

Report of the Provincial Grand Secretary To Provincial Grand Lodge on 10th June 2023

The past year has proved yet again to be a happy and enjoyable one as we continue to offset the effects of the Covid shutdown. Lodges are working hard to recover and I am pleased to report that we have Advanced 21 Mark Candidates in the past 12 months and Elevated 8 RAM Candidates, with more in hand.

During this year there has been a national roll out of the “Magic of the Mark” video in support of local campaigns to raise awareness of the Order. All Masonic Centres in the Province have been provided with supplies of a new leaflet promoting the order with QR code links to the video and our web-site. In addition “business cards” containing similar links have been widely distributed for handing to our Craft friends with a view to inviting their interest in our Order. A similar local campaign to extend the interest of Mark Masons in the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner is being prepared.

There have been several “Team Meetings” well attended by the Provincial Officers of the year including the visit of R.W.Bro. Francis Charles Spencer (*then*), A.G.M., to present a 50 years RAM Certificate to R.W.Bro. Michael Masters at the Athlumney Lodge RAM Meeting in September 2022.

At the Worcestershire Royal Ark Mariner Provincial Grand Assembly held on 16th May 2023 some 60 members and guests witnessed the unusual procedure of sharing the secrets of the RAM Chair with 2 brethren below the rank of Installed Commander. This was to enable the Junior Warden designate and Deputy D.C. designate to properly discharge their duties as members of the Provincial Team at forthcoming Lodge Installation meetings.

This Province is proud to acknowledge and congratulate the Brethren reappointed to active Grand Rank this year together with those brethren receiving first appointments and promotions. This honour continues to reflect the health and strength of the Province in the wider Mark community. In particular at the September Convocation of Grand Lodge our own P.Prov.G.M. R.W.Bro. Francis Charles Spencer was appointed, obligated, invested and installed as the Deputy Grand Master thereby establishing a record for promotion from Grand D.C. to Assistant Grand Master (June 2022) and to Deputy Grand Master in September 2022. Not to be outdone, during this year our Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Eric John Rymer was elected to the General Board and thereby also became a Member of the Grand Master’s Royal Ark Council.

The irrepressible W.Bro. John H V Moore was delighted to be appointed to active Grand Senior Deacon at the Annual Grand Lodge Investment Meeting in June 2022 and he has been very active in representing Worcestershire at other Provincial Annual Meetings. He is particularly proud to have attended all of those meetings associated with Wales. Throughout the year the Province has been represented at almost 70% of the meetings to which we have been invited, an excellent record thanks to the support

of members of the Executive as well as others. Our Provincial Grand Master himself has attended 22 meetings.

The Provincial website <http://www.worcestershiremarkpgl.org.uk> continues to be developed to provide up to date news on activities within the Province and general information. I encourage you all to bookmark it and regularly visit the site.

Keystone OnLine (KOL) now gives Lodge administrators such as Secretaries/Scribes, Treasurers and Almoners easy access to directly manage routine membership matters and Grand Lodge returns. An updated version is due for launch within the next 12 months which will further improve the flow of information and integration of Grand, Provincial and individual Lodge administration.

All of the Documents needed for Lodge administration such as Application Forms, Celebration Certificates and GL Dispensations, are downloadable from KOL and to ensure that the latest version is used, Lodges are recommended to use this facility as the 'go-to' source for such documentation rather than older printed or electronic versions on local computers. Most can be completed electronically.

Reflecting on my active participation with the Secretariat since my first appointment as Assistant Secretary in 2010 I look back on a fulfilling role and an enjoyable involvement in the administration of the Province. I am very grateful to everyone who has advised, helped, guided and supported me during that time. Over that period we have increased the number of Lodges in the Province and grown our Membership and I have been privileged to be involved in a number of projects such as the 2 Provincial Mark tokens and RAM Elevatee lapel pins. Probably the most significant change overall has been the move from a paper-based administration to an increasingly electronic presence on the internet.

Perhaps the most memorable 'event' has been the intervention of Covid and whilst there have been many negatives we have also derived many positives such as :-

- the ongoing use of Virtual Business Meetings which generally involves greater numbers attending at significantly lesser cost and reduced environmental impact
- circulation of a weekly newsletter (both Grand and Provincial) to inform and involve Members together with the wider adoption of social media platforms
- on-line registration for meetings, reporting and facilities for payment

My thanks to all our Lodge Secretaries and Scribes for their dedication and voluntary support in keeping our Mark and Royal Ark Masonry Lodges active over the past 12 months. Their work is vital to the good health of the Province.

I conclude by thanking my Team for their unstinting support, assistance and commitment over the last year. I know that my successor, W.Bro. David Hughes, and his team will continue to offer support, help and advice to Lodges or individuals if so requested and we strongly urge you all to use your direct link with us through our Lodge Liaison support channels.

Adrian C. Hutt, *P.G.S.D.*, Provincial Grand Secretary