



Royal Ark Mariner Annual Assembly



The Annual Assembly of Royal Ark Mariners was held at Freemason's Hall on Monday the 8th of December 2025 with Right Worshipful Brother Denovan Wilson, Deputy Grand Master, 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.

Following the opening business, the Presiding Officer, Right Worshipful Brother Denovan Wilson, Deputy Grand Master, invested 135 Brethren to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank.

We were delighted that the Most Worshipful Grand Master had been pleased to Appoint the following Surrey Brethren to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank in the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners.

W. Bro Roy Baker

W. Bro Darren Mantell

W. Bro Gary Raggett

W. Bro Michael Howarth (through Essex)

Our personal congratulations go to all of them.



The Presiding Officer then addressed the meeting, welcoming 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 2026.

The Brethren then retired for refreshments.



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



The Surrey Brethren had a most enjoyable meal together with the recipients of Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank in the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners.



V.W.Bro. Arnold Long, P.G.J.O

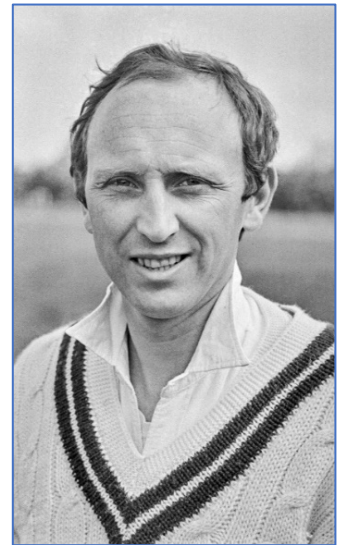


It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Very Worshipful Brother Arnold Long, our Past Assistant Provincial Grand Master, on the 1st of January 2026. Arnold, a retired Company Director, was born on the 18th of December 1940 in Cheam.

Arnold, affectionally known as "Ob", was well known as a former cricketer. A wicket-keeper and left-handed batsman, Arnold claimed 1046 victims from his 452 games over a 20-year career. He played for Surrey CCC as wicketkeeper in the first team from 1962 until 1975.

Over that period, they won the Benson and Hedges Cup in 1974, the County Championship in 1971, and in 1964 at Hove versus Sussex Arnold caught eleven batsmen in the two innings. This was then a world record but has been equalled twice since then.

Arnold was then invited to join Sussex in 1976 for the twilight of his cricketing career, and what 5 years it was. Tony Greig was Captain, but in 1978 he was sacked by Sussex because of his involvement in the Packer affair and Arnold was asked to take over. They had a disappointing start to the season but eventually in September won the Gillette Cup, beating Somerset by 5 wickets.



Arnold joined Coulsdon Lodge of Perseverance in 1970 at the insistence of his godfather and uncle who were both Freemasons.

Just prior to going in the chair in 1986 Arnold joined the Royal Arch, quickly followed by Mark, Royal Ark Mariner, Rose Croix and Knights Templar and, in the 1990's, many other Orders. Over the years Arnold said that he had been very lucky with the various ranks and jobs he has received in Freemasonry, but in particular some were very special and most enjoyable.

Grand Rank in both Craft and Royal Arch; Assistant Provincial Grand Master in the Mark between 2004 and 2009; Grand Visitor in the OSM in 2014, Deputy Grand Marshal in the Red Cross of Constantine for two years; District Grand Master of the Order of Royal and Select Masters between 2005 and 2013, and Provincial Grand Summus for the Province of Surrey in the Scarlet Cord from 2020 to 2024.

V.W.Bro. Arnold was Advanced into Coulsdon Lodge of Mark Master Masons in 1987 and Installed as Worshipful Master in 1992. He was Elevated into Coulsdon Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners in 1988 and Installed as Worshipful Commander in 1993. He received many Provincial Ranks and was our Assistant Provincial Grand Master from 2004 to 2009. He received his Royal



Ark Mariner Grand Rank in 2002 and was promoted to Past Grand Junior Overseer in 2010.

Arnold supported many charity initiatives. Just after he was installed as the Provincial Grand Summus in the Order of the Scarlet Cord by the Grand Summus he joined Wally Maynard, and me in completing the Scarlet Cord Alzheimer's Challenge organised by R.Dist.Comp. Phil Clare, the Provincial Grand Summus for Kent.

Looking back, this was especially poignant as Arnold went on to develop Alzheimer's a few years later. He was very open and stoic about it and it did not stop him going to meetings, which he was able to do with the assistance of many of his Masonic friends.

Sadly, Arnold's health deteriorated rapidly necessitating a stay in hospital mid-December, coming out just before Christmas, It was a blessing that he was able to spend Christmas with his family, but sadly he took a turn for the worse on Boxing Day when he was readmitted into hospital. Arnold passed away peacefully on New Year's Day with his family by his side.

I was privileged to have known Arnold for many years. We first met in the Royal Arch Provincial Office over 25 years ago and developed a lasting friendship.

Very Worshipful Brother Arnold Long was a pleasure to know during his lifetime, a man who enjoyed life, his family, and his Freemasonry.

V.W.Bro. Chris Eley, P.G.J.O., Past Assistant Provincial Grand Master.





Brothers In Law Christmas Luncheon



I was invited by W.Bro. Harry Smith to be his guest at this year's Brothers in Law luncheon held at the Croydon Masonic Hall on Tuesday the 9th of December.



We met up in the bar for refreshments before making our way into the dining room for a most enjoyable meal in good company.





Fine dining at Knightsbridge Lodge

The installation meeting of Knightsbridge Lodge of Mark Master Masons was held at Surbiton on Tuesday the 16th of December. Present were the Provincial Grand Master, the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, an Assistant Provincial Grand Master, along with R.W.Bro. Mik Barnes, Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master, and V.W.Bro. Richard Knox, Past Assistant Provincial Grand Master.





The Lodge was opened by the Worshipful Master, R.W.Bro. John French, our Provincial Grand Master, who welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes and accounts were approved.



The Master Elect, V.W.Bro. Perri Ahmet, Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the Mark Province of Kent, was presented to the Installing Master, by the Director of Ceremonies, V.W.Bro. Richard Knox. After a Board of Installed Masters was declared, V.W.Bro. Perri recited his Obligation, was invested with the Collar and Jewel of his Office and placed in the Chair of the Knightsbridge Lodge of Mark Master Masons. V.W.Bro. Perri then appointed and invested his Officers.

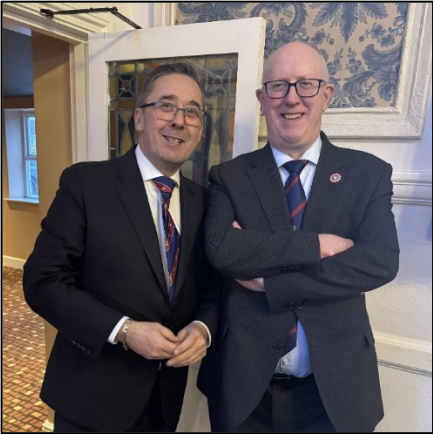


W.Bro. Ian Smith and W.Bro. Garry Lewis were declared elected to the Offices of Worshipful Master and Treasurer. The Lodge was closed in due form and everyone retired to the bar.



We were then called into the dining room to be treated to a sumptuous 6 course meal specially prepared by W.Bro. Robbie Dobbie and his team at Glenmore House.





A candidate for Weald of Surrey Lodge

The Weald of Surrey Royal Ark Mariner and Mark Lodge meetings were held on Thursday the 8th of January at the Sutton Masonic Hall, with all the Tooting Boys in attendance.



The afternoon started with a short business meeting of the RAM Lodge, which was opened by the Worshipful Commander, W.Bro. Len Hillier. Who welcomed everyone. –

I was invited to act as Junior Warden for the meeting.

After the regular business of the Lodge was completed, the Lodge was closed and the Temple set up for the Mark meeting to follow.



The Weald of Surrey Lodge of Mark Master Masons was opened by the Worshipful Master, W.Bro. Alan Boniface, who welcomed everyone, wishing them an enjoyable afternoon.



The main item on the agenda was to advance Bro. Jack Walter Holland, a Past Master of Bolingbroke Lodge No. 2417.

The ballot proved in his favour and Bro. Jack was advanced to the Honourable Degree of a Mark Master Mason by the Worshipful Master and the officers of the Lodge. W.Bro. Allan Thompson and I acted as the Deacons.



After the ceremony Bro. Jack was welcomed into the Lodge by the Worshipful Master⁵ who wished him many enjoyable years in our Order.

W.Bro. Jeff Flint was declared Worshipful Master and W.Bro. David Lawrence was declared Treasurer for the ensuing year. The Lodge was closed and we retired to the Miller Bar for refreshments before sitting down to dine.



Provincial Officers' Mess Wine tour and lunch at Denbies

As most are aware, the Mess AGM has been moved so as not to be too near the welcome/thank you evening for new/old Provincial Officers, which is sponsored by the Provincial Officers' Mess. Next year, this social evening will fall on **Friday 27th March** (that being the fourth Friday in March). The Provincial Grand Master is very keen on this get together which takes place soon after the Annual Meeting of the Province. **Please save the date.**

The date of the AGM has been moved to the second Friday in September, next year (2026) this will be on the **11th of September.**

Because there will be no Officers' Mess Autumn social event this year, it would be good if as many as possible could get together socially and V.W.Bro. Bill Barr has booked a wine tour and lunch at Denbies on **Saturday the 21st of November.** The cost is £45 per head and wives and partners are welcome as are Craft Masons and non-masons.

Tickets are limited and we do not have exclusivity. We are aware of ten bookings thus far so please consider booking this Mess event, at which we also hope to attract potential members for the Woodstock Grape and Grain Lodge.

