

## PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE of MARK MASTER MASONS of DURHAM

**R.W.Bro. David Nigel Hanson  
Provincial Grand  
Master**

### **Report of the Provincial Grand Secretary to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Durham**

Brethren, I present my fifth Report to the Mark Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham. As you will see from the items listed below, the return to Masonic Meetings after the lockdowns due to Covid has continued. Although some people are still not returning to Masonic Lodges, the vast majority are doing so, and we have had a good number of Advancees during the last 12 months. I can say that the general administration of the Province has continued to the normal set deadlines, and I rely on the various Lodge Secretaries to assist me in those matters, and I thank them all for their support over the last year.

#### **Lodge Visits (17).**

The Provincial Grand Master very much appreciates the support from his Team of Active Provincial Officers which has enabled him to accept invitations to make Provincial Team Visits to the following Mark Lodges:

Eclectic 39 (50 Year Certificate); Darlington Steadfast 250 (Amalgamation Ceremony & Installation); Dunelm 356; Wouldhave Tyne Dock 362 (50 Year Certificate); Bede 605 (50 Year Certificate); Jarrow 701 (50 Year Certificate); Ravensworth 718 (50 Year Certificate); Hackworth 761 (Centenary); Barnard Castle 778 (Centenary); Clavering 896 (60 Year Certificate); Moseley 925 (50 Year Certificate); William Todd 929 (50 Year Certificate); Spennymoor 981; Spennymoor 981 (50 Year Certificate); St. Lawrence 1093 (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary); Cestria 1151; Durham Lodge of Installed Mark Masters 1492; Stanhope 1551.

#### **Installations.**

Since September, many Lodges have held their normal Installation Meeting, at which the Provincial Grand Master has been represented by a cohort of willing volunteers from amongst the Provincial Wardens and the Grand Lodge Officers. I am indebted to them all for completing their Report Forms conscientiously, speedily, and to a high standard. Let us remember, Brethren, that these Brethren act as Representatives of the Provincial Grand Master voluntarily – they receive no expenses for their time and petrol. So, let us treat them with civility, and gratitude for the role they fulfill.

#### **Visits to other Provinces.**

Since our last Annual Meeting, the Provincial Grand Master and members of his Senior Team have attended the Annual Meetings of other Provinces as listed below:

Cumberland & Westmorland (Installation of new P.G.M.); Northumberland; North & East Yorkshire; Cheshire; Lincolnshire; Nottinghamshire; West Yorkshire; West Lancashire; Derbyshire; East Lancashire; North Wales; Cumberland & Westmorland.

## **Mark Grand Lodge Honours.**

With effect from Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023, the Most Worshipful Grand Master has been pleased to make the following appointments to Brethren from this Province:

Grand Steward	John David Watts, Ernest Dixon Lodge 1015
Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	John Strachan Denham, Auckland Lodge 596
Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies	Mark Julian Gilpin, Cestria Lodge 1151
Past Grand Standard Bearer	William Elliott Hobson, Stanhope Lodge 1551
Past Assistant Grand Standard Bearer	David Battensby, Cestria Lodge 1151

With effect from Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the Most Worshipful Grand Master will be pleased to make the following appointments to Brethren from this Province:

Past Grand Junior Overseer	John Maurice Nye, Ferryhill Lodge 1560
Past Grand Junior Deacon	Robert Taylor Watson, Hackworth Lodge 761
Past Grand Junior Deacon	Martin Rankin, Ambrose Crowley Lodge 1269

Congratulations are extended to all the above, with the wish that they have good health to enjoy their preferment, and the determination to continue to work hard for the betterment of the Order.

## **Other Events.**

As well 2 Lodge Centenaries, and many presentations of 50 year Certificates listed above, a good number of members of the Province visited Grand Lodge in September for the Promotions meeting, and it was very pleasing to see such support for the recipients. Again, we were well represented at the Grand Lodge business meeting in March, and finished with a tremendous showing at the First Appointments meeting in June.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November Ferryhill was packed to the rafters for the 'Dinner for Denny', at which we honoured our Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master, the current Assistant Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson. This was a superb night, and our thanks go to John Dodds and John Nye in particular, but also to the other members of Ferryhill Lodge who assisted them in any way at all.

November 28<sup>th</sup> saw the Installation of our new Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. David Nigel Hanson. The Pro Grand Master, M.W. Bro. John Herbert Prizeman and his team of Grand Officers duly arrived from London, and we were treated to an excellent ceremony of Installation. The P.G.M. then proceeded to appoint and invest his Deputy P.G.M. and his Assistant P.G.M. After all this ceremonial, just over 200 Mark Men then proceeded to enjoy an excellent Installation Banquet at the Lancastrian Suite.

Also held at the Lancastrian Suite was the launch of the 2029 Durham Festival in aid of the Mark Benevolent Fund. It is many years since the Mark province of Durham hosted a Festival, and the Festival Team appointed by the P.G.M. did not want to let the launch go by without a flourish – despite the problems with the heating system on the night! We all enjoyed an excellent meal, followed by superb entertainment. In between the meal and the entertainment, there were speeches from the P.G.M., a representative of the M.B.F. in London, and finally from John Watts, who introduced his Team individually, and then encouraged us all to donate.

March saw the Annual Wardens' Dinner again held at Ferryhill Masonic Chambers. A good number of Past Wardens of the Province were in attendance, showing that this continues to be a very popular event. Once again, this was an excellent evening organised by John Dodds and John Nye, to whom we are most grateful.

## Obituary.

The Province has suffered the loss of many Mark Brethren, whose names are recorded below. We acknowledge the service they gave to the Order in general, and to this Province in particular.

W.Bro. Ian Christopher Mason	P.P.G.J.O.	Ravensworth Lodge 718
W.Bro. Thomas Knott	P.P.G.J.W.	St. Thomas Lodge 1511
W.Bro. Peter Smailes	P.A.G.D.C.	Steadfast Lodge 846
W.Bro. John Victor Thompson		Ferryhill 1560
W.Bro. Robert Henry Jones	P.P.G.J.W.	Darlington Lodge 250
W.Bro. John Wilson Best	P.P.A.G.D.C.	Bede Lodge 605
W.Bro. Terence Henry Lewis		Eclectic Lodge 39
V.W. Bro. Keith Dinning	P.G.J.O.	Spennymoor Lodge 981
W.Bro. Norman John William Moffitt		Ryton Lodge 1714
W.Bro. Raymond Stephenson	P.P.G.J.W.	Percy Lodge 122
W.Bro. Raymond Gregory Snaith	P.A.G.D.C.	Indaba Lodge 1936
Bro. Frederick David Graham-Thomas		Wouldhave Tyne Dock Lodge 362
W.Bro. Malcolm Spark		St. Aidan Lodge 1145
W.Bro. Anthony David Briggs	P.G.J.D.	Ryton Lodge 1714
W.Bro. Leonard Redmayne		Bernard Gilpin Lodge 860
W.Bro. Samuel James Neil	P.G.J.D.	St. Lawrence Lodge 1093
W.Bro. Peter Beedle	P.G.J.D.	William Todd Lodge 929
W.Bro. William Burt Holden	P.P.G.M.O.	Stanhope Lodge 1551
W.Bro. Leonard Henry Stewart	P.A.G.D.C.	St. Andrew's Lodge 845
W.Bro. Ian Ormiston	P.P.G.J.W.	Ferryhill Lodge 1560
W.Bro. Raymond Davis	P.P.G.J.O.	William Todd Lodge 929
W.Bro. Thomas Hutler McKitten	P.P.G.J.W.	Shipleby Lodge 1271
W.Bro. Peter John holland	P.P.G.J.W.	Ambrose Crowley Lodge 1269
W.Bro. Clive Pogue	P.P.G.J.W.	St. Aidan Lodge 1145
Bro. Alan Townsend		William Todd Lodge 929

**“THEY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS, AND THEIR GOOD WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM. THANKS BE TO GOD, THEY HAVE MARKED WELL”**

## **Membership (all figures are taken as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022)**

The number of Memberships at the end of 2017 was 1,218. As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, it had fallen to 946. During 2022, we have lost a net total of 53 memberships. This decrease represents a further decrease of 5.31% over the last year; and a total decrease of 22.34% over the last 5 years. Please bear in mind, however, that over the 5 year period we had Covid to deal with, and the closure of 5 Lodges where not all members joined a new

Lodge. Please also remember that the loss of memberships is higher than the number of members lost - as many members are in 2 or more Lodges.

Clearly, however, 'resignations' are still a major issue. All resignations are supposed to be followed up by contact from either the Deputy or the Assistant P.G.M., and it is imperative that details of all intended resignations are sent to Province as soon as Lodge Secretaries are informed of them – a follow-up phone call is useless several weeks later. The one real shaft of light at the end of the tunnel is that, due to Covid, we had very few new members advanced into the Order. During the last 12 months since our last Annual meeting, 30 new Advancees have become Mark Master Masons. It is up to you, Brethren, to ensure that it continues.

**Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Durham  
Summary of Annual Returns of Lodges Year Ended 31st December 2022**

No.	Lodge	Total Members Installation 2021	Adv.	Join	Res.	Died	Exclud.	Hon Mem.	Total Members Installation 2022
M39	Eclectic	24	0	0	0	1	0	0	23
M122	Percy	21	0	0	1	1	0	0	19
M124	Union	20	0	4	0	0	0	0	24
<b>M250</b>	<b>Darlington Steadfas</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>
M293	Industry	26	0	0	1	3	0	2	20
M356	Dunelm	40	0	0	2	0	1	0	37
M362	Wouldhave T.D.	34	0	1	2	0	0	1	32
M596	Auckland	20	0	0	0	1	2	0	17
M605	Bede	25	0	0	1	1	0	2	21
M701	Jarrow	28	0	0	1	0	0	1	26
M718	Ravensworth	20	0	2	1	0	1	0	20
M740	Harte	22	1	0	1	1	0	0	21
M761	Hackworth	35	0	1	2	2	0	0	32
M778	Barnard Castle	22	0	0	0	1	0	0	21
M827	Unity	19	0	0	1	1	0	0	17
<b>M846</b>	<b>Steadfast (Amalgmed)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
M854	St Andrews	27	2	1	0	2	0	0	28
M860	Bernard Gilpin	22	1	0	0	0	0	0	23
M896	Clavering	24	0	1	1	0	0	0	24
M925	Moseley	20	0	0	3	0	0	0	17
M929	William Todd	25	2	2	4	0	0	0	25
M930	Castle Eden	20	0	0	1	0	0	0	19
M981	Spennymoor	22	0	1	0	2	0	0	21
M1015	Ernest Dixon	16	0	1	0	0	0	0	17
M1055	Penshaw	18	0	0	4	0	0	0	14
M1093	St Lawrence	12	0	3	0	2	0	0	13
M1106	Walton	24	0	1	1	0	0	0	24
M1112	Elevation	16	0	2	2	0	0	0	16
M1145	St Aidan	17	0	0	1	1	0	2	13
M1151	Cestria	50	0	0	3	1	0	0	46
M1269	Ambrose Crowley	32	2	0	2	0	0	1	31
M1271	Sportsman's	40	0	0	0	1	0	0	39
M1492	Durham Lodge IMN	38	0	4	3	1	0	0	38
M1551	Stanhope	27	0	0	0	0	0	1	26
M1560	Ferryhill	25	0	1	0	1	0	0	25
M1626	George Washingto	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	14
M1714	Ryton	29	1	1	1	1	0	0	29
M1806	Chief of the Builder	71	0	5	6	2	0	0	68
M1820	DLPStewards	22	0	0	3	1	1	0	17
M1936	Indaba	20	0	1	0	2	0	1	18
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>1018</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>965</b>
			Adv.	Join	Res.	Died	Exclud.	Hon Mem.	

## Conclusion.

Brethren, I present my report for your information and consideration. My grateful thanks go to all the hard working Lodge Secretaries for their help and assistance during the last 12 months, and I am sure they will continue the good work in their Lodges.

My particular thanks go to my Deputy Provincial Secretary W.Bro. Graham Wharton, my Assistant Provincial Secretary, W.Bro. Ian Heaviside, the Provincial Registrar, W.Bro. David Battensby. They have all executed their roles most efficiently, and I am indebted to them all.

On a personal level, as many of you know by now, I was told in February that my cancer has returned, and then my wife passed away in April. The last few weeks have been a difficult and

trying time for me and my 2 sons. However, the support I have received from many, many Brethren throughout the Province has been invaluable, and has helped me greatly. A good many of you have also supported my wish to raise money for Cancer Research UK, which has become an important part of my life at the present time. May I take this opportunity to thank you all for all your donations, which are much appreciated.

Brethren, let us renew our annual pilgrimage to the Lancastrian Suite in June. I am sure it will again prove to be a great success, and that everyone will have a most enjoyable day. It is my hope and belief that we are at last beginning to return to something like normal in terms of our meetings and other activities. So for now, Brethren, I wish you all well, and may the Great Overseer of the Universe look kindly upon you all, and grant you good health throughout the coming year.

Allan Gurney P.G.J.D.,

**Provincial Grand Secretary, 1st June 2023.**