

**MARK PROVINCE OF CHESHIRE**

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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

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**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It may be thought that freemasonry is a bit out of date.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 20<sup>th</sup> 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)



## The Mark, Our Charity..... Good News!

The Mark continues to be active in Charitable work at all levels, in this edition of our Newsletter we can report the following successes for the Communities of Cheshire -



The Chester Chronicle reports the gift of £1000.00 to the Countess of Chester Hospital. The money was used to buy a hand held saturation monitor used to show how well babies or children with asthma are breathing.

We were asked if this editions competition was spot the baby..... but we thought better - it's obvious!

Do you have any News about Charitable work your Lodge has undertaken..... let the team know.

On the right we have the presentation of a new Audio system by our RW Provincial Grand Master and our APGM.

The gift was made to the Hospice of the Good Shepherd in Chester. The pretty one is Mrs. Ann Edwards, the Matron of the Hospice and wife of the Inspector General for the Rose Croix in Cheshire Marsh Edwards.

The system will be used at fund raising activities, particularly outdoors.



**Grants made to Cheshire Hospitals -** At the last meeting of Grand Mark Lodge a total of £2.1 million was granted to support Hospitals throughout the UK to assist in targeting Prostate Cancer. The money will be used to buy much needed equipment. Two Cheshire Hospitals have benefited - North Cheshire with **£44,607** and with the second largest overall donation - Wirral Hospital NHS Trust **£107,411 !!!**



Left to right - Bro's. Kevin Chesters, Jon Clipsham, Peter Hull and Julian Daniel

The story gets better. We now have 5 prospective candidates for the new season, and 3 joining members, taking the lodge membership over 40. The age profile of those joining is below state retirement age (in some cases significantly below). Next year's 'ladder' officers will all be Mark Master Masons, and our stewards collars will get an airing for the first time in a number of years. This should also mean that we do not have to ask our visitors to step into office at the last minute (which is just as well, as most of our regular visitors have now applied to become members of the lodge!).

There is no single, right answer to developing the membership of the Mark degree. What we have done at Eaton worked for us. If our ideas can be applied at your lodge, or stimulate your thoughts, then this article has been worth writing.

Jon Clipsham WM Eaton Mark Lodge 1607

## Lodge Names

Following a recent visit by the Provincial Team to Walter de Hereford Mark Lodge No 1275 I was asked by several visitors "what was the derivation of the Lodge name?". The Lodge was founded in 1963. The founders found it difficult to find a name for the Lodge which suited everybody, but special circumstances solved the problem. King Edward I on his return from the wars founded in 1277, at Vale Royal, the largest Cistercian Abbey ever built. In the King's Chamberlain's accounts in the British Museum it is recorded that **Walter de Hereford was the Chief Overseer** who examined the work and paid the workmen their wages. It would be interesting for the derivation of other Lodge names to be explained so why not put pen to paper and let us all be enlightened.

T G Jones, Lodge Secretary.

## Stamford Mark Lodge No.148

The Stamford Mark Lodge No. 148 was consecrated at Altrincham Town Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1872. Seven Masons including the first Master, W.Bro. James Arthur Birch, had the honour of being Founders. So intense was the interest in the Mark Degree during this early period, that no less than three emergency meetings swelled the numbers to over 30 before the end of 1872.

The birth of Stamford Mark Lodge saw the number of Mark Lodges in Cheshire rise to five, the others being Ashton District, Joppa, Benevolent and Fidelity. It seemed to the local Senior Mark Masons, that with the additional Mark Lodges in North Wales, and no doubt due to the threat caused by the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland warranting Mark Lodges and Provincial Grand Lodges in Northern England, that it was eminently desirable to establish a Mark Provincial Grand Lodge in Cheshire, under the English Constitution, as soon as possible.

And so the Stamford Mark Lodge came to prominence again, at another emergency meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1873, it had the honour of hosting the consecration of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Cheshire and North Wales, where the Hon. Wilbraham Egerton was Installed as the first Provincial Grand Master, by RW Bro William Romaine Callender, the Mark Provincial Grand Master of Lancashire, and six Brethren of Stamford Mark, were invested as Acting Provincial Officers. Making progress from such a successful start was not easy. In 1875 the lodge numbers began to decline and during the 1880's a number of meetings were abandoned. In 1891, things changed and the ten years leading up to the death of Queen Victoria saw no less than 55 advancements.

The Lodge had its ups and downs during the twentieth century, as most others have, but met continuously, with only one meeting suspended, throughout both war periods and continued to do its duty in supporting the charities so well. During its long life, it has boasted a number of eminent Masons within its numbers, including the Hon Alan de Tatton Egerton (later 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Egerton of Tatton), Bro. George Leigh OBE and Bro. F. Broadsmith.

In 1947, a number of Lodge members petitioned Grand Mark Lodge to establish a Royal Ark Mariner Lodge, to be moored to the Stamford Mark Lodge, resulting in the Consecration of The Stamford RAM Lodge No. 148 on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1948. In 1991, some 119 years after its founding, the Lodge was proud to celebrate its Centenary, the lateness being due to the abandoned meetings in 1880's falling foul of Grand Lodge's requirement for "regular" meetings, when determining qualification for a Jubilee or Centenary.

In 1966, the Lodge moved its meeting place, from Altrincham, to Sale Masonic Hall where it meets today. We wish the Stamford Mark Lodge No. 148 and all its members well with continued prosperity into the new Millennium.

### Notable Lodge Meetings - for your diary

#### Lodge RAM meetings 2004- 2005

|           |                                     |                      |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1st Sept  | Massada Mark                        | Consecration         |
| 28th Sept | Benevolent TI Mark                  | Presentation of Maul |
| 15th Oct  | Neston RAM                          | Presentation of Maul |
| 12th Nov  | Cestrian Mark / City of Chester RAM | Presentation of Maul |
| 19th Nov  | Egerton Mark                        | Team visit           |

#### Provincial Grand Mark Meetings

|                     |                      |                 |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 17th September 2004 | Charity Reps Dinner  | Middlewich      |
| 2nd April 2005      | Mark AGM             | Chester College |
| TBC May 2005        | Mark Masters' Dinner | Middlewich      |
| TBC June 2005       | Mark GLO Dinner      | Christleton     |

#### Grand Mark Meetings

|                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 14th December 2004 | Royal Ark Mariner London |
| 7th June 2005      | Mark Investiture London  |

### What No Ham?

The Royal Ark Mariner degree has different levels of understanding and here is a brief but interesting interpretation. Noah had three Sons, Japeth, Shem and Ham.

Noah (knower) is a word related to Nous or intelligence and therefore the Higher Mind or Wisdom.

Japheth represents the Japhetic or European race of peoples and the word Europe taken from the ancient Indo European languages means 'good form'. Europe is the home of invention and science and can be seen as the head in the Northern Hemisphere, therefore Japheth can be related to the head or level of ideas in man.

Shem is the Semetic or mid zone with stress on the feeling and emotional levels.

Ham has definite links with the Hamitic races of North Africa and is the source of good Jazz rhythms.

Japheth, Shem and Ham correspond with the three levels in man Head, Heart and Belly. Perhaps Ham still needs to remain hidden as it can represent the hot, dark energies which are best concealed. It also represents a primitive form of the Will. It can be seen that this level best remains hidden and refined through ritual and work on the higher centres.

*Gordon Smith Birkenhead Ram/Mark 1072*