

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE of MARK MASTER MASONS of DURHAM

R. W. Bro. Prof. D K Wilson
Provincial Grand Master

Report of the Provincial Grand Secretary to Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Durham which was due to be held at the Lancastrian Suite, Lancaster Road, Dunston, Gateshead NE11 9JR on Wednesday, 24th June 2020.

Brethren, I present my second Report to the Mark Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham. As you will see from the items listed below, the last year has been extremely busy and enjoyable, but ultimately very disappointing. It began in a euphoria of excitement, exuberance, and anticipation of the celebration of our Centenary Year. There was a great energy about the Province. There was great energy being expended in organising the Centenary Dinner, and planning for the Centenary Meeting of the Mark Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham on 24th June 2020. Alas, it was not to be. Towards the end of 2019, we began to hear news of the Corona Virus emanating from China (or Covid 19 as it soon became known). Very soon it was evident that it was more than a mere 'disease of flu', and by the middle of March 2020, all Masonic meetings had been suspended for 4 months – something that had never happened in over 300 years of Freemasonry. Brethren, as I write this report, our Centenary events are all postponed. I hope we will be able to hold them at some time in the future, but I cannot begin to give you any idea as to when that might be. At this point in time, all I can say is that the general administration of the Province continues to the normal set deadlines, and I am relying on the various Lodge Secretaries to assist me in those matters. I look forward to seeing you all in the future – let us hope, sooner rather than later. Until then, stay safe, and I wish you all well.

Lodge Visits (16).

The Provincial Grand Master appreciates the support from his Active Team of Provincial Officers which has enabled him to accept Provincial Deputation Visits to the following Mark Lodges, all of which were visited before the suspension of Masonic activities: Eclectic 39; Union 124; Darlington 250; Wouldhave Tyne Dock 362; Jarrow 701; Hackworth 761; Unity 827; Moseley 925; Castle Eden 930; Ernest Dixon 1015; Walton 1106; St Aidan 1145; Cestria 1151; Durham Lodge of Installed Mark Masters 1492; Ferryhill 1560; and Indaba 1936.

Lodge of Instruction.

The Annual Festival of the Durham Mark Lodge of Instruction was held at Shiney Row on Tuesday, 29th October 2019, where V. W. Bro. Paul Philip Paterson P.G.M.O. attended as President of the Festival.

50 Year Certificates.

During the last year, one Certificate celebrating 50 years' membership of the Order was presented to:

W. Bro. Francis Maxwell Sanderson, Stanhope Mark Lodge No. 1551.

A second presentation was due to be made, but had to be cancelled due to the suspension of meetings:

W. Bro. Derek Strickland Mills, Penshaw Mark Lodge No. 1055.

Installations.

The Provincial Grand Master was represented at all the Mark Lodge Installation Meetings and the reports of those representing indicated that the Ceremonies were, as usual, of a high standard, and well conducted in the majority of cases. Thanks are extended to all those Brethren who represented the Provincial Grand Master so ably, and to the Lodges for the courteous and friendly manner in which his Representatives were received.

Membership.

The Membership at the end of 2016 was 1233. At the end of 2018, it had fallen to 1182. This year we have lost a net total of 46 memberships. This decrease represents a further decrease of 3.89% over the last year; and a total decrease of 7.89% over the last 3 years. If we consider that over the 3 year period, 70 Brethren have passed to the "Grand Lodge Above", and we had 160 resignations, then clearly, 'resignations' is still a major issue. All resignations are followed up by contact from either the Deputy or the Assistant PGM, and it is imperative that details of all resignations are sent to Province as soon as Lodge Secretaries are informed of them – a follow-up phone call is useless several weeks later.

Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Durham
Summary of Annual Returns of Lodges Year Ended 31st December 2019

No.	LODGE	Total Members Installations 2018	A	J	R	D	Ex	HM	Total Members Installations 2019
39	Eclectic	24	0	0	1	0	0	0	23
122	Percy	24	1	0	4	0	0	0	21
124	Union	22	2	0	3	0	0	0	21
250	Darlington	16	0	2	2	0	2	0	14
293	Industry	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
356	Dunelm	45	1	1	2	1	0	0	44
362	Wouldhave Tyne Dock	41	2	0	2	1	0	0	40
596	Auckland	21	1	0	0	0	0	0	22
605	Bede	27	0	2	1	1	0	1	26
701	Jarrow	34	0	1	2	0	0	2	31
718	Ravensworth	20	1	0	0	0	0	0	21
740	Harte	22	2	0	0	1	0	0	23
761	Hackworth	39	1	2	1	1	2	1	37
778	Barnard Castle	22	2	0	1	0	0	1	22
827	Unity	21	0	0	3	0	0	0	18
846	Steadfast	25	0	0	1	1	0	0	23
854	St. Andrew's	31	1	0	1	0	1	0	30
860	Bernard Gilpin	19	0	4	2	0	0	0	21
896	Clavering	33	0	0	4	1	0	0	28
925	Moseley	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
929	William Todd	30	1	0	1	1	1	0	28
930	Castle Eden	31	1	0	2	0	3	1	26
981	Spennymoor	26	0	0	0	0	2	0	24
1015	Ernest Dixon	22	1	0	1	1	0	0	21
1055	Penshaw	19	0	0	1	1	0	0	17
1093	St. Lawrence	16	2	0	2	0	0	0	16
1106	Walton	31	1	0	2	1	1	0	28
1112	Elevation	24	0	2	1	3	0	0	22
1145	St. Aidan	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
1151	Cestria	51	3	1	2	0	1	0	52
1269	Ambrose Crowley	36	1	3	1	1	0	0	38
1271	Shipley	22	0	0	4	0	4	0	14
1274	Staindrop	13	0	0	1	0	1	0	11
1339	Hebburn	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
1492	Durham L of I M	47	0	5	7	0	0	0	45
1511	St. Thomas	19	0	1	1	1	1	0	17
1551	Stanhope	30	1	0	2	0	0	1	28
1560	Ferryhill	26	1	1	0	1	0	0	27
1626	George Washington	17	1	0	2	1	0	0	15
1714	Ryton	30	2	0	0	0	0	0	32
1806	Chief of the Builders	67	2	6	2	1	0	0	72
1820	Provincial Stewards	25	0	3	1	0	1	0	26
1936	Indaba	26	1	0	2	1	0	0	24
		1182	32	34	65	20	20	7	1136

Mark Grand Lodge Honours.

With effect from Tuesday, 9th June 2020, the Most Worshipful Grand Master was pleased to make the following appointments to Brethren from this Province:

Grand Steward	Michael James Wilkinson, Hackworth 761
Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	Michael Graham Jnr., Jarrow 701
Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	Graham Wharton, Steadfast 846
Past Assistant Grand Sword Bearer	Phillip Alan Carter, St Andrew's 854
Past Assistant Grand Sword Bearer	John Bernard Martin Schoolkate, Ravensworth 718

With effect from Tuesday, 8th September 2020, the Most Worshipful Grand Master was pleased to make the following appointments to Brethren from this Province:

Past Grand Junior Overseer	Gilbert Crossley Snr., Ernest Dixon 1015
Past Grand Junior Deacon	Kenneth Peter Dale, Percy 122
Past Grand Junior Deacon	William Sinclair Malcolm, Wouldhave Tyne Dock 362

Congratulations are extended to all the above, with the wish that they have good health to enjoy their preferment, and the determination to continue to work hard for the betterment of the Order.

Obituary (25).

The Province has suffered the loss of many Mark Brethren, whose names are recorded below. We acknowledge the service they gave to the Order in general, and to this Province in particular.

Bro. Alan George Nichols		Wouldhave Tyne Dock Lodge 362
W. Bro. Frank Bilton	P.Prov.G,Stwd.	Dunelm Lodge 356
W. Bro. Clifford Graham Jellicoe	P.G.Stwd.	Staindrop Lodge 1274
Bro. John Geoffrey Hutchinson		Dunelm Lodge 356
W. Bro. Charles Wilding	P.Prov.G.M.O.	Castle Eden Lodge 930
W. Bro. Albert Henry Norman	P.Prov.G.J.O.	Hebburn Lodge 1339
Bro. Derrick Redden		Castle Eden Lodge 930
Bro. Philip Cranmer Dobb		Ryton Lodge 1714
W. Bro. Victor McAvoy	P.Prov.G.J..O.	Ernest Dixon Lodge 1015
W. Bro. Dennis Jones	P.Prov.G.J.D.	Clavering Lodge 896
Bro. Peter Dixon		Hackworth Lodge 761
W. Bro. Peter Smith Usher	P.A.G.D.C.	Cestria Lodge 1151
W. Bro. James William Barkess	P.Prov.G.J.D.	Stanhope Lodge 1551
Bro. Christopher Beard		Ravensworth Lodge 718
Bro. John Ashley Lee		William Todd Lodge 929
W. Bro. John Nicholson	P.Prov.G.S.W.	Ernest Dixon Lodge 1015
W. Bro. Alan Simpson	P.Prov.G.J.W.	George Washington Lodge 1626
W. Bro. William John Coward	P.Prov.G.J.W.	Harte Lodge 740
W. Bro. Neil Anderson	P.A.G.D.C.	William Todd Lodge 929
W. Bro. Ian MacDonald	P.Prov.G.Reg.	Provincial Grand Stewards' Lodge 1820
W. Bro. John Anthony Atkinson	P.Prov.G.J.W.	Steadfast Lodge 846
W. Bro. Gordon Fletcher	P.A.G.D.C.	Ferryhill Lodge 1560
R. W. Bro. Joseph Alan Armstrong	P.G.J.W.	Elevation Lodge 1112
Bro. James Watling Douthwaite		St. Aidan Lodge 1145

W. Bro. Peter Derek Jones		Ryton Lodge 1714
W. Bro. Sidney Pattison	P.A.G.D.C.	ShIPLEY 1271
W. Bro. Ronald Stobbart	P.Prov.G.St.B.	Jarrow 701
W. Bro. Philip Terry Errington		Ferryhill 1560
W. Bro. Joseph Randle Oliver	P.Prov.G.S.W.	Union 124
V. W. Bro. Alan Hall	P.G.J.O.	George Washington 1626

“THEY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS, AND THEIR GOOD WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM. THANKS BE TO GOD, THEY HAVE MARKED WELL.”

Visits to Other Provinces (2).

Since last June, due to the suspension of meetings, the Province has been represented at very few Annual Meetings of other Provinces. They were:

Northumberland; Staffordshire & Shropshire.

Other Events.

As mentioned earlier in my Report, most events connected to the Centenary of the Province have had to be postponed due to the Corona Virus.

Earlier in the year, however, on Monday 18th November, the Provincial Grand Master and his Active Officers were able to spend a very enjoyable evening in the company of the members of Jarrow Lodge 701, and the Assistant Grand Master, R W Bro Stephen Davison, as the Lodge celebrated its own Centenary.

Several weeks later, on Friday 3rd January, the Warrant of Shipley Lodge 1271 was re-activated in a unique Ceremony performed by the Provincial Grand Master and his Active Officers, which was witnessed by more than 100 Mark Brethren, with 99 attendees at the Festive Board. The re-activated Lodge, it is hoped, will eventually be re-named ‘Sportsmans Lodge of Mark Master Masons 1271’.

Conclusion.

Brethren, I present my report for your information and consideration. My grateful thanks go to all the hard working Lodge Secretaries for their help and assistance during the last 12 months, and I am sure they will continue the good work in their Lodges.

My particular thanks go to my Deputy Provincial Secretary W..Bro. Graham Wharton, my Assistant Provincial Secretary, W. Bro. Doug Quickmire, the Provincial Registrar, W. Bro. Malcolm Ormiston, and the Assistants to the Secretariat, W. Bro. Fred Beales, W. Bro. Ian Heaviside, and W. Bro. David Battensby, who has now been made Provincial Grand Inspector of Works and is responsible for the running, maintenance and upkeep of the Provincial website. They have all executed their roles most efficiently, and I am indebted to them all.

In mentioning the website, it is worth pointing out that more and more official documents will be posted there, as well as the Provincial Diary.

Brethren at this point, I would normally hope that our annual pilgrimage to the Lancastrian Conference Centre is a success, and that everyone has a most enjoyable day. Unfortunately, it has not been a normal year! So for now, Brethren, I wish you all well, and may the Great Overseer of the Universe enable us all to meet again soon.

Allan Gurney P.G.Stwd.,

Provincial Grand Secretary.

16th June 2020.