

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE

OF MARK MASTER MASONS

OF DURHAM

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE FOURTEENTH PROVINCIAL

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

**of The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity
of Royal Ark Mariners**

**Held via ZOOM
on FRIDAY 26th March 2021**

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE FRATERNITY OF ROYAL ARK MARINERS OF DURHAM 2021.

The Fifteenth Annual Assembly of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner within the Province of Durham was due to be held on Friday 26th March 2021 in the Masonic Chambers, 34 North Street, Ferryhill, Co. Durham. However, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, it had to be cancelled, and was held via ZOOM instead, at which meeting 89 Brethren were in attendance.

The Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson, presided, assisted by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. David Nigel Hanson R.A.M.G.R., and the Assistant Provincial Grand Master W.Bro. Ronald Trevor Lynn R.A.M.Prov.G.R. (3)

The following holders of Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank were present:

W.Bros. F.A. Rankin P.D.P.G.M., S.A.R. Ingram P.A.P.G.M., A. Gurney Prov.G.Scribe, G. Crossley, K. Liddell, J. Hind, L. Tinkler, F. Piggford, R.M. Henderson, R.S. Hodgson, A. Craven, R.N. Neville, G.J. Mitchinson, K. Dinning, J.M. Nye, W.H. Carlyon, J.B. Gibson, G. Tilley, L. Woodhouse, J.A. Easton, D. Quickmire, M. Graham, K. Pitchford, J. Bulmer, L. Danby, L. Howarth, R.F. Knight, R.W. Emerson, J. Awdas, M. Davis, G.S. Savage, G. Quinn, F.A.P. Beales, G. Clark, M.J. Graham, R. Layton, G.D. Taylor, J.W. Warren, and G. Whiteman.(39)

The following holders of Provincial Grand Rank were present:

R.J. Short, J.R. Bayles, R. Main, S.J. Watson, P.A. Carter, K.I. Anderson, R. Smart, A. Weir, J.T. Dodds, R.R. Tonner, R. Hope, B. Graham, K.L. Robson, J.S.Denham, N.E. Heavyside, I.H. Morrison, L. Nevin, M. Rankin, J.D. Watts, M.J. Gilpin, J.W. Gray, A.L. Kipling, D. Lister, P. Maughan, A. Monkhouse, M. Swailes, E.T. Hall, A. Prest, P.J. Appleby, and J.B.M. Schoolkate (30)

There were seventeen other members of the Order present. (17)

1. Opening the Assembly

The Presiding Officer, R.W. Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson declared the Assembly 'Open' at 6-30pm.

2. Obituary and Condolence Prayer.

The Provincial Grand Master invited W.Bro. Keith Dinning R.A.M.G.R., Prov.G.Chap., to announce the Obituary and read out a Prayer to Departed Merit. The Brethren 'stood to order' to remember those Brethren who had passed to the Grand Lodge above since the last Royal Ark Mariner Assembly.

3. Welcome Address.

The Provincial Grand Master welcomed all Brethren to the Annual Assembly. In Particular, he welcomed the Heads of Other Orders in the Province of Durham.

4. The Minutes of the previous Meeting.

W.Bro. David Nigel Hanson R.A.M.G.R., Dep.P.G.M., proposed, and W.Bro. Ronald Trevor Lynn R.A.M.Prov.G.R. Asst.P.G.M., seconded a proposal, that the Minutes of the cancelled Provincial Annual Assembly of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner, due to be held at Ferryhill on Friday, 27th March 2020, which had been circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and adopted.

The proposition was carried.

5. Letters of Apology.

The Provincial Grand Scribe announced receipt of apologies from:

W.Bro. A. Ruddell	Eclectic Lodge	No. 39
Bro. R.G. Scott.....	Union Lodge	No. 124
W.Bro. K. Dobbin.....	Industry Lodge	No. 293
W.Bro. W. Chrystal.....	Dunelm Lodge	No. 356
W.Bro. F. Richardson	Hackworth Lodge.....	No. 761
W.Bro. D. Guy	Hackworth Lodge	No. 761
W.Bro. P. Beedle.....	Barnard Castle Lodge.....	No. 778
W.Bro. L.H. Stewart	St. Andrew's Lodge	No. 854
W.Bro. W. Norwood	Bernard Gilpin Lodge	No. 860
W.Bro. J.L. Kay	Monument Lodge	No. 1055
W.Bro. F.A. Shaftoe.....	Monument Lodge.....	No. 1055
W.Bro. J. Barnett.....	Elevation Lodge	No. 1112
W.Bro. Rev'd D.A. Wright	Stanhope Lodge	No. 1551
W.Bro. S.J. Neil	Ryton Lodge.....	No. 1714

6. Roll of Provincial Team Officers.

The Provincial Grand Scribe announced that all of the Current Team of Provincial Grand Officers were present, with the exception of those who had tendered Apologies.

7. Roll of Royal Ark Mariner Lodges.

The Provincial Grand Scribe announced that all of the 22 Royal Ark Mariner Lodges in the Province were represented at the Meeting, and that satisfactory reports had been received from each of them.

8. Provincial Grand Scribe's Report.

W.Bro. David Nigel Hanson R.A.M.G.R., Dep.P.G.M., proposed, and W.Bro. Ronald Trevor Lynn R.A.M.Prov.G.R. Asst.P.G.M., seconded a proposal, that the Report of the Provincial Grand Scribe, as circulated, be taken as read, confirmed, and adopted.

The proposition was carried.

Provincial Grand Scribe's Report

The Fourteenth Annual Assembly

Brethren,

I present my third Report for The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner within the Province of Durham. Our Provincial Grand Master now presides over his seventh Royal Ark Mariner Annual Investiture Meeting.

Lodge Visits

During the past year, the Provincial Grand Master was unable to lead Deputations to any Lodges.

Installations

The Provincial Grand Master was represented at no Installation meetings, as they were all unable to be held due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Grand Honours

In December 2020 the following Brethren received Grand Honours in the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner from The Pro Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother Raymond John Smith. Although no Investiture meeting was held, the following hold the rank of R.A.M.G.R. as of the 8th December 2020:

W.Bro. Gary Quinn, Union Lodge No. 124
W.Bro. George Samuel Savage, Dunelm Lodge No. 356
W.Bro. Allan Gurney, Bernard Gilpin Lodge No. 860

These Brethren are very well known throughout the Province, and congratulations are extended to them all in the hope that they enjoy good health to continue in their efforts towards the good of the Order.

Membership

Summary of Annual Returns of Lodges Year Ended 31st December 2020

No.	LODGE	Total Members Installation 2019	Ele	J	Res	D	Exc	HM	Total Members Installation 2020
39	Eclectic	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
122	Stockton-on-Tees	20	0	0	1	0	0	0	19
124	Union	24	1	1	0	0	0	0	26
250	Darlington	22	0	0	2	0	0	0	20
293	Industry	31	1	0	1	1	0	0	30
356	Dunelm	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
362	Rockcliffe	35	2	0	1	1	3	0	32
605	Bede	28	1	0	0	2	0	0	27
761	Hackworth	21	1	0	0	1	0	0	21
778	Barnard Castle	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
854	St. Andrews	18	0	2	0	0	0	0	20
860	Bernard Gilpin	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
896	Clavering	15	0	0	1	1	0	0	13
925	Moseley	19	1	0	0	1	0	0	19
930	Castle Eden	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
981	Spennymoor	25	0	0	0	1	0	0	24
1055	Monument	19	0	0	1	3	0	0	15
1112	Elevation	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
1492	Durham Lodge of ICs	30	0	0	2	1	0	0	27
1551	Stanhope	20	1	0	0	0	0	0	21
1714	Ryton	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	15
1806	Chief of the Builders	51	2	3	2	0	0	0	54
		510							499

The Annual Lodge Returns show an overall decrease in membership of 11 during 2020. This represents an overall decrease from 2019 of 2.16%.

Recruitment of new members is so important if we are to continue to grow our membership base, as well as doing everything possible to try to reduce the number of resignations.

Hopefully, this year's figures (although probably affected by the Covid 19 Pandemic) show that the slowdown in the downward trend can be reduced even further next year, by encouraging more of our Mark Lodge members to join the Royal Ark Mariner Lodges. We must ensure that every one of our Mark Lodge members is aware of the Royal Ark Mariner Degree as the next step in their Masonic development. Each Mark Lodge now has a nominated Lodge Representative to encourage members to join the Royal Ark Mariner Degree. However, we should all remember that we are all recruiters of new members.

Obituary

Since the last Annual Assembly, the Province has suffered the sad loss of the following members of our Royal Ark Mariner Lodges. We acknowledge the service and dedication that they gave to the Order, and our thoughts go to their families.

Sidney Pattison, Moseley Lodge 925.

Born 28th October 1923 - Died 30th March 2020.

Peter Derek Jones, Ryton Lodge 1714.

Born 5th March 1925 - Died 26th April 2020.

Alan Hall, Bede Lodge 605.

Born 18th December 1942 - Died 15th June 2020.

George Edgar, Spennymoor Lodge 981.

Born 29th September 1927 - Died 31st July 2020.

John McCarthy, Elevation Lodge 1112.

Born 18th August 1927 - Died 18th October 2020.

John William Scott, Spennymoor Lodge 981.

Born 24th February 1939 - Died 3rd December 2020.

Robert Henry Greenman, Union Lodge 124.

Born 10th December 1931 - Died 22nd December 2020.

John David Bell, Industry Lodge 293.

Born 1st October 1932 - Died 12th February 2021.

Conclusion

Brethren, I present my third Report for your information and consideration.

My Deputy Provincial Grand Scribe, W.Bro. Graham Wharton, my Assistant Provincial Grand Scribe, W.Bro. Doug Quickmire, and the Provincial Grand Registrar, W.Bro. Malcolm Ormiston have all worked diligently, and executed their roles most efficiently. Their assistance, and readiness to take on even more tasks whenever requested, is greatly appreciated.

The use of technology continues unabated. This past year has seen the birth of the 'Virtual Business Meeting' held online via ZOOM. This only serves to emphasize the fact that not only the Provincial Secretariat, but also the Lodge Scribe have to have a relatively large amount of computer skills. To those Scribes who are not sufficiently confident, or competent, at the moment, I would make a plea: take the time to hone your computer skills, because you can be sure of one thing, Brethren, that the amount of secretarial work done online will only increase over the next few years. That, Brethren, is my prediction for 2021 and beyond. The Scribe's role this year has been a difficult one: no meetings to act as 'marker posts', but still having to attend to all the annual administration; and coping with the extra paperwork and protocols demanded by 'VBMs' has not been easy. Brethren, I thank you all for your efforts in helping the Province to run smoothly.

As always, congratulations are due to those Brethren being honoured this year. No doubt they will continue to support the Provincial Grand Master, and will strive to work for the good of the Fraternity in general, and this very happy and vibrant Province in particular.

Allan Gurney, Provincial Grand Scribe.

9. The following were appointed to Provincial Grand Rank in the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner.

John Connelly	Industry Lodge	No. 293
Peter Maughan	Rockcliffe Lodge	No. 362
Melvin Swailes.....	Hackworth Lodge	No. 761
Alvin Leigh Kipling.....	Barnard Castle Lodge	No. 778
Allan Monkhouse.....	Bernard Gilpin Lodge	No. 860
Mark Julian Gilpin	Moseley Lodge.....	No. 925
Douglas Lister.....	Castle Eden Lodge	No. 930
John Iddon Smiles.....	Castle Eden Lodge	No. 930
John Barnett	Elevation Lodge	No. 1112
Joseph William Gray.....	Ryton Lodge.....	No. 1714

10. The following were invited to take office in the Provincial Team for 2021-2022.

Robert Ross Tonner	Barnard Castle Lodge, No. 778	Senior Warden
Robert Main	Industry Lodge, No. 293	Junior Warden
John Maurice Nye	Spennymoor Lofge, No, 981.....	Dep.G.D.C. (RAM)
William Chrystal.....	Dunelm Lodge, No. 356.....	Sword Bearer
Francis Allan Shaftoe.....	Monument Lodge, No. 1055.....	Standard Bearer
Brian Graham.....	Elevation Lodge, No. 1112	Guardian
John Bernard Martin Schoolkate.....	Union Lodge, No. 124.....	Warder

11. The Provincial Grand Master Addressed the Assembly.

What a year this has been. In early March last year, at the Annual Warden's Night, I announced that I was cancelling two meetings, the RAM Assembly being one of them. Who could possibly have anticipated what would follow?

As the year moved on, more and more of us were affected one way or another by the Pandemic. Some of our brethren and their loved ones were affected in the worst possible way. My heart goes out to everyone of them. By now, most if not all of us have been affected in some way. Some of us have been presented with new difficulties. For others, pre-existing difficulties have been made much worse.

I marvel that despite this, people have done their best to get on with things. In doing so we have demonstrated that it was meetings, not masonry that was suspended. Masonry has in fact continued in so many ways. To illustrate this I should like to make a few remarks under the following headings.

In our Lodges

The work of Lodge Secretaries.

The work of Lodge Treasurers.

The work of Lodge Almoners

In the Province

Consideration of brethren for Appointments and promotion. I have already congratulated those being appointed to Royal Ark Mariner Provincial Grand Rank, but sitting among us there are a number of brethren who have been appointed to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank. Some were able to attend for investiture in Dec 2019, but because of the cancellation of our Assembly last year have not been formally acknowledged in Durham. They are all here and are Jeff Awdas, Mike Davis and Bob Emerson. Three more were appointed in December 2020 and not able to go to Grand Lodge for investiture. They too are here and are Gary Quinn, Sam Savage and Allan Gurney. I now say to all six of you that you richly deserve your promotions and I look to you to continue and even step up your contribution to the operation and development of our Province. I particularly ask that as holders of Grand rank you consider yourselves to be part of the extended leadership in our Province. I thank you in anticipation of this and invite the brethren to give you an enthusiastic thumbs up.

Maintenance of the Website by David Battensby

Production of the Newsletter by Martin Schoolkate.

The work of the Benevolence Committee

Organising this Assembly.

The Centenary of the Province.

So Masonry has certainly not been suspended and, at last, we have found the tunnel and can see a glimmer of light at the other end. The knowledge and experience of dealing with the virus is increasing, the vaccination programme is rolling out wonderfully well, so provided we exercise caution, perhaps we can hope that the safe resumption of meetings will not be far off. Lets be ready for it but remember that every individual brother has the absolute right to judge for himself when he considers it to be safe for him to attend meetings.

Finally brethren, short though our meeting is, it still had to be planned and organized. I thank those who have contributed in any way to this, and my particular thanks go the Provincial Secretary and the Provincial Director of Ceremonies and those who have helped them. I also thank W.Bro. Wayne Rumley for making this Zoom meeting possible and for being here to facilitate it.

Brethren, I thank you again for all you do for the Order and for being here this evening. Let's enjoy what remains of the evening and then look forward to an early resumption of meetings, and a return to some semblance of normality.

and may the Supreme Commander of the Universe bless and guide us.

12. The date and venue of the next meeting.

The Provincial Grand Master announced that the next Annual Assembly would, hopefully, be held on Friday 25th March 2022, at Ferryhill Masonic Chambers.

13. Any other business.

The Provincial Grand Scribe stated that he had no further business to bring before this Annual Provincial Assembly.

18. Closing.

The Presiding Officer, R.W. Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson declared the Assembly ‘Closed’ at 6-54pm.

..... Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson, Provincial Grand Master.

.....Allan Gurney, Provincial Grand Scribe

Dated: