

MARK PROVINCE OF CHESHIRE

Ashcroft House
36, Clay Lane
Timperley
Altricham
Cheshire

Telephone - 0161 980 6090

PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

R.W.Bro. Bryan Russell Ogden

DEPUTY PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

W.Bro. David Alldred

ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

W.Bro. Christopher John Macdonald

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Cheshire consists of 44 Lodges of Mark Master Masons and 21 Lodges of Royal Ark Mariners

**Editorial Team**

David Lawrence 01928 567561
djl.lawrence@ntlworld.com

Paul Bullows 0161 483 3090
paulbullows@btinternet.com

David Heathcote 0161 430 6551
davidj.heathcote@btinternet.com

Congratulations

Congratulations on the launch of the Mark News Letter, with reference to the article by W.Bro. Macdonald and *"the Initiatory Rite that holds powerful spiritual as well as material for enlightenment"*, I believe that this reference crosses the boundaries of every degree.

It may be thought that freemasonry is a bit out of date. However, the words and symbols do not need to be changed, we need to look at them more closely as they can prove powerful pointers to those who see freemasonry as a means of self-development. The work is not for everyone as it requires a high degree of discipline. The Mark degree is particularly relevant as the early masons prepared the stones for temples that hopefully were built for eternity. The work is more effective when allowed to work silently from within. Therefore for those who remain frustrated on the outside, we have to remain close tyled.

G.M. Smith PM & PCN Birkenhead Mark 1072

Mark Province of Cheshire

The Cheshire Mark Mason

Summer Edition

September 2004

Brethren

Welcome to the third edition of the *"Cheshire Mark Mason"*. We do hope you have all had a very pleasant summer with your families and that, having been refreshed, you are looking forward to the new Mark Masonic Year.



Over the last year in the Province of Cheshire we have seen a great deal of activity in this *"friendly degree"*. In April our annual meeting in Chester, where the Province was very well supported, saw our RW PGM speak of *"Membership"*, a subject dear to all of our hearts.

We send greetings to all those who received acting or past Provincial Rank. Those of you who received acting rank are in for a busy year which starts with the consecration of Massada Lodge of MMM in September. This will be the 44th Lodge in the Province! We wish the founders of the Lodge well and welcome them to the fold. Congratulations also go to the new Grand Officers appointed at the June meeting of Grand Mark Lodge. Please give them your support as you see them out and about working for the Mark degree.

The leaders of the Province have been to many Lodge meetings to help celebrate Lodge Anniversaries and special occasions where Brethren have reached 50 years in Mark Masonry!! Many Mauls have been presented demonstrating the continued support for the Cheshire Mark Benevolent Fund, see page 6 for the latest news.

There are now some 1067 Mark Masons in the Province and 503 Ark Mariners. Please spread the word. Have you tried "Friendship meetings", you will find a leaflet with this edition of the Newsletter. Think of all the Brethren you know who would enjoy our fellowship in the Mark Degree. The friendship meetings held at Sale Masonic Hall were very successful several Master Masons who attended were keen to put their names forward to join the Degree on the night.

Congratulations go to W.Bro. David J.A. Ayre who correctly revealed the message in the cypher (not the bottle) from the last edition. The message read "A happy new Year to every Brother from Provincial Grand Lodge", sorry David no prize this time!!

Finally please continue to send articles for the newsletter, we will try to publish them all in due course.

The Editorial Team

Success in the Quarries

Tucked away in the south eastern extremities of the Province is the town of Congleton, renowned for the fine quality of the sands and minerals quarried nearby. Closer to the centre of the town is the Masonic Hall, equally renowned for the fine quality of its activity in the quarries.

The Hall is home to Eaton Mark Lodge 1607, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The Lodge has attracted a steady flow of new members since its foundation, however, during the period 1998 to 2001, the number of masons seeking advancement declined. This, coupled with deaths and resignations, left at the end of 2001 a small, but viable lodge membership – a situation which we all felt needed to be improved. The situation has improved, and this short article describes the reMARKable change in lodge fortunes.

The starting point for the transformation was that we all felt able to talk openly with each other about the situation – the future lay in our own hands. It was apparent during discussion, that the lodge has a number of major assets:

- a beautiful Masonic Hall, steeped in tradition, and rich in ambience
- an active membership which attends regularly, and enjoys itself
- membership drawn from more than one location (not just the same familiar faces)
- very competitive pricing for the social board, and drinks
- a large number of good ritualists
- a culture of respect both for and from the senior members of the lodge, also recognition that rank is not everything
- a team of officers that works well together
- no *'hang ups'* about lodge traditions
- a secretary who works tirelessly for our benefit

Recognition that the lodge had a huge amount to offer to prospective members meant that the job of *'selling'* the idea of advancement to potential members was easier (the fact that the WM and IPM are both salesmen is purely coincidental!). Coupling our assets with the Mark degree being promoted as the *'friendly degree'* made the task easier still. We went out selling, armed with a candidate winning proposal.

Since February 2002, the lodge has advanced 8 candidates, and admitted 1 joining member. Most of the candidates have come from Macclesfield and Congleton, however, we are now attracting members from the Middlewich area too. This year we had to undertake a double advancement to ensure we stayed on top of the workload (a yellow hard hat was donned at one point during the ceremony by the WM – with so much activity in the quarries, health and safety should be paramount!).

We have taken tremendous care to make sure that our ceremonies are conducted in such a way that the candidates really feel part of the proceedings – some Oscar winning performances from our overseers this year, have played a major role in helping our new members feel relaxed improving their enjoyment of the advancement ceremony.

A Novice to Mark Masonry

I was fortunate to realise that although I had been a Craft Mason for some 37 years, there was another step to take - joining Mark Masonry!

The virtues of Mark Masonry had been extolled to me over the years but, like many others, I had commitments and was content with my Craft and Royal Arch membership

I had the privilege to be proposed into Joppa No.11 (TI) Mark Lodge some two and a half years ago and I progressed rather quickly, taking the chair this April 2004. I found that the amity and friendship in Mark Masonry is exceptional and I now have more good friends, which I would otherwise have never met.

The Lodge has had a chequered history, in 1872 Joppa was at it's zenith, however in the period 1880 to 1889 it was at a very low ebb and the membership was struggling. Nevertheless, it recovered in 1889 and continued to remain strong through both World Wars, again to decline to a level just workable. The Lodge has now recovered and is steadily progressing, with two more candidates this year (it must be due to the good looking Master!) both of which are attached to the Undertaking profession. No comments please!!

You will appreciate the age of the Lodge and the determination of the past and present members who are so very keen to promote one of the oldest Mark Mason's Lodge's in Cheshire. Like all Mark Lodges the Joppa Lodge No.11(TI) is extremely happy and vigorous and I am sure that if the Craft brethren have the opportunity to read *"The Cheshire Mark Mason"* newsletter, they too will see the opportunities of extending their knowledge and delight in achieving yet more from their masonry.

Keith M.Fair , WM Joppa No.11 (TI)

