

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE
OF MARK MASTER MASONS
OF DURHAM

MINUTES
OF THE FIFTEENTH PROVINCIAL
ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
of The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity
of Royal Ark Mariners

Held at the Masonic Chambers, Ferryhill
on FRIDAY 25th March 2022

**PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ANCIENT AND HONOURABLE
FRATERNITY OF ROYAL ARK MARINERS OF DURHAM 2022.**

The Fifteenth Annual Assembly of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners within the Province of Durham was held on Friday 25th March 2022 in the Masonic Chambers, 34 North Street, Ferryhill, Co. Durham, at which meeting 103 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 Prov.R.A.M.G.R. (3)

The following holders of Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank were present:
W.Bros. F.A. Rankin, P.D.P.G.M., D. Guy P.D.P.G.M., S.A.R. Ingram P.A.P.G.M., A. Gurney Prov.G.Scribe, K. Liddell, F. Piggford, R.S. Hodgson, A. Craven, R.N. Neville, G.J. Mitchinson, K. Dinning, J.M. Nye, D. Quickmire, L. Danby, R.F. Knight, R.W. Emerson, M. Davis, G.S. Savage, G. Quinn, G. Clark, M.J. Graham, G.D. Taylor, L. Bell, S.J. Watson, A.J. Clark, A. Cuthbertson, M. Bartle, E.T. Hall, W.S. Malcolm, A. Ruddell, R. Stephenson, L. Baker, and W. Swift. (33)

The following holders of Provincial Grand Rank were present:
R.J. Short, P.A. Carter, A. Weir, J.T. Dodds, R.R. Tonner, R. Hope, B. Graham, J.S.Denham, M. Rankin, M.J. Gilpin, J.W. Gray, A.L. Kipling, D. Lister, A. Monkhouse, M. Swailes, J.B.M. Schoolkate, C. Raine, M. Ross, F.A. Shaftoe, W. Chrystal, D. Dunn, J. Stubbings, G. Bainbridge, G. Paylor, J. Tyrer, J.A. Thompson, J.R. Hogg, D. Brown, R.J. Hargate, R. Davis, G. Alderson, P. O'Doherty, G. Morl, K. Parker, J.A. Dixon, W. Cooper, K.P. Dale, N. Jemison, K.U. Robson, and I. Ormiston. (40)

There were twenty seven other members of the Order present. (27)

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 Past Rulers of the Province, and Heads of other Orders in the Province of Durham.

4. The Minutes of the previous Meeting.

W.Bro. Robert Ross Tonner Prov.G.S.W. proposed, and W.Bro. Roy Norman Neville R.A.M.G.R. seconded, that the Minutes of the Provincial Annual Assembly of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner, held via ZOOM on Friday, 26th March 2021, which had been circulated, and published on the Provincial website, 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. L. Nevin	Eclectic Lodge	No. 39
W.Bro. I. H. Morrison	Stockton-on-Tees Lodge.....	No. 122
W.Bro. D.T. Youngson	Stockton-on-Tees Lodge.....	No. 122
W.Bro. I.E.Ogden	Darlington Lodge.....	No. 250
W.Bro. J. Blackburn	Industry Lodge.....	No. 293
W.Bro. J.A. Easton.....	Industry Lodge.....	No. 293
W.Bro. K.I. Anderson	Bede Lodge	No. 605
W.Bro. J.W. Warren	Bede Lodge.....	No. 605
W.Bro. R. Smart	Hackworth Lodge	No. 761
W.Bro. J.R. Bayles	Barnard Castle Lodge	No. 778
W.Bro. R.M. Henderson.....	Barnard Castle Lodge	No. 778
W.Bro. L. Woodhouse	Barnard Gilpin Lodge	No. 860
W.Bro. J. Bulmer.....	Spennymoor Lodge	No. 981
W.Bro. M. Graham Snr.	Monument Lodge.....	No. 1055
W.Bro. K.L. Robson.....	Elevation Lodge.....	No. 1112
W.Bro. Rev'd D.A. Wright	Stanhope Lodge	No. 1551

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 W.Bro. Robert Main Prov.G.J.W. who had died earlier in the month.

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. John Thomas Dodds P.Prov.G.S.W., proposed, and W.Bro. John Maurice Nye R.A.M.G.R. seconded, that the Report of the Provincial Grand Scribe, as circulated, and published on the Provincial website, be taken as read, confirmed, and adopted.

The proposition was carried.

Provincial Grand Scribe's Report

The Fifteenth Annual Assembly.

Brethren,

I present my fourth 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 led Deputations to the following Royal Ark Mariner Lodges: Eclectic 39 (Centenary); Darlington 250 (Centenary); Bede 605 (Centenary); Durham Lodge of Installed Commanders 1492.

Installations

The Provincial Grand Master was represented at all the Royal Ark Mariner Installation meetings held since 1st September 2021, and the reports of the Representatives attending indicated that the ceremonies continued to be of a high standard. Thanks are extended to all those Brethren who represented the Provincial Grand Master so ably, and for compiling the reports to a very high standard. Grateful thanks also go to the Lodges for the courteous and friendly manner in which the Representatives and the Provincial Assistant Directors of Ceremony were received.

Grand Honours

In December 2021 the following Brethren received Grand Honours in the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner from The Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, GCVO:

W.Bro. Ellison Terry Hall	Stockton on Tees Lodge No. 122
W.Bro. Kenneth Ian Anderson	Bede Lodge No. 605
W.Bro. Sidney James Watson	Ryton Lodge No. 1714

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 2021

No.	LODGE	Total Members Installation 2020	Ele	J	Res	D	Exc	HM	Total Members Installation 2021
39	Eclectic	17	0	0	0	1	2	0	14
122	Stockton-on-Tees	19	0	0	1	0	0	0	18
124	Union	26	0	0	1	1	1	0	23
250	Darlington	20	0	0	1	1	0	0	18
293	Industry	30	0	0	2	2	0	0	26
356	Dunelm	25	0	0	1	1	0	0	23
362	Rockcliffe	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
605	Bede	27	0	0	2	0	0	0	25
761	Hackworth	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
778	Barnard Castle	23	0	0	0	2	0	0	21
854	St. Andrews	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
860	Bernard Gilpin	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
896	Clavering	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
925	Moseley	19	0	0	0	1	0	0	18
930	Castle Eden	11	0	0	0	1	0	0	10
981	Spennymoor	24	0	0	1	1	0	0	22
1055	Monument	15	0	1	0	0	0	0	16
1112	Elevation	23	0	0	1	1	0	0	21
1492	Durham Lodge of I Com	27	0	3	2	0	0	0	28
1551	Stanhope	21	0	2	0	1	0	0	22
1714	Ryton	15	0	0	1	0	0	0	14
1806	Chief of the Builders	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	54
		499	0	6	13	13	3	0	476

The Annual Lodge Returns show an overall decrease in membership of 23. This represents a decrease from last year of 4.61%. The overall trend over the last 5 years is a decrease of 17.93% from 580 members.

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

Now that we are able to meet again, let's see if this year's downward trend can be reversed by encouraging more of our Mark Lodge members to join this friendly and colourful degree. 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.

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.

Frederick Lonergan Crawford, Clavering Lodge 896.
Born 19th November 1936 - Died 8th May 2021.

John Brian Mitchinson, Stockton-on-Tees Lodge 122.
Born 4th November 1933 - Died 14th May 2021.

James Franklin Bird, Moseley Lodge 925.
Born 10th September 1942 - Died 24th May 2021.

George Martin, Castle Eden Lodge 930.
Born 20th June 1933 - Died 14th June 2021.

James Edward Harker, Bede Lodge 605.
Born 29th August 1933 - Died 5th July 2021.

John Connelly, Industry Lodge 293.
Born 19th January 1951 - Died 12th July 2021.

James Cole, Spennymoor Lodge 981.
Born 6th October 1930 - Died 18th August 2021.

Alan William Stapleton, Hackworth Lodge 761.
Born 19th March 1948 - Died 22nd August 2021.

Graeme William Telford, Eclectic Lodge 39.
Born 4th March 1963 - Died 3rd September 2021.

Raymond Norman Dinning, Dunelm Lodge 356.
Born 29th March 1934 - Died 13th October 2021.

John Michael Burdess, Barnard Castle Lodge 778.
Born 10th March 1948 - Died 8th November 2021.

Maurice Edwin Cooper, Dunelm Lodge 356.
Born 17th January 1934 - Died 6th December 2021

Leonard Armstrong, Stockton-on-Tees Lodge 122.
Born 22nd December 1929 - Died 16th December 2021.

Lawrence Tinkler, Moseley Lodge 925,
Born 17th December 1930 - Died 28th December 2021.

Robert Main, Industry Lodge 293.
Born 5th December 1950 - Died 8th March 2022
Acting Provincial Grand Junior Warden.

Conclusion

Brethren, I present my Fourth Report for your information and consideration. My grateful thanks go to all the hard working Lodge Scribes for the dedication they have shown in ensuring that returns are completed accurately and promptly.

My Deputy Provincial Grand Scribe, W.Bro. Graham Wharton, my Assistant Provincial Grand Scribe, W.Bro. Doug Quickmire, the former Provincial Grand Registrar, W. Bro. Malcolm Ormiston, and the new Provincial Grand Registrar, W.Bro. David Battensby, have all worked diligently, and executed their roles most efficiently. Their enthusiasm and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Congratulations are due to those Brethren being honoured here today, in this Provincial Assembly. 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.

Jonathan Andrew Dixon.....	Eclectic Lodge.....	No. 39
Robert John Hargate.....	Union Lodge.....	No. 124
Jack Blackburn.....	Industry Lodge.....	No. 293
Paul O'Doherty.....	Rockcliffe Lodge.....	No. 362
Kenneth Urquhart Robson.....	Rockcliffe Lodge.....	No. 362
Raymond Davis.....	Barnard Castle Lodge.....	No. 778
Jeffrey Alfred Thompson.....	Clavering Lodge.....	No. 896
Jerome Richard Hogg.....	Moseley Lodge.....	No. 925
John Barnett.....	Spennymoor Lodge.....	No. 981
Norman Jemison.....	Monument Lodge.....	No. 1055

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

Derek Dunn.....	Bede Lodge, No. 605.....	Senior Warden
Colin Raine.....	Hackworth Lodge, No. 761... ..	Junior Warden
John Maurice Nye.....	Spennymoor Lodge No, 981.....	Dep.G.D.C.
Kevin Parker.....	Industry Lodge, No. 293.....	Sword Bearer
Joseph Archer Tyrer.....	Dunelm Lodge, No. 362.....	Standard Bearer
Graham Bainbridge.....	Bernard Gilpin Lodge, No. 860.....	Guardian
John Bernard Martin Schoolkate.....	Union Lodge, No. 124.....	Warder

10. Dr. Malcolm Wayne Robson then presented a paper to the Assembly entitled “Freemasonry in the Wild West”. This proved to be a highly interesting talk based on the apparently true story of ‘The Lone Ranger’, which had been made into a TV series in the 1950s.

W.Bro. D.N. Hanson Dep.P.G.M. gave a Vote of Thanks, and the Brethren showed their appreciation in the usual manner.

11. The Provincial Grand Master asked the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies to present W.Bro. Jim Stubbings to him. W. Bro. Stubbings then presented the Provincial Grand Master with a cheque for £800 which he had raised from the repair and sale of Masonic regalia. The Provincial Grand Master accepted the donation with great pleasure on behalf of the P.G.L. of Durham M.B.F., and thanked W.Bro. Stubbings most sincerely for his efforts. The cheque was then handed over to W.Bro. Roy Neville for banking. W.Bro. Neville went on to inform the Brethren that only the previous day he had attended a meeting of Charity Stewards in London, and had made a donation of £2,000 on our behalf to the Ukraine Refugee Appeal.

12. The Provincial Grand Master Addressed the Assembly.

The Provincial Grand Master began by saying that it would be a ‘chat’ and not an ‘address’. This informal chat with the Brethren then covered the following topics:

- He thanked the Officers who had just completed their term of office, and congratulated those he had just appointed to Provincial grand Rank, and the Provincial Team for 2022-23.
- He listed the 3 members who had received R.A.M.G.R. at the December meeting of Grand Lodge in London, and asked them to stand as the Brethren acclaimed them.
- He pointed out that Covid had taken us through a very difficult period, and that we needed to maintain contact with each other to return to something like ‘normal’ in the future.
- He pointed out that, despite Covid, we had celebrated 3 RAM Lodge centenaries since our return to meetings in September.
- He made mention of 3 significant future events: the first RAM Wardens Dinner; the Annual Mark meeting in June; and the launch of the 2029 Festival on behalf of the Mark Benevolent Fund.
- He pointed out that some problems around before Covid are still with us, and will remain with us for some time – the main ones being falling numbers, and getting members back to their Lodges.

He finished by thanking everyone for their attendance, and asked them to enjoy the rest of the evening.

13. Vote of Thanks

W.Bro. R.T. Lynn Asst.P.G.M. then proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Secretariat Team, the D.C's Team, the Ferryhill Hall Management, and particularly John Dodds and John Nye for collecting the furniture from Spennymoor, and setting up the Lodge for the meeting.

14. The date and venue of the next meeting.

The Provincial Grand Master announced that the next Annual Assembly would be held on Friday, 31st March 2023, at Ferryhill Masonic Chambers.

15. A collection was then taken for the P.G.L. of Durham M.B.F. which raised the sum of £725-65 including Gift Aid Tax Relief.

16. Any other business.

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

17. Closing.

The Presiding Officer, R.W. Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson declared the Assembly 'Closed' at 8-07pm.

..... David Nigel Hanson, Provincial Grand Master.

..... Allan Gurney, Provincial Grand Scribe

Dated: