



A Christmas Message from our Provincial Grand Master



Welcome to the 45th edition of the Surrey Keystone. As we move towards the end of the year, it is a time to reflect, to look to the future and to continue to build our beautiful Order in Surrey. Looking back myself, I am reminded of how important the Lodge Almoner's office is in all of our Lodges by staying in contact with the members of their respective Lodges. To not only offer support and assistance when needed, but also staying in touch with each other.

During Covid our message was that "It's good to talk" and I believe that will always be the case, there is nothing nicer than receiving a friendly call just for a catch up, which is always well received and appreciated. I also believe that we are all Almoners, and this is not just one person's responsibility so let's please make this a to do task for all of us in New Year, and as we are a happy and friendly Order please continue to spread the "Magic of the Mark" with passion!

Whilst some Lodges have struggled, many have thrived bringing in new candidates and enhancing the enjoyment of our wonderful order. Everyone is encouraged to look within their Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters for Brethren that they think would enjoy our Order. Tell them of the lessons that our Order teaches and the warm welcome that awaits all new members.

How many times have heard newly advanced members say, "I wish I had joined earlier". With a New Year fast approaching now is the time to be thinking about those Craft Masons and Companions in your Lodges and Chapters that enjoy their Freemasonry and may consider the Mark degree.

Whilst we are all looking forward to Xmas and being able to spend precious time in the warmth and comfort of our own families and being appreciative of the good fortune we have, let us also spare a thought for those less fortunate than ourselves and offer our prayers of support and hope for a brighter and more peaceful time ahead for one and all.

Finally, I wish you and all your families a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and Good Health and Happiness in 2024.

Kindest regards

John

Royal Ark Mariner Annual Assembly

The Annual Assembly of Royal Ark Mariner was held at Freemason's Hall on Monday the 11th of December 2023 with M.W.Bro. His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, GCVO, presiding.



In keeping with tradition, the Surrey Brethren met up at the Shakespeare's Head in Holborn for refreshments before the meeting.



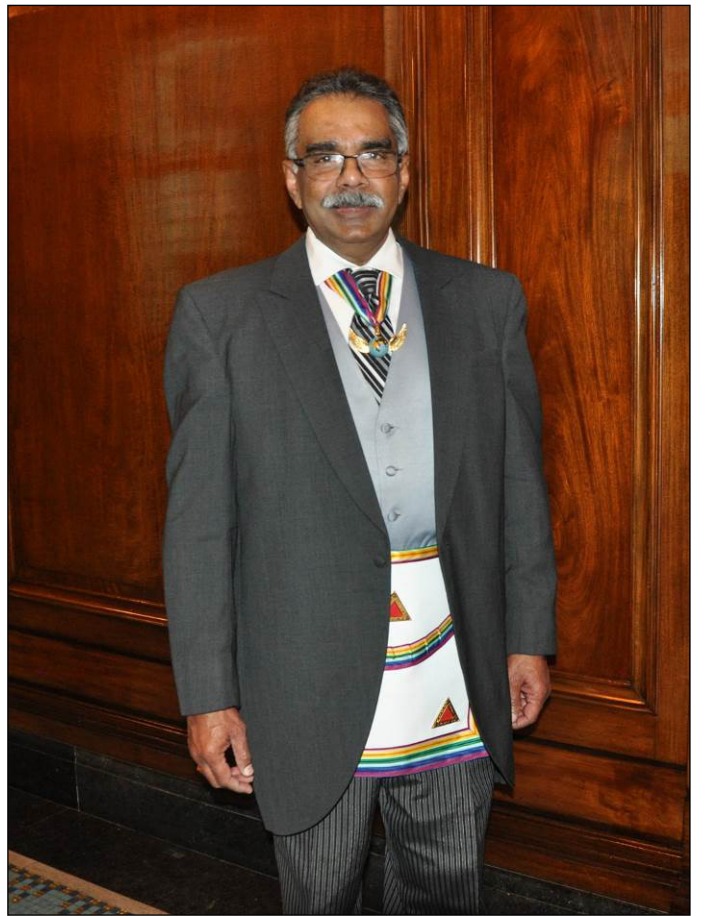
There is always a festive feel to December's Royal Ark Mariner Annual Assembly and Monday was no exception.



The full Grand Temple at Freemasons Hall looked spectacular with the Brethren resplendent in their rainbow trimmed regalia.

And the presence of M.W.Bro. HRH Prince Michael of Kent, GCVO, Grand Master, served to enhance the special nature of the meeting.





There were many Brethren visiting from foreign constitutions and Districts overseas.







Following the opening business, the Most Worshipful Grand Master spoke of the important links between Craft and Royal Arch Freemasonry and the Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Degrees, as well as the other Companion Orders of Freemasonry, and highlighted the present collaboration being enjoyed between Freemasons' Hall and Mark Masons' Hall.

In recognition of this, and his services to Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Freemasonry, the Most Worshipful Grand Master announced that he was appointing R.W.Bro. Jonathan Spence, Pro Grand Master of the Craft, to the Rank of Grand Master's Royal Ark Council (Honoris Causa).



This was warmly received by the Brethren in attendance who applauded as R.W.Bro. Spence was escorted to be invested.

Then came the appointment of 115 Brethren to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank and those present were invested. These included three Surrey Brethren, W.Bro. David Clark, W.Bro. Michael Clay, and W.Bro. Mark Guzam.



The Most Worshipful Grand Master then addressed the meeting, welcoming everyone and speaking of new beginnings and how important it is to see an appointment such as Grand Rank in this Order as the start of a new passage in one's Masonic journey.



He also spoke of how each of us has a responsibility of stewardship to the Order and asked for a collective renewal of commitment to the Degree.

He then went on to pick out many of the charitable highlights of the year achieved by the MBF and the generosity of the Brethren towards the fund.

The Grand Master then called on R.W.Bro. Richard Gan, P.Prov.G.M. for Middlesex, to give a short but very interesting talk on the celebration of it being 150 Years since the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner was taken under the protection the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons.

Lastly, the Grand Master welcomed the many Brethren visiting from foreign constitutions and Districts overseas, before thanking the Grand Secretary and M.M.H. staff, and the G.D.C. and his team, for their efforts in arranging

the day's meeting.

He closed by wishing everyone a happy Christmas and New Year, wishing us the very best in our endeavours to further the traditions of this beautiful Order in 2024.





The Brethren then retired for refreshments.



Many taking the opportunity to join the dining in the Grand Connaught Rooms, where they were pleased to drink the health of the Most Worshipful Grand Master in his presence and enjoy his response to his toast.



Photos by Bob Tuthill and Chris Eley

The Installation Meeting of Croydon Mark Lodge

The Installation meeting of Croydon Lodge of Mark Master Masons No 198 was held on Thursday the 16th of November at the Croydon Masonic Hall.



The Lodge was opened by the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Bob Russell, who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

W.Bro. Tim Ford, P.G.J.D., Assistant Provincial Grand Master was saluted with five under the direction of V.W.Bro. Chris Eley, P.G.J.O. Past Assistant Provincial Grand Master, an honorary member of the Lodge. W.Bro. Tim responded accordingly.



The main item on the agenda was to install Bro. Sam Norman as Worshipful Master. This was conducted by the Worshipful Master, with the assistance of W.Bro. Tim Ford who demonstrated the signs.

V.W.Bro. Chris gave the Address to the Master and the Address to the Brethren.

As this 'upside down' Lodge dines before the meeting the Tyler's Toast was given at the end of the meeting after the Lodge was closed.



A donation to The Therapy Garden



On the first sunny day for quite some time, R.W.Bro. Ian Clark, Past Provincial Grand Master, and W.Bro. Bill Barr, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, visited The Therapy Garden at Normandy, near Guildford. The Garden had been the recipient of funds in the sum of £1363 from the MBF to purchase a water boiler, microwave, and oven, to upgrade their kitchen equipment.



We were shown round the Garden by Sally Wooding, their Fund Raiser at the same time as an Ofsted inspection was being undertaken. As one can imagine, everyone was on their best behaviour. The garden receives referrals from schools and GPs for clients of all ages for therapeutic treatment or vocational training. Within the two-acre space, clients have their own small plot to grow whatever they wish and undertake a multitude of communal activities.

The garden has had great success in returning often wayward school pupils back into mainstream education with the benefit of vocational qualifications obtained there and many elderly clients, following strokes or suffering from dementia have seen the quality of their lives enhanced.



Ian and I were treated to a cup of coffee made with the water boiler the MBF donation had made possible. As we were informed, apart from having boiling water on tap, the unit saves energy and the potential injuries which could have been caused by up to eight kettles being boiled simultaneously.

Comites Sigillorum Mark Lodge



On the 7th of November at the Comites Sigillorum Meeting our Worshipful Master John French, Provincial Grand Master, Advanced Bro. Neill Jones.

R.W.Bro. John was ably assisted by W.Bro. Tim Ford Assistant Provincial Grand Master as Senior Warden; W.Bro. Roger Chapman as Junior Warden; and W.Bro. Martin Fowler as Senior Deacon.



W.Bro. Tim Ford then presented Bro. Gavin Durbin with his Mark Grand Lodge Certificate.

It was a great meeting, and we look forward to our next Meeting on the 6th of February when we have an installation, and another Candidate for Advancement.

Article and photos by Ray Beadle





My visit to Malta



France is the largest EU country and Malta the smallest. Population is 542,051..... PLUS, ONE! October 19th 1966 Dr Carmelo Caruana, Minister of Works, switches on Malta's first traffic lights at 7.30 p.m. at Msida. And there are FIVE roundabouts...although some say that the Maltese drive in the shade!!!! What is this all about?



It all started on the 22nd of September 2022 with an email from me asking to become a citizen of the George Cross Isle. The award was from King George VI on April 15th, 1942. Some one hundred and fifty emails later and several phone calls, I was successful.

The journey, no the road, was so interesting. It had plenty of twists and turns ... no traffic lights. I dealt with the High Commission in London and settled on the Maltese Passport Office. All departments were filled with helpful people and I was often on first names with several of them. They were there to help me wade through the morass of rules and regulations. My first task was to gain citizenship which was achieved on the 23rd January this year. I met Tim at a meeting around that time who asked how things were going so I briefly told him what I was doing and he said WHY? My response was that I wanted the associated heritage and both my daughter and grandchildren wanted to do the same thing. Without me getting there, their attempts would have been almost impossible. This kind soul of South American descent smiled and said he should look into it for his family.



I had to delve into family history on my Maltese side as far back as my great grandparents, obtain birth, marriage and death certificates and even researched my dad's R.A.F. service during world War II. He served in what was then Rhodesia and stationed at some time at R.A.F. Weeton, Blackpool, where I was at school in his later life. I had to change my name and lose my baptismal name to conform to my birth certificate.

That meant a new UK passport. At the end of it all, I had some seventeen very interesting and informative pieces of documentation. I had the time and it was quite fascinating.



I gained my citizenship and then it was the passport. I started with the High Commission in London, who were very helpful and, it would appear, very busy. They offered me an appointment for January 15th 2024. I decided to try Malta Identita, the government department in Malta. Barrie Selway and I had visited Malta in May of this year and actually found the U.G.L.E. Freemasonry HQ. We attended three meetings. That spurred me on to asking about Maltese Freemasonry and we soon met the appropriate men. Malta has its own Sovereign Grand Lodge of Malta.

I decided to visit Malta in November this year. The plan was to fly in to Malta on the 26th, get my passport on the next day, a Monday morning, spend the afternoon visiting the famed Caravaggio in the cathedral in Valletta and I would join Count Roger of Normandy Lodge Number III in the evening, flying back on the Tuesday. And we did.

When I say we, David and Trevor accompanied myself and Barrie. It was very rewarding to have my good Mark friends with me, especially as when it came to my joining the meeting I was asked if I would stand in as chaplain with smiles all round from my three buddies.

It was a tightly organised visit with a couple of possible potholes to overcome. All made all the more easy with my three good friends and the kind assistance of employees from the Malta Identita.

We stayed in a lovely hotel, enjoyed great food and met some very welcoming Freemasons.....oh and I got my passport. Now for my Maltese Identity Card, and a request to alter a Masonic regulation!!!!

Article and photos by Michael Fenech

One More Swimathon!



Join us for one more Swimathon at Guildford Spectrum Pool, GU1 1UP Sunday 11th of February 2024

Meet at 10.30am for swim at 11am.

Last year we raised funds for the Sutton Food Bank, run by Nige Feltham, and Swishes, a Charity run by the wife of W.Bro. Garry Lewis to promote and distribute free emergency toiletry packs via NHS hospitals and clinics to patients and their carers.



We recently received a nice letter from Swishes thanking us for our support and letting us know what they have been up to in 2023. Our donation allowed them to order many of their non dated products in greater number and increase the quality of products in their packs.

The hand and body lotions, soaps and toothbrushes are all now greener options which help the environment, as are the pant liners which use organic cotton. They now supply tissues with built in balsam, helping the patient or carer to have a better experience when using a Swishes pack. The bulk purchasing has meant that even in times of rising prices, they have been able to continue to produce the (better quality) packs at a continuing cost of approximately £1.00 per pack.

They wish us all a merry Christmas, with festive cheer over the coming season and a healthy and Happy New Year.

News from the Lodges



Kintore Lodge No 333 met to Proclaim W. Bro Rob Downing as Worshipful Master.

After appointing his Officers, the Lodge had a discussion about how we move forward. There are several Candidates in the pipeline, and we are resurrecting our LOIs at Croydon.

The dates will be published if any other brother wishes to attend. Hopefully we can raise the current standards of Ceremonials and give them some 'Theatre' to enhance the newly Advanced Brethren's experience.

The Kintorians are on the March!



An enjoyable meeting of Croham Hurst Mark and Craft Lodges at the Golf Club.

We welcomed a joining member while the Craft Lodge welcomed a joining member and an Initiate.

This is the meeting where the Croham Hurst Lodge of Mark Master Masons meet first, then change and join in the Croham Hurst Craft Lodge meeting followed by a joint Festive Board.

Several of the Mark Lodge members were pleased to assist in the Initiation ceremony.

If you get a chance to visit, please do so. You will not be disappointed.

Surrey Mark Masons'
**Burns Night
Charity Dinner**
At Guildford Masonic Centre, Weybourne House, Hitherbury Close,
Guildford, Surrey, GU2 4DR on Saturday 27th January 2024.

SUPPORTED BY THE
ROYAL ORDER OF SCOTLAND

MENU
Haggis, Tatties and Neeps, with Whisky
Roast Beef, with the trimmings
Cranachan (Cream, oatmeal, whisky, raspberries)

Pipers, Procession and Addressing the Haggis, plus Burns Toasts
Dining: 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm.

Dress Code: Highland, Dinner Jacket or Lounge Suit.
Ladies Posh Frocks - anything in the Scottish theme appreciated.

Cost: £39 per person.
Open to the Ladies, Friends and Family, Non Masons.

BACs payments to: Provincial Grand Mark Lodge of Surrey Benevolent Fund.
Sort Code: 30-93-74 Acc No. 68234860. Use "BURNS" followed by Surname as reference.
Cheques payable to: Provincial Grand Mark Lodge of Surrey Benevolent Fund,
send to: John Coleman
29 Glaziers Lane,
Guildford, Surrey GU3 2DE.
Further details from: john.l.coleman@btinternet.com Tel: 07879408187
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