

## **Provincial Grand Conclave and Investiture Meeting.**

This year's Provincial Grand Conclave was held at Cheshire View, Christleton on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2022.

Members and distinguished guests started to arrive around 08.30 for a 'be in your seats by 10.35 start.

The warmth of the June sunshine matched the warmth of the greetings inside the building.

All those attending were met at the door by WyBro Malcolm Orr who ticked them in and gave them their envelope, which contained the summons and procedure, as well as a copy of the Welsh Anthem.

He also attempted to sell them a lapel pin 'Bow & Arrow' which is part of the new membership and Charity drive.

At 09.00 the rehearsals started.

The Grand DC, WyBro Chris Davies began the rehearsals for the escort team for the PGSR designate and Deputy PGSR, designate.

At the same time both the Grand and Provincial Arch of Steel did their own respective rehearsals.

With the rehearsals over there was just time for a coffee and then a team photo.

With everyone in place by 10.40, including the distinguished guests who would normal process in; the DC Anthony Lloyd entered and did the housekeeping announcements.

It was now time to receive the Presiding Officer, RWyBro Jim McKeeman and his Deputy, RWyBro Sam Keery, and Provincial Grand Conclave was duly opened.

After a short interval there was a knock on the door, and the Grand Director of Ceremonies entered to announce The Grand Supreme Ruler, M.Wy.Bro Andrew Christopher Sweeney would like to come in. Not actually in those words, but that is what they meant!

The Grand Supreme Ruler and his Assisting officers processed in.

Among those in the procession was The Assistant Grand Supreme Ruler RWyBro Gasper Llewellyn Gill, who had travelled from St Lucia that morning especially for the meeting.

RWyBro Jim McKeeman placed The Grand Supreme Ruler into the chair as the Installing Officer and so that a Grand Conclave could be opened.

For Grand Conclave there was a change of officers. The Most Worthy Grand Supreme Ruler appointed:

As Grand Counsellor, RWyBro John Stafford Stevens, Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler for Staffordshire and Shropshire;

As Grand Guide, RWyBro Paul Crudge, Dewi Sant Conclave No 457;  
As Grand Chaplain, VWyBro Louis Keats;  
As Grand Recorder, RWyBro Ryan Williams;  
As Grand Director of Ceremonies, RWyBro Christopher Davies;  
As Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies, VWyBro Roger Richardson;  
As Grand Sword Bearer, WyBro Robert Dewberry;  
As Grand Standard Bearer, WyBro David Ainsworth, Norton Priory Conclave No 226;  
As Grand Organist, WyBro Derek Whatling, Christleton Conclave No 504;  
As Grand Guarder, WyBro Mark Gleave, Christleton Conclave No 504;  
As Grand Sentinel, WyBro Gary Oates, Norton Priory Conclave No 226;

The Grand DC directed the salutations to The Grand Supreme Ruler, M.Wy.Bro Andrew Christopher Sweeney, who then addressed the brethren, after which he directed the Grand Recorder Ryan Williams to call a muster role of the Conclaves of the Province; with all Conclaves being well represented.

It was now time to assemble the members of the escort.

These were:

VWyBro Peter Schick, Verney Clayton Conclave No 45;  
WyBro, John Goldsmith, Past Supreme Ruler, Fidelity Conclave No 50;  
Colin Lemin, Supreme Ruler, Chester Conclave No 155 and Dewi Sant Conclave No 457;  
Jimmy Tang, Past Supreme Ruler, Norton Priory Conclave No 226;  
Kevin Atherton, Supreme Ruler, The Vale of Weaver Conclave No 278;  
Dave Loughlin, Supreme Ruler, Seal of Solomon Conclave No 463;  
Harry Wright, Supreme Ruler, Christleton Conclave No 504;  
Derek Gaskell, Immediate Past Supreme Ruler, Maen Achwyfan Conclave No 514.

The Grand DC and escort team then retired.

Outside the Conclave, VWyBro Peter Schick and WyBro John Goldsmith were the cushion bearers.

On the cushions are the Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler's Robe, Chain of Office, Sash, Baton, Patent of Appointment and Book of Constitutions & Regulations.

Inside the Conclave the Grand Arch of Steel came to order and The Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler designate and his escort processed in.

The Grand Supreme Ruler then gave a short, but interesting history of WyBro Tony Stringer.

It turns out that both WyBro Stringer and M.Wy.Bro Sweeney are members of Mensa!

Then The Grand Supreme Ruler asked the Grand Recorder, WyBro Ryan Williams, to read out the Patent of Appointment.

When this had been done a prayer was given, before The Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler designate took his obligation.

Once obligated RWyBro Tony Stringer was invested with his Chain of Office, Robe and Baton and then Installed into the Chair by The Grand Supreme Ruler.

RWyBro Christopher Davies, Grand Director of Ceremonies then proclaimed and saluted RWyBro William Anthony Stringer as the Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler of the Province of Cheshire and North Wales.

With this Investiture completed, the Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies, VWyBro Roger Richardson, asked The Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler whom he appointed to be his Deputy.

So the whole procedure was repeated. The main differences were that it was only a six member escort and it was The Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler that Installed and Invested WyBro Paul Morrison Burton as Deputy Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler.

The RWyPGSR similarly addressed the meeting about WyBro Paul's background, making specific reference to his life working for the National Coal Board, both in Cannock Chase and Point of Ayr collieries.

Once WyBro Burton had been invested, installed, proclaimed and saluted; it was time for the Provincial Officers to retake their places.

The Grand Supreme Ruler and his deputation then processed out and Provincial Grand Conclave got underway.

RWyBro Tony Stringer collectively welcomed his fellow Supreme Rulers, and the other Distinguished Guests and Heads of Orders.

WyBro Paul Burton, DPGSR gave the In Memoriam to eight departed friends, and WyBro Malcolm Orr, Prov.G.Chaplain gave the prayer.

With the domestic business done it was time for the Investment of this year's Provincial Officers.

This was a slightly truncated ceremony than other years due to the Investiture of the PGSR and his Deputy.

Nevertheless all went smoothly.

With all the Provincial Offices invested it was the turn for the Arch of Steel to be presented.

Due to the absence of the Commander, the Arch of Steel was very ably led by Bro Philip Rose and he must be congratulated on the excellent job that he did on the day.

Calm now descended on the meeting when the ninth Provincial Grand Supreme Ruler of the Province of Cheshire and North Wales; RWyBro Tony Stringer rose and gave his address; which was both upbeat and entertaining. Could we have expected anything less?

It was now time for any other business and the Alms collection, before closing Provincial Grand Conclave.

With the Province being Cheshire and North Wales, both National Anthems are sung before everyone processes out.

It was now time to sit and relax in the sunshine before lunch. It was great to have chance to catch up with people that you had not seen for a while.

After a roast beef lunch, the PGSR proposed the toast to the Most Worthy Grand Supreme Ruler, and referred to his personal Welsh roots originating from his Great Grandparents and before. He was also delighted to present the GSR and Grand team with a small token of appreciation of their work, being a can of beer brewed in Runcorn, and a packet of Welsh biscuits, claiming to be the oldest biscuit in Wales, if not in Great Britain.

Following a suitable response, the Grand Supreme Ruler then proposed the toast to the Province, which the PGSR suitably responded and outlined his early plans for the months ahead, to consolidate and strengthen what we have by putting in place a Delivery Squad to assist Conclaves who are missing Officers, and other initiatives designed to support Conclaves and assist in bringing in new members.

Congratulations go to Tony and Paul on becoming the leaders of the Province.

Congratulations must also go to WyBro Alan Harrison PrGRec, on his excellent organisation of the day.

*Words by Derek Gaskell.*

*Pictures by Philip Rose and Peter Schick*