



A Christmas Message from our District Grand Prefect



Brethren all,

As Christmas approaches, I wanted to share with you a few heartfelt words and my warmest good wishes. This is a season that invites us to pause, reflect, and appreciate the many blessings in our lives, and one of the greatest is the friendship and fraternity we share within our beloved Allied Masonic Degrees.

The spirit of this time of year mirrors the finest of our Masonic values: kindness, generosity, understanding, and the simple joy of being there for one another. In Surrey, we are incredibly fortunate to have a District filled with Brethren who live those values every day, not only within the Lodge but in the way they support, encourage, and care for one another beyond it.

While Christmas brings happiness to many, it can also be a challenging season for some. Let us remember those who may be feeling the weight of illness, loss, or loneliness. A phone call, a visit, or even a thoughtful message can be a ray of sunshine in someone's day. These small acts of love and compassion are the true essence of our Order.

I am deeply grateful for each of you, your friendship, your commitment to the Allied Degrees, and the warmth you bring to our District. It is your enthusiasm, your good humour, and your genuine brotherly care that make Surrey such a special Masonic home.

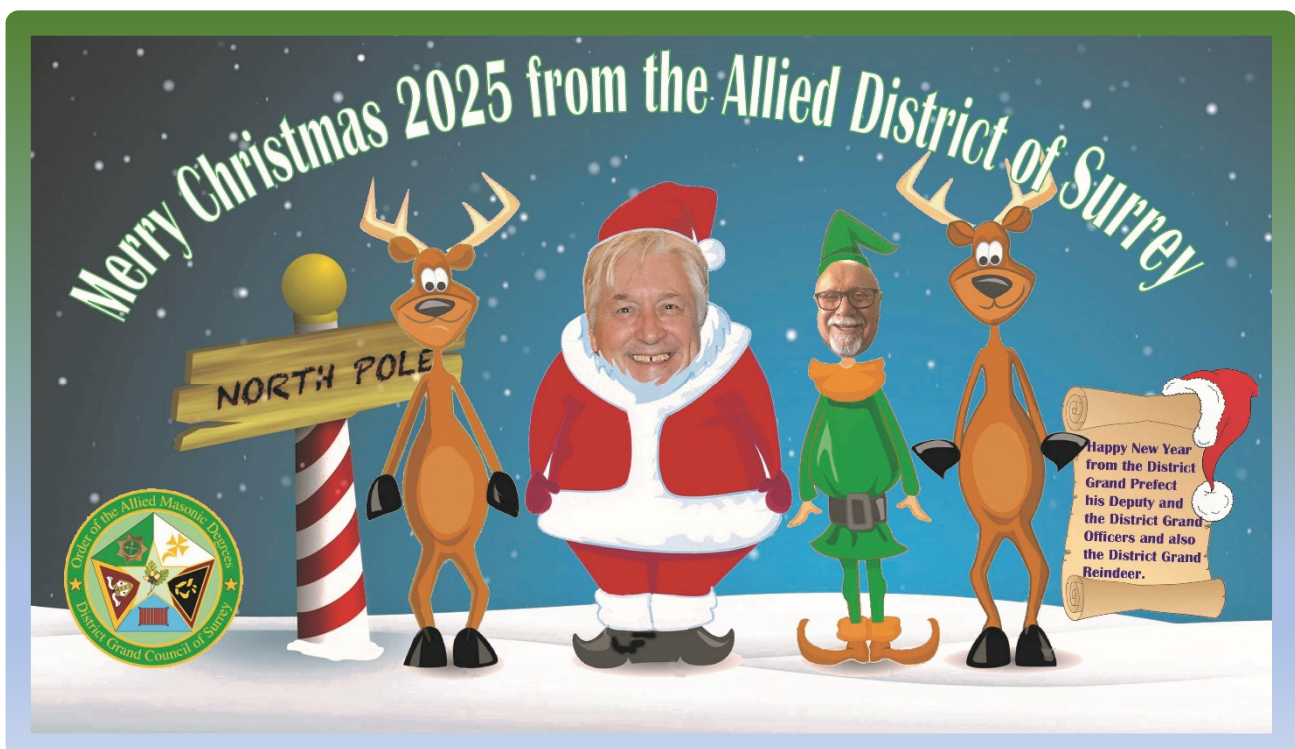
As we prepare to celebrate with family and friends, I wish you all a Christmas filled with peace, happiness, and moments of real joy. And may the New Year bring good health, renewed energy, and every blessing to you and those you hold dear.

With my warmest fraternal regards and very best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a happy, peaceful New Year, and may the Great Disposer of all have you in his holy keeping now and forever.

R.W.Bro. John Vaughan Christopher French

District Grand Prefect

Surrey



2025 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of Surrey in the Allied Masonic Degrees



The 2025 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of Surrey took place on Saturday the 6th of December at Croydon Masonic Hall.

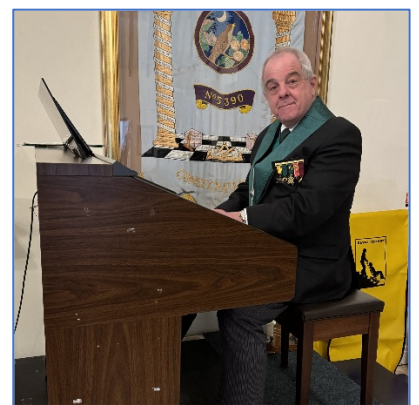


Brethren of the District of Surrey and their guests started arriving from 9 am where they received a warm welcome from the reception team before making their way into the lounge where tea, coffee and bacon butties were being served.

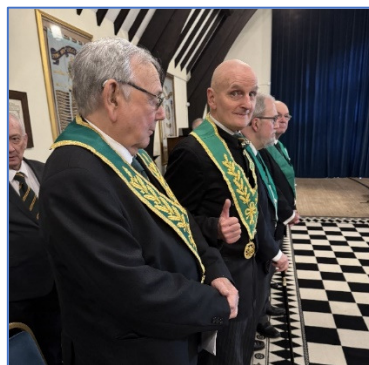




There were many guests from other Districts, as well as Heads of other Orders in Surrey. District Grand Council was honoured with the presence of two Past Deputy Grand Masters, R.W.Bro. Clive Robert Manuel, and R.W.Bro. Ian Bailey.



The Past District Grand Master, the Past Deputy Grand Masters, the R.W. Brethren and the District Grand Prefect entered in procession into District Grand Council to music from our District Grand Organist, Bro. Bob Soper.



The District Grand Prefect opened District Grand Council and was saluted with seven under the direction of the District Grand Director of Ceremonies.

After responding accordingly, the Right Worshipful Brothers Clive Robert Manuel and Ian Bailey Past Deputy Grand Masters, were saluted with nine under the direction of the District Grand Director of Ceremonies.

and R.W.Bro. Clive Manuel responded accordingly.

The R W Brethren were saluted with seven and R.W.Bro. Ronald Slater, District Grand Prefect for the District of Severn responded.

The District Grand Prefect welcomed all the guests and visitors, especially the Past Deputy Grand Masters, R.W.Bro. Clive Manuel and R.W.Bro. Ian Bailey, as well as our Past District Grand Prefect, R.W.Bro. Ray Hussey.



After the regular business of the District had been concluded the District Grand Prefect then had much pleasure in receiving several Brethren who had been introduced, received, and admitted into our Order in the last 12 months saying, *“Brethren, Recruitment and Retention of Members remain very important issues to all of us and plays a big part in the success of any District, especially so in this time of uncertainty. I consider it important to welcome new Brethren into all aspects of our Order and it now gives me great pleasure to welcome some of our newly Admitted Brethren here today and to wish them well in this further step in Masonry”.*

The District Grand Prefect announced that he had much pleasure in re-appointing W.Bro. Robert Gregory (Bob) Tuthill as his Deputy District Grand Prefect, thanking him for his support over the past year. The District Grand Prefect appointed and invested the District Grand Officers of the year, and those promoted in Past District Grand Rank.

He then addressed District Grand Council. In his address he said that it was good to see so many Brethren present and thanked everyone for their support, especially our Past Deputy Grand Masters who are always most welcome in Surrey, and whose company we enjoy immensely. He said that visiting is an important part of all Freemasonry and thanked our guests for the generous hospitality which he and his team receive around the country when they visit other Districts.

The District Grand Prefect congratulated all the Officers whom he had been pleased to appoint or promote in District Grand Rank, hoping they will all enjoy their year in Office, and if possible be able to support the Official Visits this coming year.

He also congratulated the Brethren who received Appointment or Promotion in Grand Rank at the Annual Meeting of Grand Council at Great Queen Street. He thanked the District Recorder and the District Grand Director of Ceremonies and their teams for ensuring today’s meeting was a success and finished by wishing everyone and their loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. ***(a copy of the Address by the R.W. District Grand Master is after this article)***

District Grand Council was then closed in due form and the District Grand Prefect retired in procession from District Grand Council accompanied by District Grand Officers and Honoured Guests, greeting everyone on their way out from the Temple.



The Brethren of the District Grand Council of Surrey and their guests sat down to a most enjoyable lunch at the Croydon Masonic Halls. A game of Heads and Tails was organised to raise money for charity. The winner of the rum cake baked by Jerry Gangadeen was Jack Love, Provincial Grand Master of the Royal Order of Scotland, S E Counties.



Our District Grand Prefect had much pleasure in presenting Robbie Dobbie, Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the Craft Province of Surrey, with a donation towards their 2030 Festival, which was gratefully received.

The Toast to the District Grand Prefect was given by W.Bro. Bob Tuthill, the Deputy District Grand Prefect. He presented him with another one of his Caricatures, this time the AMD Hog Roast. Our District Grand Prefect proposed the toast to the visitors thanking them again for their support for the District.



R.W.Bro. Clive Manuel responded by saying it was always good to visit Surrey and wished John and his team all the best for the future. He then presented R.W.Bro. John with a hat, green on one side and red on the other – It represented the home and away colours of Clive's football team - Ashford United....



After a most enjoyable day we all went on our way, looking forward to when we meet again.

Photos by Chris Eley and Michael Fenech

Address by the R.W. District Grand Prefect to the 2025 Annual Meeting of the District Grand Council of Surrey

Brethren all, it is my honour to address you for the ninth time at this, our nineteenth Annual Meeting since the District of Surrey was formed here at Croydon out of the old District of Southern Counties.

It is most pleasing to see so many of you here today. Thank you all for your continued support, especially our Past Deputy Grand Masters, Thank you again for honouring us with your presence.

Brethren, as well as generosity we are known and admired for our Brotherly Love. I believe that we are all, in essence, Almoners. As there may be difficult times ahead for some of our members, let us be as supportive as we can, and staying in contact is the very first step. The gift that we have all been given is time, so please use that wisely and make every effort to keep in close contact with one another.

If someone has not attended a meeting for a while, just give them a call to check that they are well, and remind them how much you look forward to seeing them at the next meeting. From personal experience, I can tell you that an unexpected phone call can bring great joy! Our members are precious to us, let us make sure we look after one another. Please let me know if you are aware of any Brother who may be experiencing difficulties. And remember, Brethren: "It's good to talk", and long may that continue.

I congratulate all the Officers whom I have been pleased to appoint or promote with District Grand Rank today. I hope you enjoy your year in office and, if possible, support as many Official Visits as you can. I assure you that your attendance is not only appreciated by myself and our Deputy District Grand Prefect, but also by the Councils we visit, who always enjoy our company. If any other members wish to attend these visits, you will be made very welcome.

I have also asked our District Grand Secretary to circulate the dates of other Annual District Meetings around the country, which you may wish to consider attending. As Bob's chauffeur, I can confirm that there is always room in my car for two more passengers! There is no pressure to attend, but I can assure you that these occasions are not only enjoyable, but you will be warmly welcomed.



This year's Hog Roast was another great success, sold out once again, with a very generous raffle and glorious sunshine. Thank you, as ever, to our Past District Grand Prefect for arranging that! His new miracle, however, turning water into wine, still needs some practice! My sincere thanks to everyone who attended, and please note the date for next year's event: Sunday, the 12th of July 2026. Bro. Kevin Brennan is once again organising the day, and I thank him for his hard work in ensuring it remains an enjoyable and family-friendly event. My sincere thanks and appreciation also go to Ray and Jenny Beadle, who so generously donate wonderful raffle prizes every year, Brethren.

The Annual Meeting of Grand Council at Great Queen Street was a splendid occasion, and my warmest congratulations go to those Brethren from Surrey who received appointment or promotion in Grand Rank, namely:

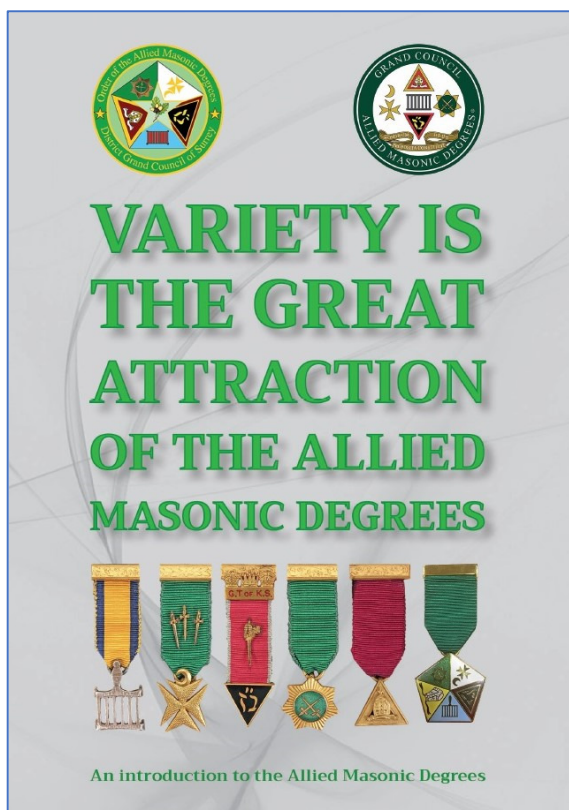
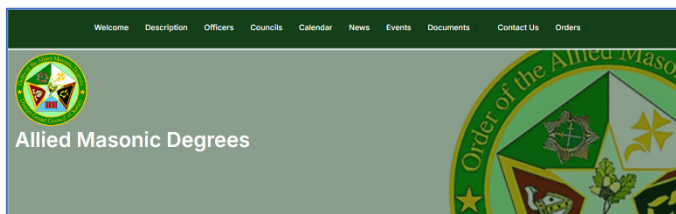
- W.Bro. Bob Tuthill, promoted to Past Grand Senior Deacon
- W.Bro. Andrew Sales and W.Bro. Chris Cradock, promoted to Past Grand Junior Deacons
- W.Bro. Barrie Selway, first appointment to Past Grand Assistant Director of Ceremonies
- W.Bro. Steve Jones, first appointment to Past Grand Standard Bearer

These are well-deserved honours, Brethren, and we salute you.



Our District Website will be overhauled in the New Year. Please let me know what changes or additions you would like to see. It is your website, Brethren, and it should serve your needs. Yes, it should be a source of information, but also a means of encouraging potential new members to learn about our wonderful Order. Remember: no idea is a bad idea.

Alongside the napkins, trifold flyers, pens, and our excellent new booklet “Variety is the Great Attraction of the Allied Masonic Degrees”, we now have some first-class tools to help spread awareness of our Order. These items are designed to start conversations, giving you the opportunity to speak with enthusiasm and passion about the Allied Degrees and encourage others to join.



Please also remember that we have the full support of our Provincial Grand Master in the Mark Degree to promote our Order at Mark meetings. Wearing your Allied napkins at Mark Festive Boards again creates awareness and sparks positive conversations. Please take advantage of this opportunity to spread the word. Should anyone require another napkin, Brethren, they are available today – normal price £125, but this morning reduced to the price of a charitable donation to your Council at your next meeting.

Brethren, our Masonic journey begins in the Craft, and whilst we should all ensure that our Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters remain strong and healthy, let us also remember that the next stepping stone into our wonderful Order is through our Mark Lodges. Let us ensure that the help, support, and encouragement we receive from the Mark Degree is not wasted and, more importantly, that our Mark Lodges continue to be vibrant, healthy, and above all enjoyable meetings to attend.

The good news, Brethren, is that this year we have increased our membership by twenty. Sadly, we have lost seven for reasons beyond our control, and four who have passed to the Grand Lodge above. I particularly thank those Councils that have successfully recruited new members, with special recognition to W.Bros. Mike Neville and Norman Jones of Surrey Council No. 64, who rarely hold a meeting without admitting new candidates.

To “Stormin’ Norman” and “the Magic of the Mike” – please keep up the good work! And to those Councils who have not yet recruited, please let me know how we can support you in reversing that trend.

The Surrey Gridiron continues to be a great success. W.Bro. Chris, I

know you hardly need reminding, but thank you once again for your hard work and commitment, which are greatly appreciated by us all.

Finally, Brethren, District Meetings do not just happen. Many people work extremely hard to make today possible. I offer my sincere thanks to them all – particularly W.Bro. Trevor Sadler, our District Grand Secretary, and his team; W.Bro. Billy Barr, our new District Grand Director of Ceremonies, and his team; W.Bro. Chris Cradock, who does so much vital work behind the scenes; and W.Bro. Ray Seeley, who continues to give great service as our District Grand Treasurer and in so many other ways

The Charity Collection at today’s meeting will go to the District Benevolent Fund, enabling us – through your generosity – to support worthy causes. Next year’s District Meeting will again be held here on the first Saturday in December. the 5th of December 2026. Please make a note in your diaries.

Brethren, I close by wishing you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year. Thank you for the kind attention you have given to my address and may the Great Disposer of all have you in His Holy Keeping, now and forever.

John V. C. French

District Grand Prefect

6th December 2025

District Grand Council of Surrey web site:

<https://www.surreycompanionorders.com/welcome-allied-masonic-degrees>

