

Scribe's Report 2025

The Eighteenth Annual Assembly.

Brethren,

I present my seventh Annual Report for The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner within the Province of Durham, while our Provincial Grand Master presides over his third 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: Eclectic 39; Stockton-on-Tees 122; Industry 293; Dunelm 356; Hackworth 761 (Shared night with Mark Lodge); Moseley 925; Spennymoor 981; 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 2024 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. Kenneth Urquhart Robson

Rockcliffe Lodge 362

W. Bro. Robert Ross Tonner

Barnard Castle Lodge 778

These Brethren are very well known throughout the Province, and congratulations are extended to both of them 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 2024

No.	LODGE	Total Members Installation 2023	Ele	J	Res	D	Exc	HM	Total Members Installation 2024
39	Eclectic	16	1	0	1	2	0	0	14
122	Stockton-on-Tees	15	1	0	1	1	0	0	14
124	Union	24	1	0	0	0	0	1	24
250	Darlington	16	0	0	1	1	0	0	14
293	Industry	29	2	0	0	0	0	0	31
356	Dunelm	22	1	1	0	1	0	0	23
362	Rockcliffe	26	1	0	0	0	0	0	27
605	Bede	25	0	0	0	1	0	0	24
761	Hackworth	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
778	Barnard Castle	21	3	1	1	2	0	0	22
854	St. Andrews	20	2	0	0	2	0	1	19
860	Bernard Gilpin	19	2	0	1	3	0	0	17
896	Clavering	13	0	1	0	1	0	0	13
925	Moseley	19	0	0	2	0	0	0	17
981	Spennymoor	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
1112	Elevation	18	0	0	0	1	0	1	16
1492	Durham Lodge of ICs	28	0	3	3	0	0	0	28
1551	Stanhope	23	1	0	0	0	0	0	24
1714	Ryton	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
1806	Chief of the Builders	50	1	1	0	0	0	2	50
		437	16	7	10	15	0	5	430

The Annual Lodge Returns show an overall decrease in membership of 7. This represents a decrease from last year of 1.61% - up from 1.31%, so we are just about holding our own. The most promising numbers are that there were 16 Elavatees, and only 10 Resignations. Let us hope that this trend continues as we go forward.

As always, 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.

I cannot too strongly repeat what I wrote last year: 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.

Ronald Leslie Bean - Bede Lodge 605.

Born 10th December 1938 - Died 22nd March 2024.

John Reginald Bayles - Barnard Castle Lodge 778.
Born 11th April 1948 - Died 5th April 2024.

William Norwood - Clavering Lodge 896.
Born 26th August 1935 - Died 26th April 2024.

Frederick John Francis Rooney – Eclectic Lodge 39.
Born 29th July 1950 - Died 17th May 2024.

David Edwin Vollans - Elevation Lodge 1112.
Born 13th April 1942 - Died 30th June 2024.

Stan Hunter - Hackworth Lodge 761.
Born 2nd August 1949 - Died 18th September 2024.

Jeffrey Awdas – Industry Lodge 293.
Born 13th April 1952 - Died 3rd March 2025.

Harry Frederick Smith - Jarrow Lodge 761
Born 8th April 1951 - Died 27th January 2025.

James Stubbings – Clavering Lodge 896
Born 12th September 1946 – Died 6th March 2025.

Conclusion

Brethren, where have the last 12 months gone? I cannot believe that it is 12 months since I last sat down to write my Annual Report to the Provincial Assembly of Royal Ark Mariner Lodges. I really must be getting older.

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. Stephen Newell, and the Provincial Grand Registrar, W. Bro. David Battensby, as is now usual for them, 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 without say a large ‘Thank you’ to you all for your support, your encouragement, but above all, for your friendship. It is all very much appreciated.

Allan Gurney, Provincial Grand Scribe.