



INSPECTOR GENERALS FORUM – 4 NOVEMBER 2020



Welcome to this virtual meeting and congratulations to all those who have not used Zoom before but have still managed to join us. I hope most of you will also be booking in for the virtual visit from the Sovereign Grand Commander a week next Monday. This has been the most difficult address I have had to present since the day 4 years ago that I had the honour to become Inspector General for our District. Difficult because none of us has seen or worked a meeting of our wonderful Order for 33 weeks and there seems only a small chance that we shall resume anytime soon.

In the first 4 months after the last Inspector General's forum, I attended 9 of the available 12 meetings of our chapters. I have had to consult my notes to remember the precise details of the ceremonies but what I did not need reminding about was the co-operative, supportive and enjoyable environment in every one of those meetings. The Enthronement meeting of Merlaue chapter just a few days before the first lockdown was very thinly attended because self-isolation had already kicked in for many

members but being part of the spirit that was evident among those present I found most enjoyable. That is what we miss most of course in the current situation.

On the administrative side, I have been outstandingly supported throughout the year by District Recorder Peter Moody who continues to be an invaluable source of advice to our Recorders, and to me. As well as the routine staff work liaising with Supreme Council, he painstakingly collected all the statistics for my annual report in June, has assembled the District Directory which every member should have handy somewhere and, during this enforced suspension of meetings, has proof-read each of my 32 weekly missives before sending it out to every Recorder. He will be doing the same tomorrow for the 33rd. I trust every member of the District is getting a copy and I hope most are enjoying researching the weekly quizzes. I would commend Illustrious Brother Stephen Knight for his responses, he has been almost spot on with his answers for weeks now and Nick Wilson, Steve Tunney, Bill Parish and John Stribling have all got close on occasions. I intend to continue the weekly missives until we get back together properly even if it is becoming difficult to find more questions for you all. It is also becoming more difficult to make sure I don't repeat myself. The missives also appear on our District web-site and whilst we are thanking webmaster James Blackhurst for his work in setting up and maintaining the website, we must also congratulate Illustrious Brother James on his recent promotion – having been working hard for the Craft Province as a Deputy Director of Ceremonies for some years, he is now the

Provincial Junior Grand Warden. I note with some gratitude the number of hard-working members of other Orders in Bucks, the engine rooms of Bucks freemasonry, who also make the time available to work for us. That said, many of these stalwart supporters also have busy working lives outside freemasonry and we, and they, must be careful that they do not become over-extended.

It would be a bit pointless to mention any points of ritual or ceremonial I have noticed in the last year – mainly because having been unable to meet for such a long time, I haven't had anything to notice but also because it may yet be a while until we are permitted to associate formally once again so any points I did raise now would probably be forgotten before they could be of any use. All I would say is that a weekly read through of the ceremonies, especially the rubric directions in italics in the book, will make the necessary re-learning much easier once we can resume a proper Rose Croix existence.

In the meantime, please don't become despondent over the latest news and lockdown. Our younger members still at work need our encouragement so do phone around your Chapter members regularly just to see how they are getting on – both ends of such conversations gain benefit from even short calls. This is perhaps especially important in the next few weeks for those of our members who live on their own. Some will be vulnerable and perhaps need assistance or support, some will find the free time at home useful for helping others. Above all, don't leave it all to the Almoners because the care and sympathy they offer for their correspondents can have an effect on them too - I hope Recorders are in regular contact with their Almoners to offer support in their task.

We mustn't forget why we are freemasons – performing ceremonies or ritual is enjoyable but associating with like-minded people and helping the wider community is more important. In our wonderful Order, membership should also strengthen the faith we already have and encourage us to think of others. We all have a deeper meaning to our lives than many in the wider world and that is an advantage we should not forget. As I mentioned in my weekly missive a couple of weeks ago, I really like the latest slogan our masters in Whitehall have come up with – Hands, Face, Space really sums it up and let us hope it works for everyone. I know there is an increased risk of losing members in this trying time, but I would encourage you all to Help others, let them help us if we need it, and Stay Safe.