

Notable Dates for Your Diary

Date	Event	Venue
4th May 2017	James McKeeman 60th (Wythenshawe Lodge of MMM Mo532)	Christleton
22nd May 2017	Masters' & Commanders' Dinner	Middlewich
7th June 2017	Grand Lodge Officers' Dinner	Christleton
11th June 2017	East End Salmon Lunch	Masonic Guildhall, Stockport
13th June 2017	Mark Investiture Meeting (Freemasons' Hall)	London
17th September, 2017	West End Salmon Lunch	Ellesmere Port Masonic Hall
14th October 2017	The Provincial Festival Gala Ball	Park Royal Hotel, Warrington
20th November 2017	T. B. Wood-Griffiths 50th (Claughton Lodge of MMM No.705)	Birkenhead
12th December 2017	RAM Annual Investiture Assembly (Freemasons' Hall)	London
11th January 2018	RAM Provincial Assembly	Christleton
22nd January 2018	The Wardens' Mess	Christleton
17th March 2018	The Cheshire Mark Provincial Meeting	Ellesmere Port

Contributions

The *Cheshire Mark Mason* team are always grateful to receive information and or photographs relating to Mark events in the Province. Please contact any member of the Editorial team, details below.

MARK PROVINCE OF CHESHIRE

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DEPUTY PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

W. Bro. Austin Westbury Bamber P.D.G.Swd.Br. R.A.M.G.R.

ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

W. Bro. Ronald Glyn Hewitt P.G.J.D. R.A.M.G.R.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of
Cheshire consists of 42 Lodges of Mark Master Masons
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A NEW website has been launched as the window into the Mark Province of Cheshire at cheshiremarkmasons.org. Constructed by Tim Emery, it's a big improvement on the old one, with all the news from 2024 Festival readily available, along with access to back copies of the "Cheshire Mark Mason," and a link to Grand Mark Lodge. The information on the website will increase and improve as it develops and it will prove a great asset to the Province.



Mark Province of Cheshire

The Cheshire Mark Mason

Spring Edition

April 2017

AASH TAKES THE CHAIR



CHESHIRE VIEW
at Christleton played host to a different sort of ceremony when six-year-old Aash Ramouter-Evans was "installed" in a new state-of-the-art wheelchair thanks to the Cheshire Provincial Mark Benevolent Fund.

Our picture shows the Deputy Provincial Grand Master Austin Bamber presenting a cheque for the wheelchair to Mark and Shaieleena Ramouter-Evans, the parents of Aash, who is happily seated in his wheelchair, which is already making a remarkable difference to his life, in the foreground
•Full story on Page 2.

CPMBF MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

THE Cheshire Provincial Mark Benevolent Fund has brought some welcome sunshine into the life of Malpas youngster Aash-Jai Ramouter-Evans.

The six-year-old suffers from Diplegic Cerebral Palsy, is in constant pain, and relied on a walking/standing frame to give him slight mobility until the Fund stepped in to provide him with a state-of-the-art wheelchair that is making a remarkable change to his quality of life.

Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy, a procedure which involves cutting nerves in the spine to relieve the severe tightness in the legs, was needed but that was originally only available in America at a cost of £50,000.

The NHS started offering the procedure last year on a restricted basis and Aash was to be one of the patients, but, without warning, they sent a standard letter cancelling the arrangement, although it was still available with self-funding.

Aash's family had managed to raise £21,000 towards aftercare costs but had to contact all donors to ask if they would agree to their funding being used for the surgery instead, and the family then set about trying to raise a further £20,000 to cover the aftercare of which they have managed to obtain about £6,000 so far. To be effective the surgery had to be completed before the ninth birthday.

As an interim measure Aash had Botox injections in his legs but this was not successful.

Aash went into hospital last August for the SDR operation and remained there for a further three and a half weeks. The procedure was successful and now he has to have physiotherapy for 18-24 months before a further spinal procedure for tendon-lengthening is undertaken.

The CPMBF was originally asked to help with upgrading a walking/standing frame, without which Aash was immobile and even with the frame was in constant pain. Eventually the manufacturers supplied an ex-demonstration model in co-operation with Shocklach School.

But after long consultation with the family and medical professionals, the Fund financed the purchase of a Hoggi-Cleo Sports wheelchair, specially manufactured in Germany for Aash and it was delivered in time for Christmas.

The wheelchair is of super-light construction with a great deal of adjustment in all its parts so

it will be suitable for Aash for 6-7 years.

The benefits are already being felt and Aash is growing daily in confidence and strength. Once secured in the chair it is difficult to entice him out of it. His big smile is testament to how much he enjoys his new freedom of movement and his ambition is to be a footballer. With his enthusiasm maybe a future Olympic medallist?

An official presentation was made at Christleton in January, when he was accompanied by his parents Mark and Shaileena, brother Ethan, Raj Ramouter, Heath Shingler and Sheetal Laxshmi, Manisha Grice and Tommy Shewharak, and Anu. Representing the Mark Province of Cheshire at this happy occasion were the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Austin Bamber and his wife Gillian, the Assistant Provincial Grand Master, Glyn Hewitt and his wife Sue, together with Colin and Joyce Hambleton, CPMBF Grant Administrator Alan Smith, David and Sandra Littler, Jim and Jan Hardman, Kishore and Ann Balgobin, Barry and Denise Travers, Ken Mayer, and Brian and Beverley Rose.

Austin Bamber made the presentation to Aash and his parents on behalf of the CPMBF and Aash was happy to demonstrate both his wheelchair skills and the strong bond with his siblings.

Although only six years old and with a long list of medical procedures ahead of him, Aash is a typical boisterous lad with a winning smile and a happy disposition and it gave all those present much pleasure to watch him in action.

His father says: "Aash is loving his new wheelchair and the difference it has made is unbelievable, he is now taking part in PE in school and in school playtime, he is able to interact with all of his friends and play football and basketball."

Mark and Shaileena are well supported by family and friends but still have to work hard to provide all the extra cash needed to try and give Aash as good a life as possible.

The CPMBF is to be congratulated for all its efforts on Aash's behalf and, no doubt, there will be further need of support in the future.

●For Grant Applications or further information please contact alan@cpmbf.org or tel.

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RAM MEMBERSHIP IS UP AGAIN

OUR Royal Ark Mariner Assembly in January once again highlighted the popularity of this special degree.

Despite a nasty virus that was circulating at the time, which resulted in some apologies being tendered, there were 146 brethren in the main lodge room at Christleton to hear the address by R. W. Bro. David Sellers, the Provincial Grand Master, with 127 staying to dine at the usual lively social board this event engenders.

The highlights of the address were — "This is the third RAM Assembly I have had the privilege of presiding over and it is very rewarding for the Leaders to have your continued support in increasing numbers and with such friendliness and enthusiasm."

The Annual Royal Ark Mariner Investiture Meeting took place in London in December and M. W. Bro. Richard Wallis Pro. Grand Master presided at a very well attended meeting.

Cheshire was well represented in support of three brethren who were invested by the Pro. Grand Master - W Bros. Glyn Hewitt APM, David Heatcote and Gerald Edwards

I offer the congratulations of all of us on their appointments, they have worked hard in supporting this order and their appointment to Grand Rank is a well-deserved reward for their commitment and dedication

I am pleased to tell you that the subscribing Membership of this order has increased by six this year building on last year's improvement. As last year half our lodges elevated one or more



candidates, but the flip side of this is that the other half had no candidates.

An encouraging statistic is that only one brother was excluded, which I know is one too many, but does indicate that lodges are taking care of members and members are keen to maintain membership even when things are difficult and really value the friendship and mutual care the order offers.

In fact this has been brought home to me and my wife recently as she fell and broke her hip a few days before Christmas and is now beginning a slow recovery following surgery. The support and sympathy we have received from our Masonic friends has been amazing and shows a spirit of friendship and mutual care of which we can be justly proud.

At our last meeting soon after the appointment of our new Craft PGM Stephen Blank I informed you that he had agreed to become a Royal Ark Mariner by being Elevated into Stamford RAM lodge.

This took place at a very well attended meeting in Sale and Stephen was received into this order with much enthusiasm and celebration. I thank all who were there and helped to give him such a warm reception, which I

know he appreciated and was of great assistance in securing the strong bond which should always exist between Mark and RAM Lodges and their Craft base.

The MBF and CPMBF have always been well supported by Royal Ark Mariners in Cheshire, though I appreciate that in many cases especially where Mark and RAM lodges meet on the same night that this support is expressed through their Mark lodge.

As we launched the Cheshire Mark Benevolent Fund Festival 2024 with a dinner dance in October it was clear that your support is unstinting and that my intention of raising money for this Festival is to be fun is being fulfilled. I thank all who attended for their support and those responsible for the organization for their efficient and careful planning.

As you have heard from our Treasurer our finances are in good shape this is largely due to his careful stewardship and the very careful management of Colin Hambleton and his secretarial team. I thank them all for the time that they give and the commitment they show to the management of this Degree.

Mark Lennard is to retire as our Treasurer at the Mark AGM in March, after eleven years of service. I take this opportunity to thank him and acknowledge his work for this degree.

Finally I thank you all for your attendance today and I am sure I can rely on your continued support throughout the year, as we all enjoy our Royal Ark Masonry in 2017."

ANOTHER BUMPER TURN-OUT IS A MAJOR MARK OF RESPECT

THE popularity of the Mark Degree in Cheshire was highlighted at this year's Annual Meeting at Ellesmere Port in March.

The brethren in attendance for the meeting at the Civic Hall numbered 284 of whom 180, the maximum that could be accommodated, squeezed into the local Masonic Hall afterwards for the usual excellent lunch.

The proceedings were watched keenly by 63 distinguished guests, including 10 Provincial Grand Masters, six Deputies and nine Assistants and the leaders of other Masonic orders in Cheshire and the Provincial Grand Master's address to the assembly follows.

"BRETHREN it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Ellesmere Port and this Civic Hall, which once again has provided us with a large comfortable home for our Provincial meeting. Your enthusiasm for this Mark degree is reflected in your regular attendance with constant good numbers in support of myself and the other leaders and is of great encouragement to us.

As usual we carried out four full Team Visits during the year. In April we visited Birkenhead Mark and RAM Lodges. I trust that this will encourage those members who are not yet members of the Royal Ark Mariner Degree that to play a full part as an active officer of the Province membership of this beautiful Degree is a vital step.

In May we visited Wythenshaw Mark Lodge the first lodge in the Province to change to daylight working. It is developing well with a growing membership and together with our more recent venture into daylight meetings, Doric Lodge, is providing a useful provision of this service in the east of the Province.

In November the team visited Middlewich Mark and in February Sandbach Mark. On both these occasions we had a candidate to Advance and a good quality of work was witnessed on each occasion. The visits were spread across the Province and all were well attended by acting Officers and Grand Officers as well as members of the lodges

visited. At all we were well received and I feel it is a valuable way of building friendships and encouraging members across the Province to aspire to Acting Office.

Many other visits of a pastoral nature were undertaken by myself and my Deputy and Assistant and of particular note was a 50th Celebration for W. Bro. John Forbes. We were always well supported in all our visits the Team being well led by W. Bro. Bob Owens S.W. and W. Bro. Graham Kirby J.W. and directed on each occasion by W. Bro. Bill Caren D.C. and W. Bro. David Bradbury Deputy D.C. Unfortunately our A.D.C. W. Bro. John Johnson had to undergo serious medical treatment during the year and has not been able to take part in many events. I am very pleased to see him taking up his duties today and we trust that your recovery will continue John.

Our Director of Ceremonies Bill Caren underwent a knee replacement a couple of weeks ago and had to miss today. We wish him a speedy recovery and thank our Deputy D. C. David Bradbury for taking on the management of today's meeting.

The success of any of any Province depends in good measure on the ability and commitment of its secretarial team. We are most fortunate to have a superb team led by Colin Hambleton and supported by Brian Mayoh and Keith Gray and I take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

Membership of the Mark in Cheshire fell by 29, ie just under 3 % this year. A good part of that due to the loss of Marple Lodge which surrendered its warrant due to falling attendance. This is only the second occasion on which we have lost a lodge since the foundation of the Province in 1872. It would be preferable if this was not repeated and I do encourage any lodge which sees a similar difficulty looming to contact one of the Leaders or the secretariat before they reach the step of considering closure. All of our Lodges are of great importance to us and we are always available to provide

help and advice.

All members have received a copy of the accounts for both the Province and the Benevolent Fund and it is clear that we are enjoying a healthy financial position allowing a 25p reduction in the fees for both Mark and RAM. A careful management of the provincial spending by the secretariat and treasurer are deserving of our grateful thanks and appreciation.

W Bro. Mark Lennard steps down today from the office of Treasurer after eleven years of service. Unfortunately he is away with his family today and sends his apologies but in his absence I thank him for his years of service to this Province. We welcome his replacement Bro. David Meacher Jones of Cestrian Lodge, I am sure we shall see a smooth transition of responsibility in this change and I wish David well in his new office.

The Cheshire Provincial Mark Benevolent Fund is very carefully managed by the Trustees and their advisers. The dividends received from that investment together with member's donations and fund raising at our salmon lunches and Mark weekends enabled us to donate to worthy causes in Cheshire, individual petitions and Mark Benevolent Fund Festivals including our own 2024 Cheshire Festival. These together allowed us to donate £34,520 to these causes in the last year.

The Cheshire 2024 Festival for the MBF was launched with a black tie Ball at the Park Royal Hotel Stretton on the 8th October last year under the Chairmanship of W. Bro. Bob McMillan and his Deputy W. Bro. David Heathcote. The evening was a great success with a good meal and a fine raffle. I thank all who supported the evening and made such generous donations to the raffle and the purchases of tickets. My thanks also go to the Ball Committee and the coordinators W. Bros. Hall, Waddell, Jones and W. Bro. Flood and their wives for organizing such a successful event.

It was also the time when we launched the Mark Festival Tie for those of you who missed out there is the chance to purchase the new tie here today, other items to support our Festival will become available in due time. We look forward to a similar Black Tie event at the same venue on 14th October this year. Please place the date in your diary brethren I look forward to your support.

We should acknowledge those who were honored with Grand Rank last June they are :- V. W. Bro. Bruce Harry re appointed Grand Chaplain; first appointment W. Brothers Keith Goulden and Graham Taylor P.A.G.D.C., W. Bro. Robert Hamilton-Taylor P.G.St.B., W. Bro. John Cavanagh Grand Steward; promotions V. W. Bro. Alan Glazier P.G.J.O. W. Bro. Bill Caren P.G.J.D., W. Bro. Bob Hall P.A.G.D.C. We congratulate them and trust they are enjoying their new ranks.

The Quarterly Communication was held on 7th March and although not a large gathering some important news was communicated. The Grand Master Prince Michel was proposed for a 36th year in Office. The Pro Grand Master M. W. Bro. Richard Wallis announced he was to retire in June. The Deputy R. W. Bro. Raymond Smith will replace him. The Assistant Grand Master R. W. Bro. John Prizeman will become Deputy and the new Assistant will be R. W. Bro. Stephen Davidson P.G.M. of Leicester and Rutland. We offer our hearty good wishes and congratulations to these worthy brethren, which together with a new Grand Sec. and Grand D.C., will make for a very busy June meeting. It may well be an early start and a very popular event.

It was also announced at this Communication that the M.B.F. are to re-equip the St John Ambulance Service with 52 new ambulances and support vehicles at a cost of £3m. The first of these ambulances will be placed in the Province of East Lancashire and the first support vehicle will be placed in Cheshire. They will be handed over at a ceremony conducted by Prince Michel in London on 17th July at which I and my colleague R. W. Bro. Alex McLaren have been invited to attend together with our wives, an event which we will all look forward to.

I will shortly have the pleasure of investing those who I have appointed to Provincial or Past Provincial Grand Rank this year and this will bring to an end the term of office for our present acting officers. We concluded their year with a dinner last week when the events of the year were recalled once again.

I am sure the new team will enjoy their year just as much as the retiring team has done and I encourage them all to visit as much as they are able."

The new Wardens settle into their chairs

THE Provincial Grand Master appointed the new Provincial team for the year at Ellesmere Port in March and Steve Simpson proudly took his chair as the Senior Warden.

Originally an Essex Freemason – he joined Harmony Lodge aged 21 when his father, who was the junior deacon, led him round at his initiation – he was forced to take a two-year break from Masonry when work took him to Saudi Arabia in 1987, where he met his wife of 30 years, Jane.

He became a joining member of Massada Craft Lodge No.8130 at Clay Lane in 1992, becoming Master in 1997 and three years later entered Mark Masonry in East Lancs, being Advanced into Canon Taylor Lodge.

Steve moved into Cheshire when he became the founding Senior Warden of Massada Mark Lodge No.1855 in 2004 and went on to become the DC of the lodge until he took over the secretarial duties this year.

He is also a member of the Royal Ark Mariner degree, having been Elevated into Lancastrians RAM No.680 in 2003.

Our new Junior Warden, Derek Walsh, also started his Masonic career in another Province, having been Initiated into Baildon Lodge No.1545 in Yorkshire West Riding in November 1999. He was Worshipful Master of that lodge in 2004 and went on to become a founder member of Aequitas Lodge No.9832 three years later.

He also began his association with the Mark Degree on the other side of the Pennines, being Advanced into Integrity Lodge No.110 in Wakefield in January 2001 and taking the Chair in 2008.

He became a Cheshire Mark Mason in 2012 – the year he was promoted to Provincial Grand Steward in West Yorkshire – when he became a joining member of Deeside Lodge No.795 in New Brighton and, in what was proving a busy year for him, was Elevated into the Royal Ark Mariner degree in Sincerity Lodge No.327 at New Brighton.

He progressed in Deeside to become its Worshipful Master in 2013 and was Worshipful Commander of Sincerity in 2016.

THE Mark “fisherman” in the east of the Province will be trawling in fresh waters this year, with their salmon lunch moving to a new venue. It has been held at Manchester Rugby Club for a number of years, but the committee, headed by Keith Goulden, took the decision to switch to the Guildhall at Stockport to try and maximise the event’s potential as a fund-raiser towards the 2024 Festival and to take the opportunity to support one of the local Masonic halls.

The date is Sunday, June

Fresh waters

11, starting at midday and running until 2pm, and tickets cost just £12.50 for an excellent buffet lunch and a glass of wine or a soft drink. Howard Waddell (0161 612 5130), John Goldsmith (0161 456 5086) or Barry Goulden (0161 483 0449) are the contacts for tickets. They would also be grateful for donations from Lodges to help defray costs and raffle prizes on the day would also be very welcome. Graham Kyffin and his West

End Social Committee are also busy out in the west summoning support for their salmon lunch, which will take place at the Orchard Suite at Ellesmere Port Masonic Hall on Sunday, September 17, again the timing is midday to 2pm, and tickets are £12 each for a first class buffet lunch. Graham can be contacted at graham.kyffin@yahoo.com. He would also be grateful for any donations from Lodges towards the cost of the event and raffle prizes from brethren.

Cheshire 2024 Festival news

THE Cheshire 2024 Festival in support of the Mark Benevolent Fund has made a strong start and the committee, headed up by Chairman Bob McMillan and his deputy David Heathcote, are working hard to build on that.

Their attention is already focused on the Festival Ball, which will take place at the Park Royal Hotel, Stretton

on Saturday, October 14.

Last year’s inaugural event at the same venue proved a big success and another large attendance is anticipated, so apply early when application forms are sent out to avoid disappointment.

The new Provincial Festival ties are proving popular and the committee have

come up with

some accessories to go with them in a matching set of cufflinks and tie pin at a cost of £15.

There is also a polo shirt (£10) displaying the Festival logo, while sets of five postcards (£5) showing the jewels of past Festivals are available, and a special 2024 Mark token will be added to that list very soon.



THERE was a very special and unusual occasion at Namptwyche Mark Lodge No. 1206 on Monday 3rd April when the Worshipful Master, Michael Holmes allowed W. Bro. Ian Muirhead, Past Provincial Grand Steward, to occupy the Master’s Chair and Advance his father, Bro. Peter Muirhead, into Mark Masonry in his own Mark Lodge, in what was yet another encouraging step forward for this lodge.

It was an extremely proud moment for both and was well received by the members. The Ceremony, which was very moving, was excellently overseen by the D.C. W. Bro. Peter Sandland.

HAPPY AS GARY!

THE Investiture Meeting of Grand Mark Lodge on Tuesday, June 13 will be a very special occasion for the Province of Cheshire.

This year we have two brethren who will be stepping up to receive the prestigious rank of acting Grand Steward and they are W. Bros. Harry Crook and Gary Horstman, appointments that will be well received throughout the province.

Graham Monaghan and Peter Sandland, who served Cheshire as Senior and Junior Warden respectively in 2014, will also be joining the ranks of Grand Lodge Officers, with both becoming P.A.G.D.C., while Brian Williams is to be made P.G.Std.Br.

The V. W. Rev. Bruce Harry will again be re-appointed as the Grand Chaplain, while the Deputy Provincial Grand Master W. Bro. Austin Bamber is to be promoted to P.G.J.O.

W. Bro. David Bradbury, the Deputy Provincial D.C. is also on the promotions list, moving up to P.G.J.D., while others attaining the same rank will be W. Bros. Paul Crudge, Brian Mayoh, Geoff Roberts and Nicholas Wild and J. Chris Welton, who enjoys his Mark Masonry in East Lancs as well as Cheshire, will receive the same honour.