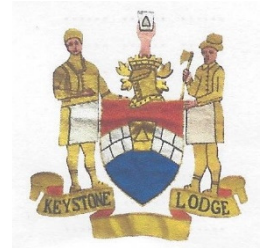




A Surrey Blue Light & Services Lodge

On Wednesday the 7th of January at Croydon the Warrant of Northern Heights Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 989 was reopened by our Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. John V C French, to form a Mark Lodge for members of the Armed Forces and Blue Light Services, present and past.

No, we did not appreciate the very cold temperature. No, we didn't want to set off at an early hour to go to a Lodge brought out of Abeyance. Yes, we went. Hindsight is wonderful and so is determination. I am so pleased we made the effort because I saw a fine bunch of men gathered together to repurpose one of our Lodges, founded in 1943. Our Past Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Ian Clark, was going to be its first Worshipful Master.



This new Lodge is for our service personnel, both civilian and military. However, the gathering was also made up of us ordinary men, but I must admit that the addition of brethren with headgear was one of the definite, delightful differences of the event.

This was an important occasion and was highlighted by the presence of our Provincial Grand Master who was escorted in with his banner and ceremonial sword. There was the accustomed round of applause on his arrival, the acknowledgement of attending officers and a warm welcome offered to the many visitors.

Furthermore, Right Worshipful Brother John French, carried out the ceremony with great panache and solemnity interspersed with occasional humour.

The Northern Heights Lodge was declared out of abeyance. This Lodge has begun its new life in a fine manner, and an annex was printed showing an impressive list of joining members with W.Bro. Tony Rastall as Treasurer and W.Bro. Mike Neville as Secretary. We were advised in the summons that the Lodge would have a name change to Surrey United Services Lodge of Mark Master Masons, No. 989. The remaining agenda items were accomplished in fine style by the Worshipful Master, Ian Clark.





We then assembled in the dining room, and the new Master was duly led in by the Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro. W.Bro./Insp. Jason Pearson.

This was a very entertaining Festive Board, prompted by a stand in for V.W.Bro. Chris Eley, who managed with the help of the newly invested Director of Ceremonies, to take some memorable photos of all members in attendance, concentrating on the newly gathered members of this Lodge and their Worshipful Master, ably supported by our Provincial Grand Master.

The whole occasion was one of the most interesting that I had attended.

I thank the members of the Lodge for inviting me and wish them every success for the future.

W.Bro. Mike Neville was fined 2 bottles of port by the members for leaving the meeting for a while to take part in a broadcast interview.

Thanks to Michael Fenech

Annual Swimathon - a great success!

On Sunday the 18th of January the Province held its Annual Swimathon at the Spectrum, Guildford. The chief swimmers were W.Bro. Mike Neville, who was joined in the pool by his daughter Jenny; W.Bro. John Massey, our Assistant Provincial Grand Master, and his granddaughter, Ellen; W.Bro. Barrie Selway; and Jo Lawrence, wife of W.Bro. David Lawrence.



There was a great age range with Barrie being 89 (20 lengths - a great effort) and Ellen 8 (40 lengths). No one was counting, but it would appear that Jo Lawrence covered the greatest distance!

The event was supported by several senior Masons in the public gallery, including R.W.Bro. John French, Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Ian Clark, the President of the MBF, and W.Bro. Des Franklin, Provincial Grand Charity Steward.



The man responsible for the money, our Provincial Treasurer, V.W.Bro. Ray Seeley, stated that the event had raised over £4,000 which will be distributed to local charities, including the Surrey Army Cadets.

R.W.Bro. John French thanked all involved in the event and presented medals to the swimmers. Next year is already booked - please put **Sunday the 17th of January 2027** in your diary.

Thanks to Mike Neville and Michael Fenech

Bond of Friendship / Bond of Fun-ship!

On Saturday the 17th of January Bond of Friendship gathered at Croydon for their morning meeting, starting with bacon rolls.

The Mark meeting saw the Advancement of Bro Terry Berry, conducted by the Master, W.Bro. Ian Holloway, and W.Bro. Mike Neville. The newer brethren also stepped up, with Bro. Mike Jefferys giving a flawless display of Senior Deacon work and Bro. Neil Jones-Lumby presenting the Working Tools. AND next – Bro. Yusef Mills impressed all present with a perfect explanation of the Mark Tracing Board for points 1-7.

The Burns-Themed Festive Board was enhanced by Bro. Dave Creamer playing the bagpipes and W.Bro. Dave Reid performing the Address to the Haggis in a dramatic, fun and knife-waving fashion.



Scottish songs were enjoyed between courses with the meeting ending with Auld Lang Syne. A great fun meeting.



Join us on **Saturday the 2nd of May** for (at least) a Double Advancement and a joint celebration of St Patrick's and St George's Day with a drum and flute display by the Army Cadet Corps of Drums. AND lots of flag waving! Contact mrmikeneville@aol.com for more details.

Thanks to Mike Neville





Burns Night 2026



The Surrey Mark Master Masons and Royal Order of Scotland Burns Night was held at Surbiton on Saturday the 24th of January 2026.

Surbiton on a Saturday evening. Plenty room for parking. Plenty room at the bar – and good service. And plenty of guests, over a hundred and thirty.



One newcomer said to me that the atmosphere was so pleasant and the venue of an excellent standard. I do know that he will be joining the Mark Order within the coming months. An excellent start to a super evening which, I understand, was a complete sell out.

The bar was a good place to start and was soon full of friends and familiar faces, with new people happy to make one's acquaintance. It was soon well populated and the half an hour before the dining was filled with good banter, easy conversation and an expectation of a slightly different evening. The stentorian voice of a good director of ceremonies soon called us to our seats and grace à L'Ecosse was delivered by W. Bro. Bill Caughie, setting the tone for a good evening with a strong hint of what was to come.



The pipes soon filled the room with the announcement of the arrival of the Haggis. This was duly paraded in by our very own piper, Ralph Potter playing a very rousing skirl, and carried by our chef, with Andrew Francis in charge and in magnificent Scottish attire. Yes, I mean a full kilt and a sgian-dubh.



As is the custom, the ritual of the address to the Haggis was then delivered to us in a “gaelicish” tongue, the admonishment, in good humour, of the chef and then the attack/carving of the haggis itself.

After an enthusiastic round of applause to the three participants, the latter then took away the haggis to be served up to us as a filling starter, with a dram of whisky poured onto it of course.



We all then partook of the haggis which was followed by an amuse bouche.

The main course of roast beef and all the trimmings followed, well served in good time by a host of serving staff.

Dessert followed and then conversation was stilled for a while.

We were invited to listen to a Toast to the Lassies delivered by V.W Bro. Bill Caughie, a very humorous, tongue in cheek delivery of some length with excellent jokes included.

He requested a response which was duly delivered with some pleasant force by Mrs. Jackie Wileman. As a teacher, she started by telling us to sit up straight and pay attention. And we did!



Her response was admirable, witty and to the point. Both toasts were greeted with great applause and well received by a well fed audience. Two brethren toured all guests and sold raffle tickets for a bumper event. This was held after dessert and to save time winners were brought their gifts rather asked to come up and choose. The response from guests was very, very satisfying and a sum in excess of a thousand pounds was raised by the assembled participants.

And that is not all. Our very amiable Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. John



French had procured a huge, huge, bottle of whisky. This was duly auctioned and raised several hundred pounds, much to delight of those gathered. This was a satisfying evening in so many respects.



After the excitement of the charity money raising, we started to leave in small numbers with several staying on to say farewell to friends they had not seen for some time.

Congratulations to the organiser, W.Bro. John Coleman, and his raffle helpers. Congratulations to W.Bro. Robbie Dobbie and the team at Glenmore House. Congratulations to the sellout gathering of Mark and Royal Order of Scotland brethren, their families and friends who supported this event and attended a very, very, enjoyable Burns Night.

Thanks to Michael Fenech



Mark Benevolent Fund awards a grant to The League of Mercy

In the auspicious surroundings of Westminster Hall in the Houses of Parliament, representatives of the Mark Benevolent Fund met with Lord Lingfield, President of 'The League of Mercy' charity and Col. Mike Neville, Trustee.



The role of The League is to recognise and encourage outstanding voluntary work in the care of the sick, injured or disabled, young people who are at risk, the homeless, the elderly or the dying.



A grant of £13,000 was made by the M.B.F. to aid the charity in honouring the work of volunteers across the United Kingdom at their annual awards ceremonies over the coming years.

Lord Lingfield said, 'I am hugely grateful to the Mark Benevolent fund for its generous donation to our charity; please be assured that these funds will be put to very good use in the encouragement and recognition of voluntary work in health and social care. The selfless public spirit of Mark Masonry is an example to us all'

The League of Mercy was established by Royal Charter on the 30th of March 1899 and was re-founded

by Lord Lingfield on the 30th of March 1999, exactly one hundred years to the day after being first established.

Its current trustees, all of whom have a wide range of experience in charitable voluntary work in various health areas, undertook its renewal as a personal Millennium project. All give their services to the League entirely for free.

In September 2010 in a ceremony at Armourers' Hall in the City of London, HRH Princess Michael of Kent was invested with the Companion's Badge of the League of Mercy in recognition of her wide-ranging and distinguished voluntary work within the League's areas of care.

Thanks to Darren Coleman-Heald

Provincial Officers' Mess Events



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. This 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; this year it will be on the **11th of September**. **Please save the date!**

Fratres Calami Aerariique Lodge

Fratres Calami Aerariique Lodge No 1704 is the Provincial Lodge for the Treasurers, Secretaries and Directors of Ceremonies of the Lodges within the Province of Surrey.

On **Tuesday the 10th of February 2026** at Nutfield, Fratres Calami Aerariique Lodge No 1704 will be hosting the President of the General Board. The meeting will commence at 5pm and is open to all Mark Master Masons.

This is your opportunity to come and listen to the President of the General Board, ask questions, and join the conversation. Further details from the Lodge Secretary, David Clark, at fca1704@btinternet.com.

If you are a Lodge Treasurer, Secretary or Director of Ceremonies then please think about joining. it will give you the opportunity to meet other Lodge Officers, the Provincial Executive, and to receive updates.

