

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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The Fourth Regular Member of the Editorial Team!

The Cheshire Mark Mason is pleased to welcome W.Bro. Jon Clipsham to the editorial team. Jon has just completed a very full year as Master of Eaton Mark Lodge 1607, and ballot permitting, will become WCN of Commemoration Lodge RAM 964 in April 2005. He served the Province of Cheshire as a Provincial Grand Steward from 2003-4.

Professionally, Jon is a Sales and Marketing Manager for a German precious metals company and has worked in this industry for 18 years. He travels internationally, providing technical marketing support to customers in the chemicals and pharmaceuticals industries. He is married with two children, and lives in Macclesfield.

Jon brings to the team his characteristic enthusiasm for freemasonry, as well as several years experience in the production of newsletters and copy writing.

The Cheshire Mark Mason

Winter Edition

January 2005

THE FRIENDLY DEGREE

You will no doubt have seen the Friendship Meeting Information Pack produced by our Deputy Provincial Grand Master. Copies of which have been sent to Secretaries of every Mark Lodge in the Province. The pack has been produced to help Mark Brethren organise Friendship Meetings in way that will maximise the opportunity to attract new members.



The guidance includes recommended groundwork, both in-lodge and for social boards, an introduction and welcome, a general overview and information regarding the Mark Charities. The first Friendship Meeting in Cheshire was held at Sale last February with the Provincial Grand Master, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and the Assistant Provincial Grand Master present. All five Mark Lodges, which meet in Sale and Altrincham, viz. Stamford 148, Wythenshawe 532, Tuscan 922, Altrincham 1024 and Haven 1543, combined forces at the meeting which was hosted by Tuscan Mark Lodge. Interested non-Mark Masons from every Lodge and Chapter which meet in Sale, Altrincham and Lymm were invited to the meeting, 11 accepted with a few others expressing interest and requesting further information about the degree.

Whilst Tuscan Lodge conducted its business for the evening, visiting brethren were met in the bar and made to feel welcome. After the Lodge had closed, all Mark brethren remained in their places in regalia and the visiting brethren, wearing craft regalia, processed into the Lodge room and were seated amongst the brethren. They were welcomed by the WM who then invited the PGM to occupy the Chair. He gave a short talk on the history and aims of the Mark Degree. The DPGM gave details of the Mark Charities and the APMG outlined the form of the Lodge and described its Officers.

Information packs were handed out giving details of the five participating Lodges and the degree. Then, after a short question and answer session, the WM thanked the Provincial Team and invited all present to the Social Board. The happy atmosphere and buzz of conversation at the Social Board was proof that Friendship had been the keynote of what had been a very successful evening.

So far, of the 11 brethren who attended the meeting, one has been advanced in Tuscan Mark Lodge and one in a Macclesfield Lodge. Also, as a result of this, another brother has been encouraged to become a Mark Mason and Stamford Mark Lodge went on to hold a Friendship Meeting in April. Stamford also had 11 visiting brethren and, to date, have had one application for advancement. More Friendship Meetings are being planned in different areas of the Province. Are you promoting the Friendly Degree in your area?

"That celestial ribbon of watered silk"

It is fanciful to suggest that prior to Noah and the deluge that not a drop of rain had fallen on the Earth and that thick wet mists deposited moisture on the ground to enable vegetational growth. However, one of our early ritual writers was a proponent of such a state of affairs and produced a lecture for the same; hence, no rainbow prior to Noah's covenant with God, and the Antediluvians had never had the opportunity to swim

The legend of an Ark after Noah was expanded into a place of safety or worship. Again in early rituals, there were allusions to Christian parallels, e.g. return of the dove with an olive branch was purported to be Christ; baptism in the waters, etc. The link of the New Testament was stated to be "the new covenant". At the conclusion of the second lecture of the old ritual a Christian allusion is "the good and faithful servants shall find rest and safety in Christ,

the True Ark". Quite clearly this was a case of "making things fit" as occurred several times in studying early ritual. Our non-Christian brethren will understand that these assertions of Christian beliefs in the events surrounding Noah could not be substantiated and had quickly to be esponded around 1845. Further, other degrees controlled by ruling bodies, under whose aegis was the R.A.M. were open to non-Christian brethren and to preclude such brethren from this degree seemed illogical.

Turning now to the history of the degree itself, as is usual the origins are lost in time. Dunckerley was aware of the Degree c.1760 in his travels to the States -alternatively, travelling Irish Constitution Military Lodges made him aware of same. In Ireland (where the degree is no longer practised at all) it existed c.1790 in an Encampment as the Noahchida degree and some 20 years later as part of Ark, Mark and Link series. In Scotland the Royal Ark Mariner Degree was worked in a Craft Lodge *by Charter* from 1840 to 1915 as a side degree. Then when the Cryptic Degree obtained it's Warrant from Illinois in 1915, by a delayed changeover, Cryptic Councils obtained their own Charter.

It is difficult to try and understand the circumstances, which prevailed and influenced ritual writers at the time, but the Jacobite rebellions were still engrained in the psyche and the Act of Sedition was impinging upon other than Craft Degrees. Grand Lodge of Scotland forbade separate working of many side degrees in 1800

Trusty Mark Masons

*Lets get a bit technical about The Cheshire Provincial Grand Lodge Mark Master Masons' Fund of Benevolence
(herein after referred to as the Mark Fund of Benevolence)*

You may have wondered about the technicalities of the Mark Fund of Benevolence. This is a Trust, which was established under Deed of Trust dated 12 March 1982 by Montacgue Albert Gilmore, George Hamson and Denis Macrae Kevan. It is registered as a Charity, numbered 512541, with the Charity Commissioners for England & Wales. The trust was established in 1982 with funds of £469.52 and over the 22 years has grown thanks to the generosity of the brethren of the Mark and RAM lodges to approximately £350,000 where it stands today. We say approximately because parts of the fund are held in quoted investments, the value of which change by the moment.

As a Trust, the Fund needs Trustees, that is where we stand in. Our powers are laid down in the original Trust Deed and our duties are spelt out in law within the Trustee Act 2000. The current Trustees are, Bro Glyn Hewitt, W.Bro John Astbury, W.Bro Paul Bullows, W.Bro Albert Cross, and W.Bro Barry Travers. We have been meeting three times a year to set and review the policies, and review the investment of funds to ensure that our objectives are met. We also advise the Committee of Benevolence of funds available for distribution on an annual basis. It is that committee which is responsible for dealing with the application forms submitted for assistance. We do however have a representation on that committee.

At this point in time, it is one of the objectives of the Fund that we only set aside for distribution to worthy causes the income which has been earned on the underlying investments in any year. The donations received from the various brethren and lodges are retained in order to grow the fund and hopefully generate further income to meet appeals received each year.

As well as ensuring that we comply with the requirements of law laid down in the Trustee Act, we also have to ensure that the Fund acts in accordance with the rules and guidelines laid down by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales. You may be aware that this body takes a much more active role these days and now has a much more detailed look at charities and their accounts to ensure that the charitable status is not being abused. We are therefore very grateful to our Provincial Grand Treasurer, Provincial Grand Registrar and Provincial Grand Secretary in keeping us on the straight and level.

THE BEGINNINGS OF SPECULATIVE MARK MASONRY IN ENGLAND AND IN CHESHIRE (Pt.2 cont from Feb 2004)

It is interesting to note that the next sentence in article 2 reads; *But this Article is not intended to prevent any Lodge or Chapter from holding a Meeting in any of the degrees of the Orders of Chivalry, according to the Constitutions of the said orders.*

From then on, it was questionable whether the Mark was a 'legal' degree. It must have seemed to the Mark Brethren that they were entering a 'Dark Era'. It was argued that as the Union recognised the Knightly orders, it must therefore acknowledge the degrees prerequisite for membership of those Knightly Orders, i.e. The Mark!

As might have been expected, the Mark did not become stagnant. It continued to be worked, although haphazardly and without any formal control, in Craft Lodges and in Royal Arch Chapters throughout England during the first half of the nineteenth century. *"The effect of the Union of 1813 on the additional degrees including the Mark, many of which had been worked under Craft warrants, was disastrous. Some continued for a few years to work the Mark clandestinely, until they wilted under the cold eye of the autocratic Grand Master at the time, the Duke of Sussex, until his death in 1843".*

It must also have been a factor, that in 1799 the Government passed "The Secret Societies Act", requiring lists of members of all lodges to be sent to the local Justice and was therefore "Public" information. Mark Lodges could not comply as to have done so would have made their working obvious to United Grand Lodge as well!

In Trevelyan Lee's book entitled "Craft Freemasonry in Derbyshire", published in 1926, we find a mention of The Lodge of Union, a Craft Lodge now numbered 268, which moved in 1828 from its meeting place in Manchester to The Devonshire Arms in Mellor, a small Cheshire village between Marple in Stockport, Cheshire and Hayfield in Derbyshire. The Lodge, despite being a "Moderns" Lodge, worked several degrees beside the Craft, including the Mark, Ark and Link. This degree is sometimes referred to as the "Link and Wrestle", which alludes to the Angel wrestling with Jacob. The Lodge minutes contain frequent references to Brethren being given the "Ark, Mark and Link". Today this Lodge meets at Ashton u Lyne in the Province of East Lancashire!

and country Lodges stopped working them for years. The Knights Templar obtained their Charter from England in 1810, for instance, and Alex Deucher became Grand Master Supreme Grand Chapter for Royal Arch was formed in 1817 and two years later there was a "divvy-up" of the degrees controlled by the Royal Arch. Opening in a Council in the early days, consisted of one knock on the pedestal with the end of the axe that wasn't the sharp bit! Whether the then degree of "Ark Mason" was the same as or similar to our R.A.M. degree history remains silent.

As a point of interest upon regalia, the rainbow aprons or sashes are a relatively new innovation. Hitherto an undressed apron was required i.e. with the wool still on the lambskin! No sceptres, no porphyry stone, no nine steps, no perambulations.

Now from our Bible we learn that Noah had three sons. Nowhere in the English ritual is there a vestige of Ham. Yet, he appears in other Constitutions, both at the corner of triangles and in the ritual "...his second son, Ham, being expelled with the curse which fell on his posterity"

It must be understood that many of the changes that have taken place in our ritual over that past 170 years or so to some extent chart the differing attitudes of the rulers of Freemasonry. In England & Wales the R.A.M. is under the superintendence of the Mark Degree, in Scotland, the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter, in U.S.A. the Grand Council of Allied Degrees. Wherever it has found a home, resting place or mooring, this Degree has found a place in the hearts of the brethren who practice it.

Know Your Cheshire Mark Festival Jewel

This series continues with the theme of Mark Festivals for the MBF held in Cheshire, following that in 1898 (see Feb 2004 edition) Cheshire held its next MBF Festival in 1929 as follows -

1929 Annual Festival

Stewards - 1,104

Chairman -

R.W.Bro.Maj.Cuthbert Leicester -Warren,

PGM Cheshire

Raised - £13,810.7s.9d



Joppa Lodge of Mark Master Masons No.11 TI

Born 23rd May 1856 in Birkenhead, and pre-dating the formation of Grand Mark Lodge by about 8 weeks, Joppa Lodge can claim a rare pedigree of having two Mother Lodges, perhaps better termed a Mother and a Step-Mother. Originally Inducted (Advanced) in 1856 by Mark Masons of the travelling Mark Lodge of Dukinfield, now known as Ashton District TI, the founding members of Joppa accepted a Warrant from the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland, after being Re-Inducted in St. Johns Mark Lodge of Bolton, just a year later in 1857. There is little doubt that Joppa No.5 (now 11TI), received invitations to accede to the two other Grand Lodges issuing warrants during that period, i.e. the new Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and from The Honourable United Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Ashton-u-Lyne District (as Ashton District TI were known at the time), but they chose to stay with Scotland, until 2nd October 1872 that is, when they agreed to transfer to the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England.

Joppa continued successfully although it went through hard times in the 1880s, often meeting with Egerton Mark Lodge No.165 to make up numbers and finally arriving at its jubilee celebrations on 7th December 1922.

Having survived both world wars, Joppa once again hit hard times in the 1950s, being very near to handing in its warrant, but thankfully, a number of zealous Mark Masons rescued it and in 1972, it celebrated its Centenary, having existed for 100 years under the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges oversees, although in reality it was 114 years old!

Joppa can boast a number of eminent Mark Masons throughout its history, not least Cheshire's first RW Provincial Grand Mark Master The Hon Wilbraham Egerton (later Earl Egerton of Tatton), Charles Matier (Grand Secretary 1889 -1914) and John Armstrong (Masonic Researcher and Author).

Joppa has also sponsored a number of Mark Lodges and is Mother to Gough Mark Lodge No.45 (Staffordshire & Shropshire) in 1861, Earl of Chester No.196 (Cheshire) in 1876 and The Wilbraham No. 523 (Lancashire) in 1900. It can also claim a first in that it sponsored a Craft Lodge, the Joppa Lodge No. 4586, whose founders were all Joppa Mark members, although a Craft Lodge of necessity was its "official" sponsor!

Nowadays, as Joppa approaches its actual 150th Anniversary, the Lodge continues to prosper and work so well for the Charities. We wish the members of Joppa Mark Lodge No.11 TI well for the next 150 years.

Notable Lodge Meetings - for your diary

Lodge RAM meetings 2005

26th Jan	Cestrian RAM	Centenary
12th Feb	Cheshire Prov Stewards Mark	Prov Banner Dedication
14th Feb	Composite Mark	Presentation of Mauls
17th Feb	Staley Mark	PGM / DPGM visit
22nd March	Macclesfield Mark	50th W.Bro.Pyatt
27th April	Mersey Mark / Weaver RAM	50th W.Bro.Shepherd

Provincial Grand Mark Meetings

2nd April 2005	Mark AGM	Chester College
TBC May 2005	Mark Masters' Dinner	Middlewich
TBC June 2005	Mark GLO Dinner	Chistleton

Brethren,

Please note the date of the Provincial AGM, whilst several summons will be sent to Lodge Secretaries individual tickets will not be sent to each Mark Master Mason.

Grand Mark Meetings

7th June 2005

Mark Investiture London

Congratulations on another good edition of "The Cheshire Mark Mason"

May I make one or two observations ? Regarding the Cheshire Mark Token (Spring Edition 2004), I was the instigator, in 1992 W.Bro.Bill Davies, Mike Stratton and I had a meeting in Chester. A design was suggested and I was appointed Secretary and Treasurer! The first batch of tokens had the incorrect design on the obverse, the delivery was rejected! (they can now be obtained in London at £8 each).

The first Lodge to order the "correct" design was Ashton TI, since then 909 tokens have been sold and I am still receiving orders. Regarding the Masonic Cipher on the front page of the issue, this is not the Thomas Dunckerley cipher, which if you have it to hand can be compared to our token. Having done so you will read 'JOPPA, KEYBRIOTH, MARKWELL with the exception of the fifth letter in KEYBRIOTH which is given as an 'A'.

W.Bro.J.Malcolm Clerc

Brethren, Malcolm can be contacted on 01565 631 721 if you would like to order stock of the Cheshire Mark Token (Editorial Team).