

Scribe's Report 2026

The Nineteenth Annual Assembly.

Brethren,

I present my First 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 fourth 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:

Rockcliffe 362; Hackworth 761 (Shared night with Mark Lodge); Barnard Castle 778; Bernard Gilpin 860; Spennymoor 981; Elevation 1112; 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 2025 the following Brethren received Grand Honours in the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner from The Deputy Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Prof Denovan Keith Wilson:

W. Bro. John David Watts

Chief of the Builders 1806

W. Bro. Derek Dunn

Bede 605

W. Bro Michael James Wilkinson

Hackworth 761

This was a Field promotion, on getting the Deputy position, by
The Provincial Grand Master RWBro David Nigel Hanson

These Brethren are very well known throughout the Province, and congratulations are extended to all 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 2025 as at your last Lodge Installation.

No.	LODGE	Total Members Installation 2024	Ele	J	Res	D	Exc	HM	Total Members Installation 2025
39	Eclectic	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
122	Stockton-on-Tees	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
124	Union	24	2	3	2	1	0	0	26
250	Darlington	14	2	0	2	0	0	0	14
293	Industry	31	0	1	2	1	0	0	29
356	Dunelm	23	0	0	2	4	0	1	16
362	Rockcliffe	27	0	0	2	1	1	0	23
605	Bede	24	1	6	2	0	0	0	29
761	Hackworth	21	0	0	1	1	0	0	19
778	Barnard Castle	22	3	1	0	0	0	0	26
854	St. Andrews	19	1	0	1	1	0	0	18
860	Bernard Gilpin	17	0	1	0	1	0	0	17
896	Clavering	13	0	1	1	1	0	0	12
925	Moseley	17	closed						0
981	Spennymoor	19	0	0	0	1	0	0	18
1112	Elevation	16	0	0	1	1	0	0	14
1492	Durham Lodge of ICs	28	0	1	1	3	0	0	25
1551	Stanhope	24	0	0	0	0	0	1	23
1714	Ryton	11	1	1	0	0	1	0	12
1806	Chief of the Builders	50	0	0	1	0	0	2	49
		428	10	15	18	16	2	3	397

The Annual Lodge Returns show an overall decrease in membership of 31. This represents a decrease from last year due to Moseley lodge closing and most members were already in other lodges we also had 18 resignations, 2 exclusions and made 3 honorary members. We did however have 10 advancements and 15 joining members some of which were from Moseley.

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 Allan 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.

Lionel Danby – Percy Lodge 122.

Born 10th September 1943 - Died 23rd April 2025.

Joseph Bulmer - Spennymoor Lodge 981.

Born 15th July 1934 - Died 4th July 2025.

Derek Martin – Elevation Lodge 1112

Born 08th July 1935 - Died 4th July 2025.

Derek Warneford -Clavering Lodge 896.

Born 03rd August 1947 - Died 13th August 2025.

Selwyn Smith Beattie - Elevation Lodge 1112.

Born 23rd February 1937 - Died 15th August 2025.

Allan Gurney – Bernard Gilpin Lodge 860.

Born 13th May 1951 - Died 18th August 2025.

Joseph William Pearson Dodson – Dunelm Lodge 356.

Born 27th March 1939 - Died 30th August 2025.

Kenneth Peter Dale – Stockton on Tees Lodge 122

Born 06th August 1945 - Died 09th September 2025.

Michael Richard Dickinson – Industry Lodge 293

Born 17th May 1940 – Died 19^h September 2025.

William Crystal – Dunelm Lodge 356.

Born 10th June 1942 – Died 06th October 2025

Michael Richard Robson – Dunelm Lodge 356

Born 01st July 1944 – Died 07th October 2025

David Thom Youngson – Chief of the Builders Lodge 1806

Born 26th February 1938 – Died 14th October 2025

Ralph Jackson Short – Durham L.I. Commanders 1492

Born 24th June 1943 – Died 24th October 2025

David Graham Shipley – Stockton on Tees Lodge 122

Born 17th March 1941 – Died 25th October 2025

Francis Maxwell Sanderson – Stanhope Lodge 1551

Born 27th February 1933 – Died 15th November 2025

Geoffrey Winston Hunt – Moseley Lodge 925
Born 11th July 1941 – Died 24th November 2025

Keith Liddell – Ambrose Crowley Lodge 1269
Born 9th January 1947 – Died 6th February 2026

Robert Hoy – Ravensworth union Lodge 124
Born 13th April 1960 – Died 11th March 2026

Conclusion

Brethren, where have the last 12 months gone? I cannot believe that it is 12 months since I stood in for Allan whilst he was in Hospital, at the Annual assembly of the Provincial 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. Stuart Tinnion, my Assistant Provincial Grand Scribe, W. Bro. Stephen Newell, and the Provincial Grand Registrar, W. Bro. David Battensby, have all shown 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 saying a large ‘Thank you’ to you all for your support, your encouragement, but above all, for your friendship. It is all very much appreciated.

Graham Wharton Provincial Grand Scribe.