

## **Scribe's Report 2024**

### **The Seventeenth Annual Assembly.**

Brethren,

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

#### **Lodge Visits**

During the past year, the Provincial Grand Master has led Deputations to the following Royal Ark Mariner Lodges:

Stockton-on-Tees 122; Darlington 250; Dunelm 356; Rockcliffe 362 (Centenary); Hackworth 761 (Shared night with Mark Lodge); Barnard Castle 778; Moseley 925 (75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary); Stanhope 1551; and 2 visits to Durham Lodge of Installed Commanders 1492 (Wardens' Night & Installation).

#### **Installations**

The Provincial Grand Master was 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 2023 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 Bernard Martin Schoolkate

Union Lodge 124

W.Bro. Alan Weir

Spennymoor Lodge 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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

No.	LODGE	Total Members Installation 2022	Ele	J	Res	D	Exc	HM	Total Members Installation 2023
39	Eclectic	14	1	1	0	0	0	0	16
122	Stockton-on-Tees	17	0	1	2	1	0	0	15
124	Union	22	1	3	1	0	0	1	24
250	Darlington	18	0	0	1	1	0	0	16
293	Industry	28	1	2	0	1	1	0	29
356	Dunelm	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
362	Rockcliffe	28	0	0	1	1	0	0	26
605	Bede	26	0	1	1	0	1	0	25
761	Hackworth	19	1	1	0	0	0	0	21
778	Barnard Castle	23	1	0	1	2	0	0	21
854	St. Andrews	20	1	0	1	0	0	0	20
860	Bernard Gilpin	19	0	2	0	1	1	0	19
896	Clavering	11	0	3	1	0	0	0	13
925	Moseley	17	1	2	1	0	0	0	19
981	Spennymoor	21	1	0	0	1	0	0	21
1112	Elevation	20	0	1	3	0	0	0	18
1492	Durham Lodge of ICs	29	0	5	4	1	0	1	28
1551	Stanhope	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
1714	Ryton	14	0	0	0	3	0	0	11
1806	Chief of the Builders	51	1	2	3	1	0	0	50
		<b>442</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>437</b>

The Annual Lodge Returns show an overall decrease in membership of 5. This represents a decrease from last year of 1.31%. The fall last year was 2%, so we are just about holding our own, and it seems as if a few more members are coming back after the pandemic.

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.

Hopefully, next year, I can report that we have an increase in membership. However, let us not forget, that for the Royal Ark Mariner Degree to increase its membership, we need to encourage more members of the Craft to join our Mark Lodges – one depends upon the other. Then, we must ensure that every one of our Mark Lodge members is aware of the Royal Ark Mariner Degree as the next step in his 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.

**Leonard Henry Stewart**, St. Andrews Lodge 854.  
Born 28<sup>th</sup> June 1940 - Died 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Ian Ormiston**, Spennymoor Lodge 981.  
Born 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 - Died 29<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

**Raymond Davis**, Barnard Castle Lodge 778.  
Born 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1947 - Died 19<sup>th</sup> May 1923.

**Thomas Hutler McKitten**, Industry Lodge 293.  
Born 12<sup>th</sup> January 1943 - Died 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**Clive Pogue**, Elevation Lodge 1112.  
Born 7<sup>th</sup> February 1945 - Died 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

**John Iddon Smiles**, Castle Eden Lodge 930.  
Born 7<sup>th</sup> November 1937 - Died 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

**Geoffrey Whiteman**, Bernard Gilpin Lodge 860.  
Born 1<sup>st</sup> January 1943 - Died 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

**William Duck**, Darlington Lodge 250.  
Born 26<sup>th</sup> January 1935 - Died 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

**John Barnett**, Elevation Lodge 1112.,  
Born 20<sup>th</sup> August 1943 - Died 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

**Langton Woodhouse**, Bernard Gilpin Lodge 860.  
Born 21<sup>st</sup> September 1942 - Died 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**Thomas Iles**, Dunelm Lodge 356.  
Born 21<sup>st</sup> September 1941 - Died 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**Harold Taylor**, Barnard Castle Lodge 778.  
Born 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1945 - Died 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**Hugh Dorans**, St. Andrew's Lodge 854.  
Born 8<sup>th</sup> December 1956 - Died 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

**Ronald Beedle**, Spennymoor Lodge 981.  
Born 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1932 – Died 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**Frederick Alan Peat Beales**, Rockcliffe Lodge 362.  
Born 25<sup>th</sup> May 1942 – Died 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

## **Conclusion**

Brethren, Tempus Fugit. It hardly seems as if 12 months have passed since I last sat down to write my Annual Report to the Provincial Assembly of Royal Ark Mariner Lodges.

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. Thanks to their help, and that of other members of the Senior Team, Province has continued to function smoothly and efficiently.

As in every Annual Report, 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.

Finally, Brethren, I cannot end this Report without some personal reflection. Over the last 12 months, my life has certainly changed, and I am most grateful to all those Brethren who have supported me through another difficult year. However, the last year has allowed me to reappraise my life, and has opened up new opportunities – addressing Durham Benevolence on the subject of Stomas, and the need for greater provision of changing facilities for ‘ostomates’, an appeal which has even spread outwards into Nottingham and Northumberland; and secondly, the raising of money for Cancer Research UK. Both of these activities have taken up a great deal of my time, and have relied on you, my fellow Masons, for support and encouragement, and I am extremely proud of the way you have got behind them and helped both causes. Thank you all for your support, your encouragement, but above all, for your friendship.

*Allan Gurney,*

Provincial Grand Scribe.