



Provincial Assembly
of The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity
of Royal Ark Mariner

Friday 31st March 2023

Scribe's Report

The Sixteenth Annual Assembly.

Brethren,

I present my fifth Report for The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner within the Province of Durham, while our Provincial Grand Master presides over his first Royal Ark Mariner Annual Assembly.

Lodge Visits

During the past year, the former Provincial Grand Master, and the current Provincial Grand Master have led Deputations to the following Royal Ark Mariner Lodges: Union 124 (125th Anniversary); Industry 293; Hackworth 761; Bernard Gilpin 860; Clavering 896; Spennymoor 981; Monument 1055 (Lodge Closure); Durham Lodge of Installed Commanders 1492 (Installation); Ryton 1714 (Belated 25th Anniversary).

Installations

The Provincial Grand Masters were represented at all the Royal Ark Mariner Installation meetings held since our last Annual Assembly, 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 2022 the following Brethren received Grand Honours in the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner from The Pro Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother John Herbert Prizeman:

W.Bro. John Reginal Bayles
W.Bro. Ronald Trevor Lynn
W.Bro. John Thomas Dodds

Barnard Castle Lodge No. 778
Barnard Castle Lodge No. 778
Spennymoor Lodge No. 981

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 2022

No.	LODGE	Total Members Installation 2021	Ele	J	Res	D	Exc	HM	Total Members Installation 2022
39	Eclectic	14	2	0	2	0	0	0	14
122	Stockton-on-Tees	18	0	0	0	1	0	0	17
124	Union	23	1	0	1	1	0	0	22
250	Darlington	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
293	Industry	26	1	2	0	1	0	0	28
356	Dunelm	24	0	0	1	1	0	0	22
362	Rockcliffe	32	0	0	2	0	1	1	28
605	Bede	25	1	0	1	0	0	0	25
761	Hackworth	21	0	0	1	1	0	0	19
778	Barnard Castle	21	2	0	0	0	0	0	23
854	St. Andrews	20	1	1	0	2	0	0	20
860	Bernard Gilpin	17	1	1	0	0	0	0	19
896	Clavering	13	0	0	0	1	0	1	11
925	Moseley	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
981	Spennymoor	22	2	0	1	2	0	0	21
1112	Elevation	21	0	0	0	0	0	1	20
1492	Durham Lodge of ICs		0	3	1	1	0	0	29
1551	Stanhope	22	0	2	0	0	0	1	23
1714	Ryton	14	1	0	1	0	0	0	14
1806	Chief of the Builders	54	0	2	5	0	0	0	51
		450	12	11	16	11	1	4	441

The Annual Lodge Returns show an overall decrease in membership of 9. This represents a decrease from last year of exactly 2.00%. The overall trend over the last 5 years is a decrease of 11.98% from 501 members (adjusted for the loss of Castle Eden Lodge and Monument Lodge).

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 meeting again on a regular basis, let's see if this year's small downward trend can be arrested 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.

Leslie Dobson, Eclectic Lodge 39.

Born 21st March 1931 - Died 27th April 2022.

Ian Christopher Mason, Union Lodge 124.

Born 26th August 1951 - Died 28th June 2022.

Peter Smailes, Darlington Lodge 250.

Born 3rd March 1935 - Died 5th September 2022.

John Victor Thompson, Spennymoor Lodge 981.

Born 16th June 1944 - Died 2nd August 2022.

Terence Henry Lewis, Eclectic Lodge 39.

Born 24th October 1918 - Died 20th September 2022.

Keith Dinning, Spennymoor Lodge 981.

Born 13th May 1942 - Died 21st September 2022.

Norman John William Moffitt, Ryton Lodge 1714.

Born 25th November 1953 - 9th November 2022.

Raymond Stephenson, Stockton-on-Tees Lodge 122.

Born 4th April 1942 - Died 17th November 2022.

Raymond Gregory Snaith, Darlington Lodge 250.

Born 7th April 1946 - Died 24th November 2022.

Frederick David Graham-Thomas, Rockcliffe Lodge 362.

Born 2nd October 1962 - Died 28th December 2022.

Anthony David Briggs, Ryton Lodge 1714.

Born 6th April 1933 - Died 30th January 2023.

Samuel James Neil, Ryton Lodge 1714.

Born 21st October 1939 - Died 6th February 2023.

Peter Beedle, Barnard Castle Lodge 778.

Born 21st May 1963 - Died 8th February 2023.

Conclusion

Brethren, 12 months ago, I stood before you knowing that a mere 3 weeks beforehand, I had been diagnosed with stage 3 cancer, and that I was to have a major, hopefully life saving, but inevitably a life changing operation only a week later. Little did I know how much my life was to change over the next few months on a personal level. However, here I am, still around, for which I am most grateful, and I have great pleasure in presenting my Fifth Report for your information and consideration.

As always, Brethren, Province cannot function without the assistance of the Lodge Scribes, and I thank them most sincerely 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. Ian Heaviside, and the Provincial Grand Registrar, W.Bro. David Battensby, have all continued to show great commitment and dedication in their respective roles. Their enthusiasm, help, and assistance have been greatly appreciated during the last 12 months in particular which have been, and continue to be, a difficult time for both myself, and my wife especially. Thanks to their help, and that of other members of the Senior Team, Province has continued to function smoothly and efficiently.

Congratulations are due to those Brethren being honoured here today, in this Provincial Assembly. No doubt they will continue to support the new 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.