

THE UNITED RELIGIOUS, MILITARY AND MASONIC ORDERS OF THE TEMPLE AND
OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM, PALESTINE, RHODES AND MALTA OF ENGLAND AND WALES
AND ITS PROVINCES OVERSEAS

PROVINCE OF ESSEX

Provincial Prior

A. J. (John) Helliar



14 May 2020

Dear **Brother Knights of Essex, Distinguished Brethren and Friends**

Today many of us from all over Essex, plus our invited guests and visitors from other Provinces and Orders, would have been travelling to Southend to meet this morning at Saxon Hall for what would have been our Annual Chapter of the Provincial Priory Meeting of Essex to celebrate once again the Investiture of all those knights of the Province who were to receive Provincial honours.

Whether it was to be re-appointed to an Executive office or receive a Provincial honour for the first time or a promotion to a higher rank within Essex, may I, as your Provincial Prior, congratulate you and thank you likewise for the support you have given to the Province over many years, that has led to the recognition you so justly deserve today. If you were attending to support a friend or colleague being honoured or as an interested observer I trust that when next we are able to meet again you will still wish to make the journey which, if past times are repeated, once again will be a joyous occasion on a beautiful sunny day in Southend.

To all our usually invited guests, visitors and friends, Essex likewise will miss you greatly as your presence always makes our meeting more enjoyable, more vibrant and more special when we are together.

On 17 March when UGLE and Mark Masons Hall announced that all Masonic activity was to be suspended for four months we all knew that not just our own Provincial Meeting but all such gatherings, plus our own individual units, were to suffer the same fate.

However, the seriousness of the situation was apparent and such measures were required in the circumstances. Indeed, nothing like the devastation caused by the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic has been experienced on a worldwide basis in the majority of our lifetimes and those old enough to remember further back can only compare it with the times experienced during the darkest days of the Second World War.

As Provincial Prior of Essex, my heartfelt wish is that we shall all be able to look back on this period in our history, sometime in the not too distant future, and as Christians thank the "*Great Captain of our Salvation*" that he has delivered us safely from these difficult times.

Let us not forget, that hopefully when that happens, we will still remember those less fortunate than ourselves who have not survived this ordeal.

In the words of that emotional song I hope that we can all say :

"We'll meet again, Don't know where, Don't know when, But I know we'll meet again some sunny day"
- in Southend.

Yours in the Bonds of the Order,

John

Provincial Prior of Essex