

PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS AND ROYAL ARK MARINERS OF DURHAM

DURHAM

PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER OF DURHAM
RW Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson



Durham Mark Masons to Sponsor Regional 'Annual Health Awards 2020'



Professor Denovan Keith Wilson

During the 2020 period of lock-downs it is important for us to remember that it is formal meetings, not Mark Masonry that has been suspended. The best proof of this are the various activities that have and are being continued by brethren, Lodges and Provincial

Grand Lodge since the first lock down was announced.

Until normal meetings are resumed, as they surely will be, we must continue to work together, to preserve those things which make up the *"Magic of the Mark"* we so love and enjoy.

Such collective work has culminated in a number of firsts. Several Mark Lodges now use interactive communication platforms, such as 'Go to' and 'Zoom' to host meetings with their members and guests. Indeed, Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham MMM, held its first (hopefully its only 'Zoom') Annual General Meeting on the 29th of July this year. The Province also continues to distribute the Centenary Fund awards nominated by its membership.

Our Centenary Year also energised the production of the 100 year History of Provincial Mark Masonry in Durham. A printed version is currently in a draft form. Once completed and printed a copy will be circulated to all members. The formation of the Sportsman's Lodge of MMM No.1271, under the former Shipley Lodge warrant, has proved to have been a successful initiative re-energising a Mark Master Mason Lodge, also the launch of our updated Provincial Mark Honour website. All very commendable!

Now 2020 has presented Durham Mark Masons with the opportunity to recognise and present awards to worthy recipients from the Health and Social Care Section working in the Northeast. These prestigious awards recognise and reward the tireless work and achievements of the dedicated

individuals and teams who look after our 'Health and Wellbeing'. The annual Celebration Event of the Sunderland Echo and South Shields Gazette, 'Health Awards' will be hosted at the Roker Hotel, Sunderland.



The Provincial Grand Lodge of MMM's of Durham is proud to announce it will be one of the major sponsors of that event alongside the NHS, Clinical Commissioning Group and BUPA. Representatives from each organisation will be involved in selecting the recipients of awards under several categories. One of those categories will be selected by our representatives on that panel to receive the Durham Mark Masons Recognition Award.

As one of the main sponsors our organisation will be given editorial covering, pre and post event. A presence at the awards ceremony and importantly actively working in partnership with community facing organisations.

However, due to COVID-19 pandemic the Awards Ceremony will be carried over into 2021 (a date yet to be fixed). The events will be launched by the media in early 2021 inviting nominations for each of the twelve categories.

Announcing this initiative the Provincial Grand Master of Durham, Professor Denovan Keith Wilson stated;

"Our major project to Mark the Centenary Year was the tangible support given to local causes which we have and are doing. How wonderful it is, that in addition to this we now have the opportunity to show our support for the region and our National Health Service by sponsoring and donating a 'Durham Mark Masons Recognition Award' The commemorative item is a beautiful precious stone bracelet, which has been specially designed and made by one of our members. This collaboration with other major sponsors, sits easily alongside our Centenary Project and is another wonderful example of Mark Masonry in the Community"

MARK MASTER MASONS ;

GIVING HOPE, HELP, ASSISTANCE
AND SUPPORT.

Mask your face – Not your feelings.

*Poems in a Pandemic – Some words might help,
with words you are never alone.*

Research has been carried out nationally by several organisations including the NHS and Government, on the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collating, not only the actual effects on physical health but also wellbeing, caused by the restrictions on individuals and communities in trying to control the virus nationally.

The wearing of a Mask or face coverings have a practical application to assist protection of ourselves and others. However many will encounter feelings of anxiety, loneliness and loss which are being concealed not by a mask but being confined to thoughts in the mind.

Expressing those thoughts in writing has been found to be a source of release of such confinement of thoughts and feelings.

Poetry or short stories gives a space for individuals to be creative, feel and reflect in a way that allows others to understand what is going on inside the hearts and minds of the writer. Such writings would not only provide catharsis for poets, but will tell the rest of society what was happening during the darkest days of the pandemic that effected our membership and families.

We invite you to write and submit your poems /stories, so that they can be shared with our readers. The content of such items maybe reassurance to readers, who may have empathy with the sentiments being expressed by the author, which can be therapeutic to both. You may wish to include a photograph or illustration to accompany your contribution.

To help you capture your experience and emotions you may consider any of these senses for your writings; hope, isolation, humour, reflection, recovery, observation, loss, bravery and uplifting. However, the list provided is by no means exhaustive.

Please forward your poem and / or story to Michael Wilkinson by email: michael.w@learning4ever.co.uk or by post;

14, Grangeside, Darlington, Co. Durham. DL3 8 QJ

All contributors will be acknowledged.



'It's Good to Talk'.

*Should you be one of the many who might be suffering any of the feelings mentioned in this article, then you should remember that you didn't have to suffer alone. Remember that well-used phrase, which is very apt in such a situation, that **'Its Good to Talk'**.*



Trevor Lynn

Trevor Lynn, APGM and Chairman of the Provincial Mark 'Caring Committee' commented , "Our Provincial Almoner,

Keith Liddell, a registered member of the MBACP, invites you to contact him in confidence on his mobile no;

07986 567005 to offer our support.



Keith Liddell



David Hanson

‘Mark Masons Seasonal Home Visits’

At this time of the year many would be preparing for the annual Seasonal Festivities to celebrate Christmas with family and friends. A time to enjoy company and shared togetherness with others.

Goodness only knows what those celebrations will look like this year, as we wrestle with curtailing the coronavirus. This year, more than ever, many of us will have been self-confined in our homes for weeks or months with only a few callers or visitors, some will have had none.

Unfortunately the latest Government announcement for further restrictions for the whole of country gives little relief to such households.

At this time of year our Lodge Almoners regularly support brethren including our lodge widows. These benefit from the assistance given by those Almoners on our behalf. Unfortunately, there will be those brethren and their partners who will only have each other's company to enjoy. Likewise, there will be brethren who reside alone. A friendly caller to their door may be the tonic to lighten that sense of loneliness.

In an effort to give some relief to such isolation and addressing both of those scenarios, plans are being made to conduct a number of home visits. It is hoped that

these will be welcomed by the householders when the Christmas message can be delivered and shared.

Hopefully, the magic of Santa Claus will not be lost on those who still retain an innocent belief in his mystic powers of travel. As mere moral Mark Men we have no such powers for covering long distances and numerous homes in one single night like Santa.

To address that problem, volunteers are preparing to visit as many such households as possible in the weeks of December building up to Christmas Day. Those volunteers will conform to Governments Corvid-19 guidance and respect householder's requirements.

You can help those volunteers make preparations in compiling their Christmas List.

If you, or if you know of a brother, who would take pleasure in a home visit please contact the Provincial Almoner. WBro Keith Liddell, mobile: 07986567005 email: k.liddell@blueyonder.co.uk or you Lodge Almoner.

Keeping in Touch via ‘Zoom’

Keeping in touch with family and friends has never been so important as it is in these challenging times. Opportunities to physically meet one another continue to be restrictive in accordance with government legislation and guidance which may be enforced by law.

Thankfully, we have access to an array of interactive communication platforms. These allow the use of several means of effective communication, speaking, listening and seeing one another.

Freemasons across the country are now enjoying the benefits of such technology as a means of communicating with work colleagues, relatives, friends and fellow masons.

‘Zoom’ is a popular platform used by many organisations. It is easy to access. The service is mainly free to use. As ‘Zoom’ is gathering popularity with Lodges to host virtual meetings there are many brethren who are unable to participate because they have yet to download this service onto their computers, laptop, iPad or iPhone.

The guidance below may be of assistance to such readers

How to join a Zoom meeting.

You can access Zoom on your computer or laptop via their website – [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us) - or by the app on a tablet or smartphone.

If you do not have a Zoom account then don’t worry, there is no need to set one up . You can select ‘Join a meeting’ and enter the ID and Password details that will have been sent to you by the meeting host, Or if a link has been provided, simply click on the link and it will open up a Zoom window.

The meeting room will usually be open 5 minutes

before the nominated start time. This gives you the opportunity to join and make sure you can see and hear the host on your screen.

You will be asked to type in your name, but please be aware that this is what everyone else in the meeting will see as your name on their screen.

When you initially join the meeting your video and audio will be turned off. This means that no one can hear or see you. You will have to activate both audio and video via the appropriate icons on your screens.

It is hoped that you are now able to prepare and take part in future meetings and encourage lodges to such use on a fairly regular basis to keep in touch and support one another in these ever changing times.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, David Hanson, keen to encourage this means of communication commented,

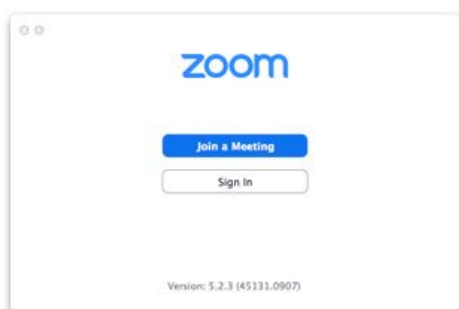
“Brethren we are certainly living in testing times when we cannot meet face to face, shake hands or embrace, things that we took for granted and now dearly miss. Thankfully, we have access to this technology which enables us to visually communicate in real time.”



David Hanson

He added, *“I firmly believe that it is imperative that we try to keep in touch with one another and the Zoom platform certainly enhances the way we are able to communicate in the absence of our Lodge meetings. In the meantime I look forward to seeing you on Zoom”.*

MW



AUDIO & VIDEO buttons in left bottom corner to switch on or off sound and picture during meeting





Pictured presenting the cheque to Christine Thomas, CEO and Trustee, is W. Bro. John Watts, a member of Ernest Dixon Lodge Of Mark Master Masons No. 1015. “

“ The local Charity “ Building Self-Belief “ is fortunate to have among its Trustees two well known and respected freemasons, **Stan Fitches MBE** and **John Watts**. Its mission is to establish stronger communities by building self-belief and in its short life, founded in April 2018, it has significantly improved self-esteem and life chances for hundreds of vulnerable young people across the Northeast.

In areas which are recognised as socio-economically deprived, programmes are designed and workshops delivered on subjects including mental health and wellbeing, building aspiration, team building and cultural activities all with the aim of supporting young people and in building better local communities. In order to assist this excellent charity in furthering its aims the **Executive of the Province of Durham Mark Benevolent Fund** has decided to approve a **grant of £500**.

Building Self-Belief CIO Charitable Objectives

Building Self-Belief CIO’s core aim is to build stronger communities by building self-belief in vulnerable young people in the region.

We run programmes for children in areas of the North East that are socio-economically 'deprived' according to the National Index of Multiple Deprivation measures. We deliver group workshops and community based programmes around mental health and wellbeing, building aspiration and employability skills. As part of our programmes, we give the young people the opportunity to experience voluntary, cultural and team building activities, that engage the young people and assist them in building better communities.

Building Self-Belief CIO was created in April 2018 and formally launched by Sue Snowdon, the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham in November 2018, at Durham Masonic Hall. Since that date, we have significantly improved the mental health, self-esteem and life chances for over 500 vulnerable young people across the region.

Building Self-Belief’s programmes provide these support programmes, in community and school-based settings, in order to support vulnerable young people in improving their self-confidence, self-esteem and social skills to enable them to recognise their full potential in life. The programmes’ activities involve a range of workshops on topics such as building and sustaining friendships, aspiration, self-image, leadership and communication skills.

We provide post-project analysis on the Revised Children’s Anxiety and Depression Scale and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Measures Scale, to measure the impact of our activities.

We have already had great support from the Masonic community including from the OSM Province of Durham, OSM Benevolent Fund, Conclave of Friendship No. 241, Widow’s Sons – Durham Chapter. We were also the nominated charity for the 2020 UGLE Prestonian Lecture, given by Professor George Boys-Stones. We greatly appreciate this support in assisting us to continue to expand our programmes, for which there is ever growing demand, especially in such challenging times for charitable funding.

Dear Roy/John,

I am writing to inform you that we (**Enter CIC**) have received your letter dated October 30th 2020.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mark Master Masons of our Province for your kind donation of £500. I was delighted to receive it and can assure you that the finance will be put to good use to benefit our young people. We are about to embark on a new project designed to help young people maintain positive mental health. I will utilise the money for this project.

“ Ordinarily I would have organised a photograph (with supporter John Thompson of Chief of the Builders Lodge of MMM No 1806 and our young people), but unfortunately the second lock down has made this impossible. However, I have attached an image of myself receiving the cheque.

Thank you very much for your consideration. The finance could not have come at a better time.

Very best wishes,

Andrea Mallen Flynn DL, BA (Hons), PGCE, MA, Director, Enter CIC



John Scott , Poet and Restorer



'The money you gave for hampers I found amounted to several thousand pounds, all the money collected was not once so rare but over the last six months. I've come to despair, to continue this work and think that it's greedy then stretch your thoughts to those who are needy, I walked in the temple and oh what a sight my heart expanded with joy and delight. The lodges in Province I have found sit the DC and Deacons on chairs unsound. When you have an antique but you start to despair, long gone are the days to be used as a chair . Brethren if you want chairs that others admire I am the brother to meet your desire, if you want chairs that fit the bill I am the brother to say I will.'



Brethren if you require chairs restoring please contact John W. Scott on 01388602821. Depending on the condition of the item it will cost £15-£20 of which £15-£20 will be donated to the Mark Benevolent Fund.

Mark District of Spain, Annual Assembly, THE CORONAVIRUS CONUNDRUM

As all of my fellow District and Provincial Secretaries know, the planning for the next assembly starts the day after the last one! But who could have imagined when I woke up on the morning of Sunday 2nd February, the global turn of events that were to unfold?

But there have been times over the summer months when our District Meeting in Benidorm on **Saturday 6th February 2021**, seemed to be a lifetime away. With an ever-changing landscape of events and at times deteriorating on an almost daily basis.

The problem being posed is the same for all Districts and Provinces:

Will we be able to stage such an event?

And if we can, what reasonably can we offer and to how many?

Even supposing the lockdown measures at the time are favourable, and that participants, members, visitors and friends are confident to support it.

Our 'Covid compliant' planning started in earnest a few months ago, when our best guess was that we may be able to host a socially distanced meeting, that would only be able to cater for about half the numbers we enjoyed in the 2020 Assembly, which has progressively grown over the 24 years of the District's existence.

With the advent of the UK's 'Bubbles' and 'Rules of 6' and their Spanish equivalents (both at National and Regional levels) we may not even be in a position in February to go ahead with our current plans on the drawing board, who knows what the coming months will bring?

The one thing we are all learning is not to rule anything out, especially in these troubling times and we in the District of Spain will be exploring every possible avenue to host the very best Assembly we can to celebrate our 25th anniversary year, circumstances permitting, whether that meeting will be physical or virtual (or a bit of both!!)

If you would like to keep up with our plans and developments, please drop a line to our dedicated District Assembly email address: 2021meeting@markesp.com Or visit our website: www.districtmarkspain.com And we will make sure you will have latest and most up to date information regarding our meeting, which is due to be held once again at the Gran Bali Hotel, Benidorm, on the fabulous Costa Blanca (which I am contractually obliged to say), Spain on **Saturday 6th February 2021**, with events open to everyone on the Friday evening (5th February 2021) Details of Hotel Packages and Booking Information are also available on request.

Let's hope that things do start to get better for 2021 and that all of our Mark Provinces and Districts can once more enjoy the Friendship and Brotherhood that meetings with our Brethren always bring, whether they be in our Lodges or at our Assemblies.

Mark Well, Stay Safe - *Ian Crawford, District Secretary, District of Spain.*



Winter Sun Spain 2021

Brethren, I am in contact with the Grand Secretary, District of Spain regarding the 2021 AGM, and with the ongoing Covid 19 in Spain their AGM is uncertain to be held for now.

Due to this situation therefore, I am unwilling or able to arrange a trip to Spain. I will keep all who are interested in the Spanish trips up to date with the AGM details when we receive them. If the A G M(Spain) meeting goes ahead I will send all details via the newsletter, if anyone is interested in attending then please contact me and I will furnish you with all the booking details. Anyone who would like details of the A G M Meeting to be held on Saturday 6th February 2021 please contact me (Arthur) on ajc5807@gmail.com

I hope you are all keeping well and safe,

Mark Well,
Arthur Clark.

“ **The Province of Durham Mark Benevolent Fund** has helped a wide range of charities over the years and in this Centenary year 64 charities favouring young people have benefited from grants of £1000 each as part of our celebrations. One charity in particular, based in Chester-le-Street, which received a grant of £25,900 in 2013/14 following an application to the Mark Benevolent Fund in London a few years ago, is the **Heel and Toe Children’s Charity** which provides free conductive education therapy to children with physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, and receives no government funding.



Such was their gratitude to our Province for facilitating this major grant that they named the therapy suite in the Main Centre in honour of Peter Croft. Since that time our Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson, has visited this Centre and both he and the Chairman, W.Bro. David Hanson, take a keen interest in the affairs of the charity. Sadly, the corona virus pandemic has forced the charity to suspend many of its therapy programmes to the detriment of children and their families and is having to consider the possibility of closure.

In the hope that it would afford some measure of relief it was decided to make a Grant of £1000 and our photo shows the Past Deputy Grand Master, V.W. Bro. Frank Rankin, making the presentation to the Fundraising Manager Amanda Tweedy, with the very best wishes of the Mark Master Masons of the Province of Durham. “

As an aside I guess the giant cheque ensures that a presentation can be made and still observe social distancing !
Roy.

OBITUARY

- 18/07/2020 **Bro. Michael Cockerton**, DOB:15/03/1949, MARK- 1151
- 31/07/2020 **W. Bro. George Edgar, P.P.G.J.W. / R.A.M.G.R. ,** DOB: 29/09/1927, MARK - 981, RAM- 981
- 29/08/2020 **Bro. Alexander King**, DOB: 03/02/1946, MARK- 761
- 28/09/2020 **Bro. Norman Cooke**, DOB: 29/01/1947, MARK: 1269
- 02/10/2020 **Bro. Robert William Chisholm**, DOB: 11/10/1940, MARK 929
- 18/10/2020 **Bro. John McCarthy, P.P.G.S.W. / R.A.M.Prov.G.R.,** DOB:18/08/1927, MARK 1112, RAM 1112

Lodge Secretaries please provide notifications ASAP to allow the Obituary to appear in this Newsletter in a timely manner.