

## Keeping up to date

OWING to current uncertainty about when Lodges can meet and under what circumstances, the diary of notable dates has been omitted from this Newsletter. Brethren are advised to consult with secretaries of Lodges they would like to visit in advance to ascertain the latest information.

Subject to restrictions being lifted the RAM Grand Rank investiture meeting at Freemasons' Hall in London is scheduled for Tuesday, December 8, 2020; the Cheshire RAM Assembly is on Thursday, January 14, 2021 and the Acting Officers Dinner on Monday, March 1, both at Christleton; the AGM of the Mark Province of Cheshire at Ellesmere Port on Saturday, March 20; the Grand Officers Dinner at Christleton on Wednesday, June 2 and the Investiture meeting of Grand Mark Lodge (first appointments) will take place at Freemasons' Hall in London on Tuesday, June 8.

## It's extra time for Provincial Team

IT has been a strange time for everyone for the past eight months but, as far as Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Freemasonry is concerned, the 2020/21 Provincial Team has suffered more than most.

Not only was there no Provincial Meeting where they would have been invested with due pomp and ceremony, but with Masonic activity almost at a standstill since March they have been kicking their heels at home instead of visiting Lodges the length and breadth of Cheshire, making new friendships and firming up old ones.

But there is now some excellent news for the Team as it has now been decided that all of them will be offered the opportunity to stay in office for another year – 2021/2022 - to make up for their disappointment.

That is particularly good news for the Provincial Wardens, Stuart Jones and Walter Grundy, for those offices are very special ones and to wear those collars carries an equal amount of enjoyment as well as responsibility.

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The Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Cheshire consists of 41 Lodges of Mark Master Masons and 24 Lodges of Royal Ark Mariners

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Mark Province of Cheshire

# The Cheshire Mark Mason

Autumn Edition

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## STAYING IN TOUCH

AS I look over the last Newsletter, produced in April with a fine photo of The Assistant Grand Master and the Leaders of the Province at the Centenary of Claughton Mark Lodge, little did we realize that this was the last time we would meet together in many months.

Preparations were in place for our Mark Provincial Meeting in March but it was one of the first meetings to be cancelled due to coronavirus.

I am sure those of you due to be appointed or promoted were very disappointed not to have your special day and I was just as sad that I was unable to invest you with your new rank in the usual way.

Nevertheless I congratulate you and I hope you will enjoy your new positions which are well deserved.

The Grand Investiture Meeting which normally takes place in June together with the Quarterly meetings of March and September also fell victim to the lockdown and again disappointment to those who were to receive or be promoted in Grand Rank from Cheshire.

All their Ranks were active from the date of the cancelled meetings in June and September but I am sure they were most disappointed to miss



out on what should have been a highlight day in their masonic careers.

For the record the following were the recipients:- Re-appointment Rev Bruce Harry Grand Chaplain. First Appointment:- Dr Anthony Mathie Grand Steward, Steve Simpson and Derek Walsh PAGDC. Promotions:- John Lightfoot PGJO, Albert Cross PGSD, Gary Horstman and Harry Crook. PGJD,

Grand Mark Lodge has been working hard to make it possible for the process of deferring meetings and where needed abandoning meetings without affecting a lodges status of continuous meeting.

Whilst many Masonic Halls have not found it possible to make their premises virus secure and are therefore closed other larger halls have been able to satisfy Government

requirements and are able to open but with only six members including a Tyler, social distancing and a face covering and no meal, I find it difficult to encourage members to meet under these conditions.

Many lodges and their members have found Zoom a good way of keeping in touch via the internet as well as the old telephone.

During this time we may not meet face to face but we do need to keep in touch and maintain friendship and fellowship with all our friends and brethren.

The Mark Provincial Grand Masters all over the Country and some from overseas join in a zoom meeting at 10am every other Thursday. This allows us to exchange ideas and find out how other Provinces are dealing with the restrictions.

At the moment we have around 50 PGMs joining in each time plus one of the National Leaders and the Grand Secretary who keep us up to date on their thinking.

I trust that you and you families have kept fit and well in these difficult times and that the future will be one in which we can look forward to enjoying our Mark and RAM meetings as we once did.

**Mark Well**

**David R Sellers**

**Provincial Grand Master**

# We must maintain Festival drive

SHORTLY before lockdown Frazer McCord and Morag, at the request of the Provincial Grand Master, ran a Burns night at Christleton, which received great support from across the province.

Bookings were managed by Mike and Diane Jones, who ensured that the attendance was more than 100 people, and Frazer himself performed his favourite Tam O'Shanter to the delight of his transfixed audience, while Harry Fynn addressed the Haggis with aplomb, without the aid of the microphone!

The stars of the show however were undoubtedly Eric and Liz McConnell who entertained with Eric putting down the ladies (in the best possible taste of course) and Liz answering back. The opinion in the room.... Liz and the Ladies won by a knockout.

The beneficiary of the event was the Mark Benevolent Fund and it started off the year of fundraising with a bang, we were all looking forward to the rest of the year and all our events with anticipation.

Unfortunately Covid-19 came along and put a halt to our merriment, cancellation of the Mark Weekend Away and both salmon lunches followed, along with cancellation of the Masters and Commanders Dinner and the Charity Stewards and Almoners dinner.

Typically Mark Masons continued to have fun with Stephen Flood raising substantial funds with his Lockdown haircut Challenge and Ken and Shirley Davies selling bookmarks for £10.00 each.

Debra Conroy started making



**PETER WRIGHT eat your heart out.**

**The PDC World Champion is very proud of the eccentric hairstyles and head painting that he appears on darts stages with, but the Mark Province of Cheshire has come up with a serious rival in Stephen Flood.**

**The effervescent Deputy Chairman of our Mark Benevolent Fund 2024 Festival remained his usual livewire self during lockdown, coming up with a wide variety of rather sensational coiffures, including the one pictured above, to make him a serious contender.**

**And Stephen managed to tie his hair-raising efforts into an excellent fund-raiser for the Festival, raising a magnificent £1,500 from sponsorship.**

Facemasks in the UGLE tie material.

Many brethren asked for their dinning fees from the various cancelled events to be donated to the Festival.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, recently announced a tightening of the lockdown measures across the country and warned that we would be facing difficulties for some time to come.

Only 6 people maximum can now attend masonic meetings, meaning many are having to be abandoned due to not being quorate or because of additional restrictions imposed in certain areas.

Some of our brethren are now facing hardship and loss of employment as businesses face an uncertain future and if you are in that position the Masonic Charitable institutions are there to help you all.

Fewer meetings means no money being deposited on charity plates and no cheques being sent off at Installations, our Festival efforts are stalling and there is now less than 4 years to go until our event in 2024.

The charities need our support, those of us that find ourselves saving money from the lack of masonic activity, not going to meetings or paying for meals are needed now more than ever to show our commitment.

If you are one of the more fortunate, please consider a one off donation or a regular giving amount to bolster our festival efforts. In doing so you will, I am sure, earn the gratitude of all those in need, who the Masonic charities so magnificently look after.

Your 2024 Festival Committee thank you all for your tremendous support to date and in advance for your continued commitment to the cause.

# Middlewich make their Mark

**NO, it's not a reunion of Butch Cassidy's Hole in the Wall Gang ... it's a small group of intrepid Cheshire Freemasons who kick started the return of Mark Masonry in the best traditions of the "friendly degree" on September 28.**

**Middlewich Mark Lodge No.902 held the first Mark meeting in the Province of Cheshire since Claughton Mark Lodge No.705 celebrated its centenary on March 16 when six brethren gathered at Kinderton Street to hold their regular meeting in somewhat irregular circumstances.**

**Carefully respecting the covid 19 restrictions in place in Middlewich at that time six members conducted a strictly business meeting, but it was good to be back.**

**Lodge secretary Colin Hambleton commented: "It was a very different meeting with social distancing and the wearing of masks, but it was enjoyed by the six present, covering respect for departed merit, approval of minutes, and the general administration of the Lodge. A socially distanced meal completed a good evening."**



**The six brethren who attended the event are pictured above - back row, V. W. Bro Bill Chalmers, W. Bro Kevin Atherton, W. Bro David Hinde; front row Bro. Peter Mayhew, W. Bro Colin Hambleton and Bro. Mike Potter.**

# New dates for the Weekend Away

BRETHREN, as you may be aware this is the time of year when we begin to promote the Mark Weekend Away, the Mark Province of Cheshire's premiere social gathering, an event which offers us all a chance to meet up with friends to enjoy that which is so prized and has become synonymous with the Mark Degree "friendship".

Unfortunately we find ourselves in uncertain times and our Provincial Grand Master, in conjunction with his executive, having taken into consideration the current health

guidelines issued by Government, the views of the Social Committee led by V. W. Bro. Glyn Hewitt and the age profile of our membership, has decided to postpone.

Whilst we know that many of you will be disappointed, we hope that you understand that this decision was not taken lightly but the overwhelming thought that kept coming to the fore is that the Mark Weekend Away is a celebration for the Province of Cheshire and its members which should only be resumed when it is SAFE for ALL our members to attend.

**We can therefore announce that the new dates for the Mark Weekend Away are 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> April 2022, with the usual option to extend.**

W. Bro. Stephen Flood, with the agreement and co-operation of the Cumbria Grand Hotel management, has arranged for our deposit to be held over to April 2022.

We believe that this date offers us the best possible chance to celebrate that which we hold so dearly; our friendships and our Mark Masonry.