

PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS AND ROYAL ARK MARINERS OF DURHAM



Province of Durham Royal Ark Mariner Annual Assembly

The Province of Durham RAM Annual Assembly took place on Friday 31st March 2023 at Ferryhill Masonic Hall. It was a packed Lodge room which welcomed the Provincial Grand Master, David Hanson and distinguished guests. This was of course, all done with the slick polished style we've come to expect from our Provincial Director of Ceremonies and his Team. The Heads of Orders were given a traditional Durham welcome along with the special guest, Rt W Bro Walton, PGM for Northumberland. Whilst there are formalities to complete, the main part of the evening was to celebrate the appointments and promotions in the Order.

The acting appointments to the Provincial Team are.

Senior Warden	Norman Eric Heaviside	Chief of the Builders	1806
Junior Warden	John Strachan Denham	Hackworth	761
Deputy DC	John Maurice Nye	Spennymoor	981
Sword Bearer	Graham Johnson	Industry	293
Standard Bearer	James Arthur Palfreyman	Barnard Castle	778
Guardian	Leslie Nevin	Eclectic	39
Warder	John Bernard Martin Schoolkate	Union	124

The full listing of the Royal Ark Mariner Provincial Team for the year can be found on the website at www.durhammarkmasons.org

The recipients of Provincial Grand Rank are

Frederick William Lynas	Eclectic	39
Thomas Neil Hugill	Stockton-on-Tees	122
David John Anderson	Bede	605
Thomas Barr Jack	Bede	605
Alan Dargue	Hackworth	761
David Battensby	Moseley	925
Stephen Daniel McGlen	Castle Eden	930
Peter Harrison	Spennymoor	981
Ivan Jewell	Elevation	1112

(Province of Durham Royal Ark Mariner Annual Assembly—continued)

Upon completion of the investiture, members of the Durham Lodge of Installed Commanders gave an explanation of the Royal Ark Mariner Tracing Board. In the picture (l to r) with the PGM are Don MacKenzie, Mark Gilpin and Fred Piggford.



The Provincial Grand Master, David Hanson addressed the RAM Annual Assembly and thanked everyone for being so inspirational in working so tirelessly for Lodges, the Province and Freemasonry in general. The continual efforts that everyone puts into help the charities and worthy causes. The support for the Durham 2029 Festival thus far has been amazing and despite difficult times, is so inspiring.

David congratulated all those he appointed or promoted. He stated how much joy it is to carry out the investiture and that it is the high point of the year. He also thanked them for the work they had done and likely to do in the future, for their Lodges and the Province. He also paid credit to the outgoing team.

David enthused about recruitment and retention of members. He encouraged everyone to consider colleagues in their Mark and Craft Lodges who may wish to join but are just waiting to be asked. But that is only one part of the equation, we must retain them once they join. The best way is to communicate and if they haven't been for a little while, go talk to them, tell them how they are missed and welcome them back.



Cestria Mark Marked Well

Cestria Mark hosted the Provincial Grand Master and the Mark Provincial Team at their April meeting in Chester-le-Street.

After completing some Lodge business and election of the Master for the ensuing year, the scene was set for the PGM, David Hanson and his team to enter. The Provincial DC announced the first procession and then the Grand Officers. The PGM entered with the senior Provincial Officers in the third procession. After the formalities were concluded, control was handed back to the Lodge DC.

The next business was to advance a new member of the Lodge, Bro Brian Woodhall.



What was to follow was an excellent ceremony of advancement, with some drama and light humour for added sparkle.

Before closing the Lodge, Richard Scott provided a short presentation about the Durham 2029 Festival. He demonstrated how the Mark Benevolent Fund was making a difference to local people. He also encouraged everyone to become part of the fundraising effort but importantly to enjoy what they are doing at the same time, have some fun. Further details about the Durham 2029 Festival can be found on the Festival website: www.Durham2029.org

(Cestria Mark Marked Well—continued)

After the formal meeting, everyone was treated to a lovely meal and drinks. There was a really good vibe in the room with much chat and laughter. Festival jewels were also flying out of Richard's hands with seven soon obtaining theirs.



The PGM on responding to his toast, started by thanking the Lodge for the very warm welcome everyone received, a wonderful ceremony and how well it had been performed for the candidate, Bro Brian. 'This is what the Mark is all about, the warmth of friendship, fellowship and great ritual' he enthused.

David commented that he would often speak about recruitment at this point. However, as the lack of past masters on the Lodge officer list showed that it was doing well, he told the Cestria Mark Lodge to keep doing what it is doing. He did remind everyone that there is also the Royal Ark Mariner degree and encouraged membership to those who had not joined ... yet.



David would also comment on the promotions that some Cestria Mark members were receiving this year, with two first appointments to Grand Rank and two Provincial promotions, as well as four current acting Provincial officers some of whom will be reappointed. He congratulated the Lodge on the hard work which has been displayed by so many and the energy and enthusiasm.

The joyful mood continued to the close of the evening, with everyone making Cestria Mark Lodge's newest member, Brian Woodhall feel really welcome.

(Cestria Mark Marked Well—continued)



**Cestria Mark
Certainly Marked
Well**

Me, Her, and the Big 'C'

Brethren, I write this article, not for sympathy, because I am drowning in sympathy. I have received so much sympathy and so many good wishes over the last 12 months that I have run out of different ways to say 'thank you'. And I do thank you all for your good wishes to both myself and my wife during that time. They have been much appreciated.

However, life is as it is, and it is now time to get on with what is left to us. More importantly, now is the time for action, and to try and bring some good out what remains an awful situation. A situation, may I add, that is not unique to myself and my wife. There are so many of our members going through similar medical problems so, let us not forget them as well.

For those that do not already know, I was diagnosed with cancer of the rectum in March last year, and had an operation on 1st April which removed most of my rectum and a large part of my bowel. I now live with a permanent stoma and a colostomy bag (nicknamed ALF – Allan's Little Friend). However, at the beginning of February, I was told that the cancer has resurfaced in my lungs and, although incurable, is 'hopefully' treatable – to which end I started a 3-weekly cycle of chemotherapy on a continuously ongoing basis in the middle of March.

While all this was going on, my wife, Sarah, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in late June last year. The discovery of a heart murmur, allied to her pre-existing epilepsy, meant that although the surgeons were prepared to operate on the cancer, they were not prepared to operate on her. She subsequently underwent a course of chemotherapy which ended in December. Since the new year, however, she has suffered severe drops in her haemoglobin levels, which have resulted in blood transfusions on 5 occasions up to now, and CLL has also been mentioned (some form of leukaemia, I believe).



At the start of the year, my younger son announced that he was planning to sign up for the Great North Run again (he has done it a few times before), but instead of raising a few pounds for local charities supported by his employer, he was signing up to support ovarian cancer charities. This idea was changed after the news that my cancer had returned and he is now entered on behalf of Cancer Research UK. His 'Just Giving' page on the internet states that he hopes to raise £500 before the run takes place on Sunday, 10th September. Brethren, he was gobsmacked when I came back from Durham Lodge of Installed Masters and told him that £305 had been donated by Lodge members and the Lodge itself. He was even more astounded 4 days later when I returned from Sportsman's Mark Lodge with £489 from members, the raffle, and the Lodge. Two amazing acts

(Me, Her, and the Big 'C' - continued)

of generosity, for which I am most grateful. This just proves how generous and supportive Freemasonry can be, and it makes me proud to be a member of our fantastic organisation.

Brethren, as I said above, now is the time for action. But I am not asking for your support for myself, or my wife. We are comfortably well off. But cancer is a scourge on our society. The figures show that 1 in 2 people will suffer some form of cancer during their lifetime – unfortunately, my wife and I are above average on that statistic! And I suspect many of you have been affected by someone close to you, either family or friend, going through painful and difficult treatments for this horrible disease. However, I am asking for your help, and your generosity. I personally cannot get around all the Lodges before September, to plead and beg you to donate to this much needed charity in the way that I would like. But I can ask you, here and now, to assist me to raise as much money as possible for this much needed charity work funding research into treatments and cures. Invitations to visit and address individual Lodges will always be considered, but acceptance will depend on my availability, and how I react to ongoing chemotherapy.

So, Brethren, I ask you now, to donate either by sending me donations (together with your name and contact number) or by signing up at my son's 'Just Giving' page on the internet. The address is somewhat long but here it is:

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/michaels-giving-page-1553>

Brethren, if you have read this diatribe to the end, then I thank you. If you take that one step further, I will be eternally grateful.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Allan Gurney, P.G.J.D.

Sadly, Sarah died on Sunday, 16th April. May she now rest in peace in the Grand Lodge above.

Wardens' Dinner



Ferryhill Mark Lodge hosted the 11th annual Wardens Dinner. This special occasion helps celebrate all the acting Wardens who have been appointed to the Provincial Grand Mark Lodge of Durham.

The event was instigated by the Provincial Grand Master, Peter Croft in 2011 when he asked the retiring Junior Warden, John Dodds to take on the task. The first was held in 2012 and

John has organised them ever since with the help of John Nye. The event in 2020 was the moment many will remember when our previous PGM, Denny Wilson stopped activities due to Covid. The 2021 Wardens Dinner was also a casualty of the Covid pandemic.

The event is held on the March meeting of the Ferryhill Mark Lodge and the Provincial Grand Master and his deputation are welcomed to the Lodge. Thereafter, all the current and past Wardens who are able to attend are announced and welcomed into the Lodge. There were 28 Wardens attending covering the years from 1997 to the present day.

The Provincial Grand Master, David Hanson then had the pleasure of investing twenty-one brethren with their Durham 2029 Festival Jewels. He thanked them for their overwhelming support and joked, *"I hope we don't run out!"*. The Worshipful Master, David Thompson then presented a £500 cheque on behalf of the Lodge to go towards the 2029 Festival.

To the delight of the Festival Team, John Dodds made a presentation of £1000 to the Festival from the Durham Mark Social Committee Fund.



In the picture (l to r) are Don Marshall, Ian McMillan, David Hanson, Corey Irons and Paul Harrison.

After the formalities, everyone retired to the dining room for the Wardens Dinner, after collecting drinks of course! The event is a sell-out, as has been the case for a few years.

It was also wonderful to see three newly advanced Mark Masons attend the Wardens Dinner. They were from the recently amalgamated Darlington Steadfast Lodge and were brought by Don Marshall.

(Wardens' Dinner continued)

John Hargate, Senior Warden in 2007 gave a very entertaining response to the Visitor's Toast. He thanked the Masonic equivalent of Ant & Dec, John Dodds and John Nye for organising the event. He welcomed the initiative for all Masonic Orders to work more closely and how this can only lead to greater enjoyment.

The Provincial Grand Master and the Festival Team were in for another treat when Graham Wharton presented yet another cheque. This was the proceeds from the sale of the home made jams, chutneys and honey he has sold at Lodges around the Province. He presented a cheque for £300 which represents the surplus from 600 jars sold in Mark or Mariner Lodges.

A fantastic evening and one the PGM refers to as 'the jewel in the crown'



Durham 2029 Festival



On Saturday 21st January 2023, the Durham 2029 Festival launch event marked the official beginning of 6 years of fundraising on behalf of the Mark Benevolent Fund. This will be the fourth time Durham has played host since the Province was formed just over 100 years ago.

The event was held at 'The FED' in Dunston.

The evening was a mix of gala dinner, short speeches and excellent entertainment.

Guest of honour was David Ashbolt, the Deputy President of the Mark Benevolent Fund. Also in attendance was the Assistant Grand Master, our own Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson.

Our members, their partners and friends from across the Province assembled for the special occasion. On arrival, they were greeted by members of St. John Ambulance Service with the ambulance donated by the Mark Benevolent Fund for the Durham Province. They were also able to view one of the many Blood Bikes which was also funded by the MBF. Some guests even getting a 'feel' for the bike and sitting atop it.

After the meal, Enter CIC introduced themselves and provided the first segment of the evening's entertainment. These young adults performed a number of songs and routines from '50s rock 'n' roll to West-End musicals.



(Durham 2029 Festival – continued)

It was then time for the Provincial Grand Master, David Hanson to welcome everyone and officially launch the Durham 2029 Festival.

“Our Festival is in support of the Mark Benevolent Fund. For over 150 years, the MBF has been helping those in need and it itself has been ably supported by Mark Master Masons across the country. It is now our turn ...the Province of Durham...to lead the charge in raising funds for the MBF. But let us not forget that it isn't just about handing over a sum of money; it is about the joy that will be brought to the downtrodden and the relief that will be given to the needy. Hence, our festival slogan: ‘Giving is not just about making a donation, it's about making a difference’.



The Durham 2029 Festival is for everyone and will be a success with your help and enthusiasm. We hope that you as Mark Masons, your friends and families can participate, enjoy, and organise many events that will occur over the next six years.

Let's make that difference.”

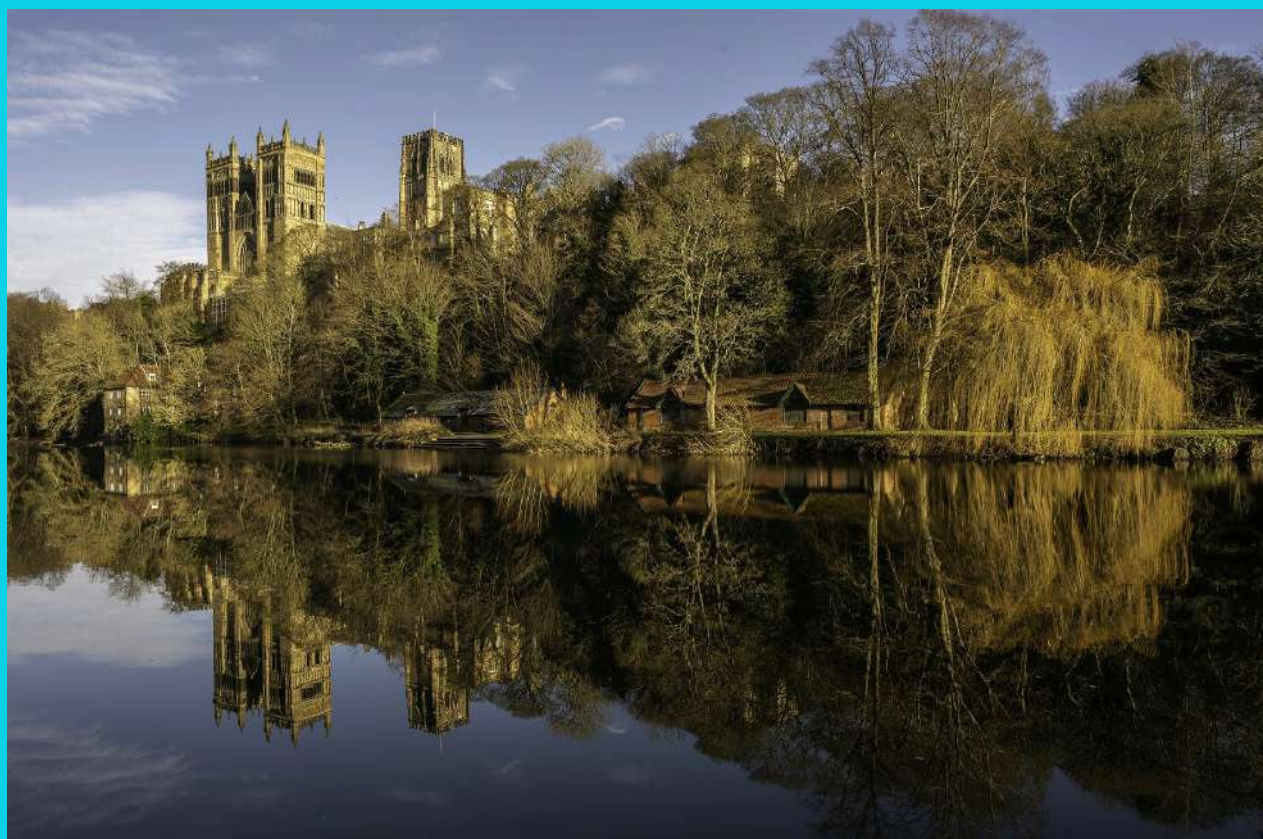
David introduced the Festival Team and welcomed them to take the stage. After the introductions, he made reference to Winston Churchill who said, “ we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give”. It was now time to introduce the Festival Chairman, John Watts to make his address who gave a heartfelt talk on why we do what we do, and how the MBF helps many across the country, including people in our own Province. A full transcript of John's address can be found on the Provincial website: <https://durhammarkmasons.org/>

After his build up, John then introduced the Deputy President of the MBF, David Ashbolt. David thanked everyone for their enthusiasm and further explained how the MBF provides assistance. He spoke with great passion about the MBF and also the Festival Jewels and MBF Honorifics. In closing, he wished the Province of Durham and its members, families and friends every success with the Durham 2029 Festival. The evening was then handed over to performer Chris Tame who got the dancing started before a disco rounded out the successful evening.

The Mark Benevolent Fund is a registered charity (no. 207610) and came into existence in 1868. It was founded on the suggestion of the Reverend George Raymond Portal, Grand Master of the Mark. He felt that for charity to be effective, it had to be disbursed swiftly and without the bureaucratic formalities of other Masonic charities. To him it was wrong for there to be any delay in providing assistance to those in need. It was his own Latin tag “Bis dat qui cito dat” – **he gives twice who gives promptly** – became, and still is, the principal guideline of the M.B.F.

The Durham 2029 Festival website can be found at: <https://www.durham2029.org>

Durham Cathedral - A jewel in the Province of Durham



Special thanks go to WBro Stephen Bell of Ravensworth Lodge of Mark Master Masons for the photograph of Durham Cathedral. This has been used as a background photograph on the Provincial website home page. Visit <https://durhammarkmasons.org/> and have a look. If anyone would like to submit a photograph of an iconic location within the Province of Durham, please send it to WBro David Battensby via email at battensbyd@gmail.com and it may be used in the future. Photographs should be good quality and of high resolution.

New Worshipful Masters and Worshipful Commanders

MARK LODGES		<u>Worshipful Master</u>	<u>Installed</u>
			2023
			JANUARY
Sportsmans	1271	Michael John Wilkinson	6 th
Jarrow	701	Derek Luke	16 th
			FEBRUARY
Industry	293	David Pattinson	6 th
Harte	740	Sheldon Beddard	13 th
Dunelm	356	Stephen Daniel McGlen	23 rd
			MARCH
Wouldhave Tyne Dock	362	Neil Stephenson	15 th
Chief of the Builders	1806	Stephen William Walker	17 th
Stanhope	1551	Raymond Edward Dinning	20 th
Eclectic	39	Peter John Reddick	28 th
RAM LODGES		<u>Worshipful Commander</u>	
			2023
			JANUARY
Stockton-on-Tees	122	Mark Stuart Whitaker	17 th
			FEBRUARY
Elevation	1112	Alan Cuthbertson	22 nd
			MARCH
St. Andrews	854	Edward Jones	9 th
Rockcliffe	362	Christopher Raven	17 th

Bill Swift—Fifty Years of Service to Mark Masonry



The Provincial Grand Master and his team visited Spennymoor Mark Lodge to present a 50 years certificate to William 'Bill' Swift. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons he was unable to attend.

There were many brethren there to show support for Bill despite his absence. A brief history of Bill's distinguished Masonic career was given to help enlighten anyone who didn't know Bill.

A short talk was given by Joe Bulmer about Spennymoor Mark Lodge and its history, which of course, features Bill in its content. For anyone who is interested, a copy of the talk can be found on the Provincial website at: <https://durhammarkmasons.org/>



Bill started his Masonic career when he was Initiated into Doric Lodge on 19th April 1971 although as was often the case in those days, it would be 14 months before he became a Master Mason. He progressed through the various offices to the chair and in due time was promoted in Provincial Lodge to Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden. In 1999 he was rewarded with appointment to Grand Rank. In the Royal Arch he was Exalted in Whitworth Chapter on

4th June 1975 and became their first Principal. He was later promoted in Provincial Chapter to Past Provincial Grand Scribe Nehemiah and in Grand Chapter to Past Assistant Grand Sojourner.

Bill joined the Mark in January 1973 and became Worshipful Master in 1989. He was promoted to Provincial Senior Warden in 1993 and became Provincial Secretary between 1994 and 99. Grand Rank honours were awarded in 1995 as Past Grand Standard Bearer and then promoted to Past Grand Junior Deacon in 1999. In 2005 a further promotion followed with the rank of Past Grand Junior Overseer for the continuous work he has provided to the Order. Bill also joined the Spennymoor Royal Ark Mariner Lodge in 1981 becoming their Worshipful Commander in 1990. Provincial Grand Rank was awarded in 1996 and then he was honoured with Grand Rank in 1997.

It is fair to say that Bill is well known to Masons and particularly Mark Masons in the Province of Durham. Bill was presented with his certificate at his home by the Provincial Grand Master and Master of Spennymoor Mark Lodge.

Doug Barkess—Fifty Years of Service to Mark Masonry

The Provincial Grand Master was guest of Moseley Lodge to present Doug Barkess with his 50 years of service certificate. The special occasion would see the Provincial Team descend on Birtley Masonic Hall.



Before the presentation, the brethren were treated to a stylish and entertaining rendition of the Mark Degree Tracing Board. This was delivered by Lee Puchala and George Young of Dunelm Mark Lodge.

The Provincial Grand Master, David Hanson was delighted to be 'the messenger' in presenting the 50 years' service certificate to Doug. David was keen to point out that the certificate was from the Grand Master himself. It was his pleasure and privilege to present it on his behalf.

Doug is a well-known Mason, particularly in the northern area. He was Initiated into Sincerity Lodge in December 1970 and raised in May the following year. He was first Worshipful Master in 1981 and most recently in 2021. He has held many offices in the Lodge from Secretary for 14 years, Charity Steward to Membership Officer and Benevolent Representative. He was awarded Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden by Provincial Lodge in 1989.

Doug also joined the Chapter, being Exalted into Norman Chapter in November 1982. He was their First Principal in 1991 and again in 1999. He has been Scribe for 13 years and was awarded Past Provincial Grand Scribe Nehemiah in 2013 by Provincial Grand Chapter. He previously held the ranks of Past Provincial Grand Sojourner and Past Provincial Grand Registrar.

(Doug Barkess—Fifty Years of Service to Mark Masonry continued)

In Mark Masonry, Doug was Advanced into Moseley Mark Lodge in February 1973 and became their Master in 1985. Doug was promoted in Mark Provincial Grand Lodge to Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in 1989. Then in 1996 and 2008 he received promotions to Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer and Past Provincial Grand Senior Overseer respectively. In 2001, Doug was rewarded for his service with Grand Mark Lodge honours and the rank of Past Grand Standard Bearer.



David thanked Doug for his service, commenting that he is a stalwart of Mark Masonry in Durham and particularly Moseley Mark Lodge. He then requested The Provincial Secretary, Allan Gurney to read the certificate before he presented it to Doug. There was a rapturous round of applause and salute.

At the festive board, there was a toast and presentation made by Doug's good friend Jim Harris.

Before the evening ended, the Provincial Grand Master presented the Worshipful Master with their 2029 Festival Bronze award.

Provincial Visits

To ensure the comfort and provision for all who wish to attend a Provincial Visit, would you please remember to advise the Lodge Secretary of your intention to visit and dine.

NOT REPLYING IS NOT AN OPTION

MARK

2023

April

4th	Cestria	1151	Chester-le-Street	Confirmed
21st	B/Castle (Centenary;Small Team)	778	B/Castle	Confirmed

May

25th	Dunelm	356	Durham	Confirmed
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June

13th	Mark Grand Lodge		London	Confirmed
20th	William Todd (To be confirmed nearer date)	929	Willington	Pencilled In
26th	Stanhope	1551	Stanhope	Confirmed
28th	Annual Provincial Meeting		The Fed	Confirmed
3rd	Walton (75th Anniversary)	1106	Crook	Confirmed

September

12th	Mark Grand Lodge		London	Confirmed
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October

23rd	Durham L.I.M.M.	1492	Birtley	Confirmed
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November

10th	Ryton	1714	Ryton	Confirmed
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December

8th	Bede	605	Burdon Road	Confirmed
14th	Elevation (2 x 50 Year Certificates)	1112	Blackhill	Confirmed

RAM

2023

April

14th	Stanhope	1551	Stanhope	Confirmed
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May

June

July

September

October

November

16th	Durham L.I.C.	1492	Hetton	Confirmed
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December

11th	RAM Grand Lodge		London	Confirmed
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2024

January

22nd	Moseley (75th Anniversary)	925	Birtley	Confirmed
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May

17th	Rockcliffe (Centenary)	362	South Shields	Pencilled in
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Deadline for the Summer 2023 newsletter is 15th June 2023.

Please send contributions to newsmarkdurham@outlook.com

(Articles in Word and tables in Excel please.)



OBITUARIES

“They rest from their labours and their good works do follow them. Thanks be to God, they have marked well.”

Title	Forenames	Surname	DoB	Mark Lodges	RAM Lodges	Mother Lodge	Mark GR	Mark Prov GR	RAM Rank	Died
Bro.	Frederick David	Graham-Thomas	02/10/1962	362	362	Wouldhave T.D.	N/A	N/A	N/A	28/12/2022
W.Bro.	Malcolm	Spark	19/01/1943	1145	N/A	St Aidan	N/A	N/A	N/A	25/01/2023
W.Bro.	Anthony David	Brigg	06/04/1933	1714	1714	Ryton	P.G.I.D.	P.P.G.S.W.	R.A.M.G.R.	30/01/2023
W.Bro.	Leonard	Redmayne	01/03/1940	860	N/A	Bernard Gilpin	N/A	N/A	N/A	03/02/2023
W.Bro.	Samual James	Niel	21/10/1939	1093	1714	St. Lawrence	P.G.I.D.	P.P.G.I.W.	Prov.R.A.M.G.R.	06/02/2023
W.Bro.	Peter	Beedle	21/05/1963	929	778	William Todd	P.G.I.D.	P.P.G.S.W.	Prov.R.A.M.G.R.	08/02/2023
W.Bro.	William Burt	Holden	03/08/1935	1551	N/A	Stanhope	N/A	P.P.G.M.O.	N/A	07/03/2023

