lea in Rawtenstall.

The regeneration of the Manchester Hall, which was long overdue.
The ending of the last Festival to support the RMBI and the extension of Hewlett Court to provide much more state of the art accommodation for our residents. That support was always forthcoming.

Some would say, that being a Provincial Grand Master can be a lonely job.

To be honest, I have never ever felt that !!

Perhaps it's because everything we do and achieve in this Province has been a team effort and the teams I have worked closely with have been instructive and constructive and I have valued their advice and guidance. More than that – being with them – has been fun and I shall miss them all.

I started my Masonic journey 53 years ago when I was 21. I never dreamt then that I would become the Provincial Grand Master nor did I seek it. Now that it's happened, I'm jolly glad it did !!

If there are two people who stand out, that I would particularly wish to thank – more than any other, it would be my Father who taught me all about Freemasonry and the importance of making friends for life. He never saw me become Provincial Grand Master and that's probably a relief as he would have fainted at the news.

And the second is my wife, Ruth who has been the love of my life, my closest friend, my stalwart, guide and mentor.

She has always kept my feet on the ground and would frequently say – when I returned from a fun night out with you guys, “I think you’ve had enough adulation tonight – now take the dog into the garden for a “you know what”!.

Finally – finally,
My final thanks must go to all of you for your constant kindness, your loyalty, your support and above all your friendship.

I may leave with a heavy heart but I do so in the certain knowledge that you will ensure that this Province will continue to be the success in the future, it has always been in the past.