

The Order of
Royal and Select Masters
of England and Wales and its Districts and
Councils Overseas



DISTRICT OF ESSEX

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Dear Companions,

Yet another year is coming to an end. Time goes by so quickly these days as the pace of our lives seems to get busier and busier with every passing day. Already the festive season is only a few days away and our minds are turning once again towards plans for merriment, goodwill and cheer, and for a happy and enjoyable time with friends and family, as well as anticipation for what the new year may have in store for us. I also think that it is important for us to use this time to reflect on what we have achieved during the year and consider what is important in our lives.

As far as the Order in general is concerned, this has also been a busy year and the Order continues to progress. During the year three District Grand Masters retired and new District Grand Masters were installed in their stead, and six new Councils have been, or will be consecrated. The Excellent Master Degree, introduced in 2013, is gradually being conferred on more and more recipients although numbers are still strictly limited to no more than two qualified Companions per District in any one year. Every recipient must have had conferred on him the Order of the Silver Trowel, and those honoured from our District this year were Ill. Comps Terry Morgan and Rodney Bass. Until this year the ceremony had been conducted only twice a year at Mark Masons' Hall, but this year the Grand Master gave permission for the Excellent Master degree to be conferred outside London for the first time, at a ceremony at Bristol.

Once again, we have had another busy year in our own District. Apart from the annual District meeting in July, which was very well attended by our own members and a large number of guests from other Districts, more than 50 Companions enjoyed an excellent Combined Councils meeting in May hosted by Colchester Council at Colchester. The Degree of Thrice Illustrious Master, otherwise known as the Order of the Silver Trowel, was conferred on five members of this District by Companions of Essex Installed Masters Council in May. This was the first time since the inception of the degree that the recipients were solely members of Essex Councils. In previous years we had undertaken the conferral of the degree on behalf of the Districts of Kent and Hertfordshire but both Districts now have their own Councils with the authority to confer the degree themselves. As you are aware, there have been changes in the District Executive. Clive Mansfield has stood down as Deputy District Grand Master after four years in that office and I am most grateful to him for his support and devotion to our Order. Tony Littleford has succeeded Clive and Bob Potts is our new PCW. I know that the restructured team will work harmoniously together for the benefit of our District which continues to grow, I am pleased to say.

Earlier this month I again had the pleasure of hosting our annual Christmas luncheon at Southend and I am most grateful to Clive Mansfield for organising it so well. It was a most enjoyable occasion with a capacity 165 sitting down to an excellent lunch. We are very fortunate to have the use of Saxon Hall, which is a very professional facility and caters for our every need without complaint. The venue has already been booked again for another lunch next December, and I am sure it will prove to be equally as enjoyable.

During the course of the year I, and members of my District team, visited every Council. As ever we were extremely well received wherever we went and had the pleasure of witnessing some excellent ceremonies. I make no apology for repeating what I have said previously - our ceremonies contain some of the finest pieces of ritual to be found anywhere in Masonry and it is good to see so many Council Officers making a special effort to deliver the ritual to a high standard for the benefit and enjoyment of candidates. I have no doubt that this will have a positive effect on them and will encourage them to recommend our lovely Order to others to join.

It has also been my pleasure to represent this District at the annual meetings of several District Grand Councils, often accompanied by members of my District Executive, and when I have been unable to do so, they have stood in for me thus ensuring that the high profile and standing of this District is sustained. I am most grateful to them for their unstinting support.

This time of year means something different to everyone - whether it's celebrating this significant date in the Christian calendar, catching up with loved ones, opening presents, or simply enjoying a brief slowdown in our hectic lives. I extend my personal good wishes to you and your families for happiness and joy this Christmas season, a Happy New Year and everything that you would wish for yourselves in 2018. I look forward to enjoying your company next year, wherever we may meet, and may peace, love and prosperity follow you always.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,



District Grand Master