

Celebrating 100 years



1920-2020

A Short History

Researched and compiled by
W Bro Maurice Bartle RAMGR



Provincial Grand Master Prof Denovan Keith Wilson
Installed as Provincial Grand Master
Tuesday 16th September 2014 to present

What a delight it is to extend warmest congratulations to the brethren, past and present, of the Darlington Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No 250, for forming their lodge and guiding it from its consecration in 1920 to the present day. The Centenary milestone was of course past in 2020 and, but for the Covid 19 Pandemic, would undoubtedly have been celebrated then in great style. However, now that we seem to be emerging from the pandemic, let us hope that in the near future the Brethren will be able to meet for what is bound to be a memorable, albeit belated celebration of the Centenary of the Lodge.

How wonderful that to mark the centenary, the brethren have produced an updated history of the lodge. This is set out in the following pages and shows that Darlington Lodge is one of only three that existed before the formation of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham. Throughout its history Darlington Lodge can truly be said to have been a beacon for Royal Ark Masonry in and around Darlington. For that, Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham will be forever grateful. It has been said that the past is history, the future is a mystery, but the here and now is a wonderful gift, which is why it is called the present. I hope that the members of Darlington Lodge, they are being well informed by its history, will use the wonderful gift of the present to demystify the future, so that they can plan and happily continue their journey into it.

As they do so, may they have the blessing and guidance of the Supreme Commander of the Universe.

RW Bro Denny Wilson

Provincial Grand Master

A Brief History of The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners

The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners is more widely known as “The Royal Ark Mariners.” The history of the Degree is obscure, as the precise origins of the Royal Ark Mariners are unknown and few historical facts have emerged over the years. The Degree is around two hundred years old and, as its name suggests, takes for its setting the circumstances leading up to the Great Flood and the actions taken by Noah to build the Ark by which mankind was preserved from perishing in the ‘Universal Deluge’.

Like the Mark Master Mason's Degree, which is based on an established fact (i.e. the construction of the Temple at Jerusalem), so the degree of Royal Ark Mariner is also based on an actual happening, i.e. the Great Flood, as recorded in the Bible and verified in 1929 by the archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley, who not only found evidence of the flood, but established that it had occurred some 6,000 years previously. The legend of Noah, his sons, the Ark and the Deluge was enacted in the Mystery Plays of the seventeenth century and continued as catechisms in the early Masonic rituals.

By the 1750s there was a Degree of Noachites or Prussian Knights. However, the first authentic record of the degree appears in the minutes of a meeting held in Bath in 1790. Numerous records exist throughout the country of the ceremony of Elevation being performed since that date.

The teaching of the Degree emphasises the importance of the family strengths and the need for each member of society to play his part for the benefit of all. We are taught that out of chaos and catastrophe mankind can survive and that we should face adversity together, helping to look after those less fortunate than ourselves.

The importance of the degree is that it illustrates that each member is one of a crew and each is dependant on the other. It is very much familiar, and is special in the message that it bears. Truly the “Jewel in the Crown” of Masonry. The symbol of the Degree is the triangle and the points represent, Wisdom, Strength and, Beauty while the five Cardinal Virtues characteristic of Masonry, Watchfulness, Discretion, Brotherly Love, Truth and Charity are illustrated.



**PRESENTED AT THE REGULAR MEETING
OF DARLINGTON LODGE OF ROYAL ARK MARINERS
11th OCTOBER 1995
“BACKGROUND HISTORY”**

It has been commented by astute observers that it seems to be characteristic that there is an upsurge of moral fervour and commitment following a period of extreme strife or danger.

This appears to be demonstrable with respect to Freemasonry, and is certainly apparent in the case of the expansion of the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner in the Province of Durham. Prior to the Great War, or as we know it World War 1, there were only two Royal Ark Mariner Lodges in the Province of Northumberland and Durham, they being the Northumberland and Berwick (T.I.) Lodge which met in Newcastle and the Union Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.124 which still meets at Queen Street, Sunderland and being formed in 1897. The only other local Royal Ark Mariner Lodge, Middlesbrough No.276, which of course was in the Province of Yorkshire North & East Riding a fact which had little detrimental effect upon the fortune of the new Darlington Royal Ark Mariner Lodge, as the records show that Middlesbrough Lodge No.276 provided a strong pillar of support, especially during the early years.

Scarcely had the smoke and mists of the Great War drifted away than a spate of Royal Ark Mariner Lodges sprang from the ruins. Stockton-on-Tees Royal Ark Mariner Lodge No.122 was Warranted on 28th July 1919 and Consecrated on 16th January 1920.

The Darlington Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.250 followed closely, the Warrant being granted on the 1st of March 1920 and the Consecration taking place on 26th April 1920.

It might thus be asked why we are celebrating the 75th Anniversary this evening, especially as meetings of the lodge took place in the months of June and July of that year. The answer is that it was decided to celebrate in October because of clashing with other Masonic celebrations, and in any case what is a few weeks in seventy five years?

Shortly after the formation of Darlington Royal Ark Mariners No.250, the separate Mark Provinces of Durham and Northumberland were formed on 12th June 1920. This obviously led to a further expansion in the degree.

Thus, to complete the picture of Mariner activity at that time, the Eclectic Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners at Hartlepool was Warranted on 3rd August 1920, Bede Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.605 on the 18th May 1921, followed by the Rockcliffe Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No 1923 on the 17th December, also at South Shields.

There was not to be such another rapid expansion of lodges until after the World War 2.

THE CONSECRATION

It is thus against this background of Masonic zeal that the fledgling Darlington Royal Ark Mariners Lodge first set sail. It was moored to the Darlington Lodge of Mark Masters No 250, on the 26th April 1920 with which it has maintained the strongest links over the past seventy five years. At the time of formation there were but three Craft Lodges in Darlington, Restoration No.111 (1761), Marquess of Ripon No.1379 (1871) and St. Cuthbert No.3417 (1910). Dunelm Lodge No.4079 had been granted a Warrant but was consecrated after Darlington Royal Ark Mariners No.250. Vigilance Chapter No 111 was the only Chapter, and Darlington No.250 was the only Mark Lodge. It is not surprising therefore that the first Commander of the Lodge should be a prominent Darlington Mason. W Bro William Todd was a Past Master of Restoration No111 and of Darlington Mark Masters No 250. He was the founder of many lodges in the Province and destined to proceed to high office and eminence in Freemasonry. Thus we should rejoice that our Lodge had such a firm foundation on which to build. That it has lasted these seventy five years may be due to the strength of the structure which was then formed.

We do know that W Bro William Todd was a Master Builder in the town so he presumably knew a bit about laying foundations.

What is unclear is where he drew up the plans and obtained the materials. There are no records for the first seven years of the Lodge's existence; the only inferences which can be drawn are those which can be gleaned from the attendance book. Where did our eminent first Commander obtain the knowledge to occupy the chair? It is most probable that it came from Union Lodge (or maybe even Middlesbrough Lodge). He was present as Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies at the consecration of the Stockton-on-Tees Lodge in January 1920, so it may be presumed that he had been admitted to the secrets of the Commanders Chair. As we shall see later it was not uncommon for such accommodations to be made in order to ensure the progress of the degree.

From the Officers who were present at the Consecration of Darlington Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.250, we may therefore deduce the list of Founder Members were

W Bro William Todd	Worshipful Commander
Bro J. Archer Vann	Son Japheth
Bro Richard M. Wilkes	Son Shem
Bro Joseph Tomlin	Treasurer
Bro Stephen J. Wallis	Scribe
Bro J.J. Weakner	Senior Deacon
Bro H.S. Sutherland	Junior Deacon
Bro R.M. Dove	Guardian
Bro George Bennett	Warder
Bro H. Hall	Steward

The Consecration Ceremony was Conducted by the Provincial Grand Master of Northumberland and Durham Rt W Bro Col. Charles Warren Napier- Clavering, assisted by W Bro William J. Carmon, P G Ov, W Bro Herbert T. Purvis, Prov Asst. G. Secretary, who on this occasion took on the role of D of C, W Bro G. Howard Chilman Prov G. Chaplain, Past G Chaplain (Fitzwilliam Mark & York T I. Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners), W Bro Charles W. Anderson Jnr, the Worshipful Commander of the newly formed Stockton-on-Tees Lodge of R.A.M. No.122,

Finally W Bro Christopher Danby of York T. I Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners, who was to become Past Commander of the Lodge.

Eighteen Visitors signed in, including six from Stockton and eight from Middlesbrough. We have no way of knowing what fare was provided after the meeting. We may only hope that it was a little more robust than the tea which was served at the consecration at Stockton

On June 12th 1920 at a Special meeting of the Province, the Provincial Grand Master announced that HRH The Most Worshipful Grand Master had agreed to divide the Province of Northumberland & Durham into two separate provinces



RW Bro Charles Warren Napier - Claving was appointed the first PGM of the new Province of Northumberland.

RW Bro Gerald Wellesley Liddell Baron Ravensworth was appointed as the first PGM of the new Province of Durham





GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS,

of England and Wales,
and the Colonies and Dependencies



OF THE British Crown.



Pro H. R. H. The Duke of Cornwall M. W. G. M.
and Anthonys R. G. 74 6 2

Whereas, a Petition signed by Brothers William Sedel, James Archer
Kerr, Richard Morison Trites, Joseph Tomlin, Richard Marshall Dove, Stephen
James Hall, William Henry Hall, Robert Stanley Sutthorn and John Johnson Treasurer
George Bennett, Charles William Anderson and James Fitzcarrill Gill,
being regularly constituted Members of the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner,
praying that a Warrant may be granted to them empowering them to open
a Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners, to be attached to the

Darlington Lodge

of MARK MASTER MASONS, N^o 250 and to be called the
Darlington Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners

has been received by the Most Worshipful Grand Mark Master Mason
The Most Worshipful Grand Mark Master Mason having every trust
and confidence in the before mentioned Brethren, is pleased to issue this his
Warrant authorizing the said Brethren to open a Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners, as
aforesaid, and therein to confer the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner, upon Brethren duly
qualified as legally advanced MARK MASTER MASONS, under the terms, conditions, and
regulations made and provided, or that from time to time may be made and provided
by the GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS, of England and Wales, and the Colonies and
Dependencies of the British Crown for the government of the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner.

As Witness our hands this — first — day of March —

1920

J. A. [Signature]

GRAND REGISTRAR

R. B. [Signature]
GRAND MASTER
[Signature]
GRAND SECRETARY

Darlington Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners Warrant

THE WORKING OF THE LODGE THE FIRST 20 YEARS

The first regular meeting on 9th June 1920 shows five new names in the Lodge Book: Bro's Henry James Park, Robert Nichol, William Roger, J. I. Blenkiron and I.W.R. Copping. The first named of these was one of the prime movers in the formation of the St. Cuthbert Craft Lodge but was not destined to achieve the chair of the Darlington Royal Ark Mariners Lodge. All the others subsequently became Commanders. However, we cannot know whether these brethren were elevated at this meeting or were joining members. Obviously there was frantic activity at this time, for a month later an emergency meeting was held when another six names appear. W Bro Charles W. Anderson of Stockton-on- Tees Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.122 was one of these new members. Another five enlisted in the next nine months, but then there are no further names until October 1922 when Bro Sam Abrahams signs in. It now takes the next four years to add the next six members; no doubt an effect of the severe economic depression of the mid-twenties. During this period, in the absence of the recorded minutes, we can only surmise as to the characters involved.

One thing which is noticeable is the different signatures. That of W Bro Copping is appropriately enough 'Copper Plate'. However another signature which I had very great difficulty deciphering turned out to be that of W Bro George Dobson-Wright. Roy Alsop tells me that he was Darlington Borough Treasurer, when Roy was employed in his department as a clerk. Despite the complexity of George Dobson-Wright's signature, Roy tells me that there were those in the Borough Treasurer's Department who could reproduce it, but he won't admit to whom he refers! When war broke out Roy went to inform his boss that he wanted to volunteer to join the navy. He was met by the response "Who are you?" at which Roy was a little dumbfounded, as he had sat at his desk just outside the great man's office for nearly four years!

In 1927 things must have taken a turn for the better as five elevations are recorded. From April 1927 things become a little clearer as it is from this date that the Minutes are available; from this date to the outbreak of World War 2 there were twenty nine elevations and one joining member, of which twelve ultimately became Commanders of the Lodge.

At the meeting on 13th October 1937 three candidates were elevated. Notable amongst these was Bro E.W. Hinde, who was Provincial Grand Warden and Secretary of Steadfast Mark Lodge No 846, and in whose memory we have a Masonic Golf Tournament. He became Commander in 1945. The second candidate was Bro A.W. Charlton, who was a near neighbour of my parents, and who took the Chair in 1944. The third was Bro J.E. Beadle of Glebe Farm, Salters Lane. Darlington, who used to deliver milk from a horse and trap in the Harrogate Hill area of the town. I have fond memories of being allowed to ride along with him on his rounds, when I wore knitted trousers. At the Installation of Bro Ernest Victor Payne on 14th April 1937 the following is recorded in the Minute Book. 'The brethren having assembled in the Lodge, the Assistant Director of Ceremonies W Bro G.F. Impey, for the first time in the history of the Lodge, marshaled a procession of Officers and Past Commanders outside the Lodge, and proceeded into the Lodge.

They having been drawn up in double formation in the Lodge, the Worshipful Commander W Bro W.J. Pallin, passed through the ranks to the Chair. The Lodge having been duly assembled the Worshipful Commander W Bro W.J. Pallin opened the Lodge in the usual form

In 1937 there was some confusion and discussion within the degree as to the position of the triangle. A letter was received from the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons affirming the practice we now use.

At the meeting in February 1938, it was proposed and agreed that the Treasurer be instructed to send Ten Shillings to the Grand Secretary for the appeal to the fund for the Earl of Stradbroke, on his twenty five years service to the Order.

The Lodge was saddened, in June 1938, to receive the news of the death of W Bro William Todd, the lodge's first Commander

THE WAR YEARS 1939-1945

As would be expected the fortunes of the lodge took a dip during the time of conflict in the Second World War. At first Masonic activities were to be immediately curtailed, but a memorandum was circulated from the office of the Durham Provincial Grand Secretary, W Bro W.J. Pallin, which was at 30, Pierremont Gardens, Darlington, advising that a new Order had been issued allowing resumption of meetings as from 4th September 1939.

However; it was suggested that Meetings should be abbreviated within reason, especially Installations, and the after proceedings so arranged that the Brethren could disperse at an early hour to enable them to reach their homes without danger.

The 1941 Installation of Bro Thomas William Frederick Brown had to be delayed until an Emergency Meeting in May, due to the unavoidable inability of the Commander-elect to attend.

The flow of candidates picked up again as the fortunes of war turned in favour of the Allies. Notable amongst these candidates was Bro Ronald Moncrieff Graham, of Hackworth Mark Lodge, who was later to be the first recipient in the Lodge, of Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank.

At the February meeting in 1944 the Darlington Royal Ark Mariners Benevolent Fund was set up, with the aim that grants should be restricted to Royal Ark Masons of Darlington, but that the committee may exercise its discretion as to grants or donations outside of that from time to time, when the state of funds warrants it'. Funding was to be from Social Functions and to be independent from the Alms Bag.

In 1945 the Annual Subscription was set at 25 Shillings (£1.25). Unfortunately the Minutes for the Meeting held April 1945 are missing from the Lodge Book, so that we have no record of the celebration of the first twenty-five years of the Lodge.

October saw the elevation of Bro Freddy Bold, another well-loved Mason, and one whose name is revered on the Grand Lodge Honours Board as a Grand Officer of Royal Arch Chapter.

At this meeting the Worshipful Commander, W Bro E.W. Hinde presented the Lodge with the Porphyry Stone which now resides on the Pedestal of the Worshipful Commander in Commemoration of the Peace.

1945 - 1969

The period after the war was one of consolidation. A steady stream of candidates presented themselves, mainly from Darlington Lodge of Mark Masters No.250 and from Hackworth Mark Lodge No.761.

Notable names in this period were George Leatherbarrow in 1947, to be followed by his son Ian in 1958 whilst George was in the Chair. The late Tom Sproates was elevated in 1949 although sadly did not progress in the Lodge, resigning in 1953.

Another sadness which hit the Lodge in 1949 was the death whilst in office, of the Worshipful Commander, W Bro Joseph William Angus after conducting only one meeting. The chair was taken by W Bro R.G. Orton for the remainder of the year. In June 1950 W Bro E.V. Payne was appointed Past Grand Senior Deacon of Mark Grand Lodge.

At the Installation of Bro Ronald Graham in 1951, the Installing Commander was W Bro W.J. Pallin, despite the fact that the Worshipful Commander, W Bro F.J. Thompson was present. That all was not well is shown by the calling of an Emergency Meeting on 29th October to provide relief to Mrs. Thompson in her trouble. The sum of £50 was approved, but no mention of what befell W Bro Thomson can be found in the Minutes. Incidentally at that time the lodge accounts show a balance of £5l.5s.2d, with £24.5s.0d in the Charities account, and £165.6s 10d in the Benevolent Fund.

On 13th February 1952 the brethren stood to order to mark the passing of King George VI. on 6th February 1952. W Bro Pallin was proposed as an Honorary Member. A similar proposition was made in respect to W Bro E.V. Payne at the next meeting, due to his ill-health.

In October 1953 W Bro J.B. Haw raised the question of reverting back to the system whereby each brother received a drink with his meal. He was supported by W Bro E. Angus. The matter was put to the brethren and it was agreed to revert back to the old system. At the same meeting £50 was voted to the 1955 Festival (£10 from Lodge Funds and £40 from the Charities account).

February 1954 saw the elevation of Bro Wilf Cottam another well-known mason. In 1958 Bro J.E. 'Ted' Burnside was Elevated into this degree, an event which, together with those of Bro T.R. Alsop in 1962, Bro T.H. Gaskin in 1963, and Bro J. Finch in 1964 was to have profound influences on the Lodge. These four brethren, probably more than any others, have formed the lynch-pins for the Lodge in the last three decades by reason of their dedication to the Order and love of the Degree.

However the elevation of Roy Alsop nearly didn't happen. He was supposed to be present for elevation on 8th June 1960, but due to the Scribe having an incorrect address, the Lodge Summons went astray, therefore the elevation of Roy was put back to the October meeting.

As there was no candidate for the 8th June 1960 meeting the degree was worked with Bro J.S. Veasey, of Spennymoor Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.981 acting as the candidate.

The Subscription was raised to £1s-.0d. in 1961, (not to include food). Bro Les Leckenby was elevated in June 1961. The Sum of 20 guineas was voted to the 1961 Festival

In the 60's the Lodge continued to work steadily on through the uniform flow of candidates. On the 13th February 1963 there was no candidate, so the degree was worked with Bro J.S, Veasey of Spennymore Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners. Jim Veasey sadly passed away on the 3rd October 1995. He will long be remembered as a loyal and strong supporter of this Lodge. The 8th February 1967 must have been a memorable night, as on this evening Bro's Eric Jackson and Alfred Norman Steer Waddleton were elevated together. It might be said that the Darlington Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners would never be the same again, for we had in those brethren two unique individuals. I had known Alf since childhood, and can remember him dispensing petrol by turning the handle of the manual pump. I came to know him well as a regular customer in later life, I was pleasantly surprised to be welcomed by this giant of a man when I entered Royal Ark Masonry. I soon learnt to appreciate his wit and wealth of anecdotes the variety of which reflected the colours of the degree.

In June 1968 it was announced that Grand Mark Lodge had decided to allow Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank and Royal Ark Mariner Provincial Grand Rank to be conferred. Congratulations were extended to W Bro John W. Cousins on his appointment to Grand Rank. W Bro Cousins was a Past Commander of Spennymoor Royal Ark Mariner Lodge No.981, and had become a joining member of Darlington Lodge in 1955.

In 1969 the subscription was raised to £2. It was at one of the meetings during this year that an appeal was made by the Treasurer Bro David Lockhart for contributions to the 1970 Festival.

He apparently wanted to raise £25 to meet the Lodge target. In order to achieve this it was decided to make a collection in the Lodge.

When it was found that the desired amount had not been reached the plate was passed around again! Yet another attempt was made at the festive board, when it found that two toffee-papers were included in the proceeds. It was rumoured that Bro's Waddleton and Jackson were seen chewing!

Another interesting year was 1974 when W Bro J.S. Wailes was Worshipful Commander. Stan had lost both arms in an electrical accident. Despite this disability he carried out his duties with great dignity and credit to the Lodge. The only clue in the records that there was any difference, is that the Scribe had to sign the Minutes on his behalf. That Scribe was our own Roy Alsop who was landed with the job at a moment's notice when the then Scribe, W Bro J.T. Petty died suddenly. It was a job which Roy was to hold for the next twenty-one years.

Similarly, Les Leckenby took over as Treasurer in 1978 from David Lockhart, who had served sixteen years. Les was to emulate this record by himself serving sixteen years in the post. Of the latter-day Commanders, each have their memories; the dramatic ritual and impish and infectious humour of Cec' Allan, the beaming bonhomie of George Sturdy, and the quiet dignity of Jack Moye are just a few examples. Over the seventy-five years of the Lodge it is interesting to note that of the candidates and joining members, 62% came from Darlington Lodge of Mark Masters No.250, 17% from Hackworth Mark Lodge No.761, 11% from Steadfast Mark Lodge No.846 and 10% other Lodges.

Officers Of The Lodge

W Bro Geoffrey Gibson	WCN
Bro Alan Tibbett	SW
Bro Mathew Devine	JW
W Bro James Finch, RAMGR.	Chaplain
W Bro Alan Howard Bland	Treasure
W Bro Allan Goult, Prov.RAMGR.	Scribe
W Bro Thomas Henry Gaskin RAMGR.	DC
Bro Peter Anzio Longstaff	SD
Bro John Joseph Sanderson	JD
W Bro Maurice Bartle	ADC
Bro Ronald Clarke	Gdn
Bro Bernard Ronald Steer	Stwd
Bro Thomas Williamson	Stwd
Bro Peter Gordon Parlour	Stwd
W Bro John Robert Moye	Wdr
W Bro James William Stenson	IPCN

Roll of Masters and Elevation Date

1961	W Bro L.B. Leckenby, Prov.RAMGR
1962	W Bro T.H. Gaskin, RAMGR.
1963	Bro J.J. Page
1964	W Bro J. Finch RAMGR.
1967	W Bro E. Jackson Prov.RAMGR
1967	W Bro A Goult Prov.RAMGR
1973	W Bro A.H. Bland
1977	W Bro J.R. Moye
1978	W Bro J.W. Stenson
1979	W Bro E. Thompson
1979	W Bro B. Finch
1979	W Bro D. V. Williams
1980	W Bro M. Deaton.
1981	Bro M. Bartle
1986	W Bro G. Gibson
1987	Bro A. Tibbett
1988	Bro C. Davenport
1990	Bro M. Devine
1990	Bro P.A. Longstaff
1992	Bro J.J. Sanderson
1992	Bro R. Clarke
1994	Bro B.R. Steer
1994	Bro T. Williamson
1994	Bro P.G. Parlour
1995	Bro R.A. Anderson

1970 - 1995

The 50th anniversary of the Lodge was celebrated in 1970, at the Installation Meeting in April. This, however, was an Installation Meeting with a difference. W Bro Thomas N. Thompson, D.C. of Steadfast Mark Lodge No.846 had been appointed as Assistant Provincial Grand Master, so that it was necessary for him to become a member of the Royal Ark Mariner Degree. It was decided to Elevate him into the Lodge before the Installation Ceremony. This was done, by the Worshipful Commander W Bro T.R. Alsop, before a Provincial Grand Lodge Delegation headed by the Provincial Grand Master-designate W Bro J. MacMurray . The Installation of Bro J.D. Brown was then conducted with his father W Bro J. Brown, P.C.N. in the Chair. The newly installed Commander then handed the Provincial Grand Master-designate a cheque for £100 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Lodge after which the Scribe gave a resume of the Consecration Ceremony.

At a subsequent Emergency Meeting held on the 6th May 1970 the signs and passwords appertaining to the Commander's Chair were communicated to Bro T.N. Thompson, to enable him to fulfill his Provincial duties.

The Third quarter therefore kicked off with somewhat of a sensation.

He immediately assumed the office of Junior Warden and was Installed into the Chair of the lodge two years later.

The next twenty years or so were characterised only by the steady ebb and flow of regular Elevations and Installations. The candidates were about evenly drawn from Darlington, Steadfast, and Hackworth Mark Lodges, and from others. However, as was to be expected there was a major influx from Hackworth during 1978 and 1979 when W Bro Alf Waddleton and W Bro Eric Jackson were respectively in charge.

1920 and 2020

To the present; the flow of candidates is smaller but still steady, in common with other Lodges and Degrees, but it is quality we should seek rather than quantity. In reviewing the past one hundred years it is this aspect which appears the most striking. Those who live on in the memory and who shine out through the records are the brethren who committed themselves to the principles and ideals of the order and lived by them in their daily lives. The Royal Ark Mariners is one of the most friendly degrees, and to draw a pertinent parallel, the crew of a ship have to work in harmony in order to safeguard their existence, so must we work to protect our Ark. In looking back over the history of the Lodge I have also reviewed the economic and industrial history of the town after which it is named. In 1920 Darlington was first and foremost a railway town with textiles also important. Since those times the railway manufacturing connection has gone, as has also the wool and cotton industries. Chemicals have come and gone. Heavy engineering has also declined radically, and we are now dependent largely upon high-tech industries and tobacco for major employment.

Yet through all this time the Darlington Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners has sailed along, weathering the storms and the calms. Our high-spots were in the 1950's when membership was around fifty, but generally the lodge has consisted of a small, select and dedicated few. It is up to the present members to ensure that this enthusiasm is conveyed to those who will continue to steer the true course into the future.

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

There have been a number of father and son relationships within the Lodge. In the early days there were a number of Commanders with the surname 'Young', but we have no record of what, if any, relationship existed.

The following is a list Father and Son who have passed the Chair.

Father	Son
1938 Joseph A. Waddleton	1978 Alfred N.S. Waddleton
1958 George Leatherbarrow	1973 Ian Leatherbarrow
1966 John Brown	1970 J David Brown
1957 James Finch	1986 Brian Finch
1883 Eric Williams	1989 David Vaughan Williams

Grand Rank and Provincial Grand Officers

NAME	RAMProvGR.	RAMGR.
John W. Cousins		*
Ronald Graham	*	*
Henry Jones	*	
Addison Dent	*	*
John Brown	*	*
Ted Burnside	*	*
Roy Alsop	*	*
Tom Gaskin	*	*
Jim Finch	*	*
Les Leckenby	*	
Eric Jackson	*	
Alan Howard Bland	*	*
David Vaughan Williams	*	*
Maurice Bartle	*	*
John William Stenson	*	
Geoffrey Gibson	*	*
Matthew Devine	*	
Bernard Steer	*	
Peter Gordon Parlour	*	*
Robert Jones	*	
Donald Marshal	* (N/E Yorks)	
Peter Smailes	*	
William Duck	*	
Graham Davies	*	
Raymond Gregory Snaith	*	
Douglas Crabtree	*	
Stephen Mullen	*	
Anthony Russell Davies	* (Nthum/d)	

The Last Quarter: 1995 to 2020

Over last twenty five years much has changed. In reviewing the make up of the Lodge the most significant feature is the almost complete change of membership, of those listed as members in 1996 only three remain members today. Since 1996 twenty-five brethren have passed to the Grand Lodge above, and a further twenty-two have resigned. We mourn the loss of such a large numbers who have died, but we also are sad for those who felt they could not continue to support the degree. As always it is the memories of such worthy brethren which mitigate against their loss. Each one brought something special to our fraternity. In looking down the list each name conjures memories. The pitman stories of Jack Moye, the quietude of Les Leckenby, Alan Tibbet's enthusiasm. Alan Goult was a joining member, but put his full heart into the running of the Lodge serving as Scribe and arranging the printing of the 75year booklet at no cost. Tom Gaskin served as DC for many years even though beset with chronic arthritis. The coquettishness of Jim Finch and Eric Jackson has already been commented upon.

One outstanding fellow was Harry Parratt who came from Kent. He had the amazing ability to look at a passage of ritual and memorise it instantly. Alan Bland was a mainstay, being an accountant he was Treasurer not only of the Lodge, but of the Mark Province. I owe a great deal for his valuable advice and mentoring. The brightness of Roy Hattersley, the colourful Major Bob, the keenness of Graham Davies, The courage of Joe Raby, who despite his illness battled on.

I never found the source of Bill Stenson's black bullets. Peter Parlour was the nearest I had to a natural brother. Each one of these brethren shone a light which keeps burning in the memory of those who were fortunate to share time with them.

But what of the working of the Lodge? As can be seen from the current membership list seventeen have joined us since 1996, the first being ever resourceful Billy Duck whose involvement in fund raising is an example to us all.

In 2002 we were very fortunate to welcome Raymond Gregory Snaith, a Mason with a prodigious reputation, and who, only four years later was to become Deputy Superintendent of the Royal Arch in Durham

That W Bro Snaith fully embraced the Mariner degree there can be no doubt, as he subsequently produced a thoroughly researched paper on its origins entitled "The Jewel in the Crown", extolling its virtues and quoting biblical references. He produced a compelling argument that the Royal Ark Mariner Degree predates conventional Freemasonry and is indeed the foundation for it. Doug Crabtree followed later that year, a stalwart mason and reliable in all respects. In 2003 Tom Gaskin was made an Honorary member.

"Hard Times"; At the June meeting in 2003 the attendance was so small that the Lodge was merely opened and closed. This led to the proposition that the June meeting be dispensed with, which was implemented for 2006

At the December meeting in 2004 Alan Bland gave an interesting talk about Freemasonry in the Middle East entitled "The Red Sea Incident" when the Arabic authorities proscribed Freemasonry in Bahrain.

Troubles continued in 2005, Senior Warden Tom Williamson was diagnosed with cancer and was unable to proceed to the chair. Tom Gaskin was now very frail and Doug Crabtree was starting a long road to recovery after surgery.

The sum of £994 was voted to go to the Mark Benevolent Fund in order to achieve Grand Patron Status.

In October of 2005 W Bro Fred Richardson, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master led a Delegation visit. The degree was worked with a special explanation of the steps by Bro Graham Davies. Fred was happy to take away a cheque for £848 for the Mark Benevolent fund.

At the December meeting Bob Jones stood in for Don Marshall as Commander. Congratulations were tendered to W. Bro Maurice Bartle in being awarded Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank. The tracing board explanation was conducted by Bro's D.H. Clark, P.G. Parlour, M. Bartle G. Gibson.

December 2007 saw a full Provincial delegation headed by the PGM RW Bro James Peter Croft. This was formal visit, but he would often drop on us without any announcement. He said he liked the friendly atmosphere of our meetings.

In February 2007 we were honoured by the presence of RW Bro W. H. Conchie, PPGM of the Mark Province of Cumberland and Westmorland. He had come to live in Richmond to be near his daughter. It was to be the first of a number of visits before he sadly passed away. He greatly enjoyed the Tracing Board being explained by Bro's Clark, Stenson, Marshall and Gibson.

April 2009 saw the installation of W Bro Raymond Gregory Snaith, an event which proved to result in a number of applications for membership from SteadfastMark Lodge. Unfortunately this year we experienced the untimely death of number of our members.

Doug Crabtree took the chair in 2010, followed by Stephen Mullen in 2011. A dispensation had to be obtained as Stephen had then not been in the chair in the Mark. However this did not withhold his performance as Commander as he has occupied the chair more than any member, having to stand in for Peter Munday, John Scott and Joe Raby because of them being unable to complete their duties due to ill health. All told Stephen presided over twelve meetings between April 2011 and October 2017.

In 2015 Mike Bell took on the role as commander even though he was quite seriously ill, It is quite a tribute to him that he completed his task for the full year. 2016 was Peter Wiegold's year which unfortunately was uneventful except for an interesting talk on "Women in Freemasonry" given by Tony Russell-Davies.

In October 2018 we received the sad news of the death of the Provincial Grand Master RW Bro James Peter Croft. This preceded the deaths of several of our own Brethren.

At the December meeting The Worshipful Commander Anthony Hopkinson Bird had the pleasurable task of elevating his son Nigel O'Brien Bird. Apparently it is tradition in the family that the offspring have the maternal family name as a secondname. And so we come to 2019 when David Whitfield took up the reins. All the talk was of what arrangements we were to undertake for the centenary celebrations. Unfortunately world events rather scuppered what plans we had. We can only hope that we can resume when the trauma is over

The Lodge was formed after the First World War. Perhaps we may hope that following this present conflict against COVID19 men of substance will seek for something meaningful in which to devote themselves.

However "Living in the past can rob the future " Let us plan together to build a glorious future and celebrate the Lodge Centenary in October 2021.

Officers of the Lodge as at April 2020

W Bro David Whitfield	WCN
Bro Ian Ogden	SW
Bro Roger Stevenson	JW
W Bro Maurice Bartle RAMGR	Chaplain
W Bro Peter Wiegold	Treasurer
Bro Simon Radonicich	Scribe
W Bro Michael Lambird	DC
Bro Graham Wharton	SD
Bro John Craggs	JD
W Bro Geoffrey Gibson RAMGR	ADC
W Bro Maurice Bartle RAMGR	Almoner
W Bro Stephen Mullen RAM Prov GR	Guardian
Bro Stephen Newell Senior	Steward
Bro Nigel O'Brien Bird	Steward
W Bro Raymond Gregory Snaith RAM Prov GR	Warder
W Bro Anthony Hopkinson Bird	IPCN

1920-2020 Background

Looking back at the parallel economic and industrial history of Darlington. In 1920 Darlington was a leading industrial town. The North Road Works was a major engine manufacturing plant for the London and North Eastern Railway. The famous Robert Stephenson and Hawthorns produced engines for the wide world. The Darlington Forge produced steel forgings making shafting, propellers and stern frame castings for such ships as King George V, Mauritania, and the Queen Mary, as well as gun barrels for the army and navy.

There was a Wire Works drawing wire for suspension bridges. Henry Williams & Co. made signalling equipment for the railways, That site is now a housing estate, Textiles: The Pease Mill stood on the banks of the river Skerne they were a major producer of woollen stock. Paton & Baldwin's at Lingfield, a renowned producer of knitting wool. Their site was transferred to Rothmans who manufactured cigarettes. The Chemical industry has come and gone. Come the 1960's we had the influx of American businesses: Cummins Engines is still with us, but for how long is dependent on environment pressure. Torrington Bearings was hived off to Romania!

Roll of Members Elevation Dates

1979	W Bro David Vaughan Williams RAMGR
1981	W Bro Maurice Bartle RAMGR
1986	W Bro Geoffrey Gibson RAMGR
1998	W Bro William Duck RAM Prov GR
2002	W Bro Raymond Gregory Snaith RAM Prov GR
2002	W Bro John Douglas Crabtree RAM Prov GR
2002	W Bro Stephen Mullen RAM Prov GR
2008	W Bro Peter Wiegold
2008	W Bro Anthony Hopkinson Bird
2010	W Bro Anthony Russel Davis RAM Prov GR
2011	W Bro Micheal Peter Lambird
2012	W Bro David Whitfield
2013	Bro Ian Ogden
2013	Bro Roger Stevenson
2013	Bro Simon Radonicich
2014	Bro Thomas Neil Hugill
2015	Bro Graham Wharton
2016	Bro John Craggs
2018	Bro Nigel O'Brien Bird

Roll of Deceased Brethren

1997	W Bro J. R Moye
1999	W Bro J.R .Leckenby RAM Prov GR
2001	W Bro Alan Tibbett
2005	W Bro Alan Goult RAM Prov GR
2006	W Bro John Sanderson
2006	W Bro Tom H. Gaskin RAM Prov GR
2008	Bro Tom Williamson
2009	W Bro Jim Finch RAM Prov GR
2009	Bro Brian Finch
2009	W Bro Harry Parrett RAM Prov GR (Kent)
2009	W Bro Alan Anderson
2010	W Bro Alan Howard Bland RAM Prov GR
2011	Bro Derek Clark
2011	Bro Roy Hattersley
2011	W Bro Mike Priestman
2013	W Bro Eric Jackson RAM Prov GR
2014	W Bro John Scott
2014	Bro Mike Dodds
2014	Bro Major Bob Jones
2015	W Bro Graham Barry Davies
2015	W Bro Mathew Devine RAM Prov GR
2018	W Bro Joe Raby
2018	W Bro John William Stenson RAM Prov GR
2018	W Bro Peter Gordon Parlour RAM Prov GR
2019	W Bro Mike Bell
2021	W Bro Peter Weigold

