



Brethren all, welcome to the latest edition of the Essex Mark Times and I hope that once again you will find it informative and interesting. Since the last publication the Province has once again kept us all busy, and as we move through the year continues to keep us that way as we plan for further events.

If you are reading this whilst waiting for the Annual Meeting to start, can I once again thank you for your support. I do hope you find our new venue to your liking and whilst sitting there take a moment to think of the history which this building is steeped in. 'New Hall' has occupied the magnificent Tudor Palace of Beaulieu since 1799. The estate was acquired by King Henry VIII in 1517, at which time the building was greatly enlarged and enhanced. Henry VIII's Royal Arms can be seen in the Chapel at 'New Hall'. After Henry, 'New Hall' became home to Mary Tudor, before being granted to the Earl of Sussex by Elizabeth I. Oliver Cromwell later procured the estate, for five shillings!

I am also sure your presence at the meeting will enhance the day for those receiving honours and appointments and appreciate your attendance to make it a special day for them. I hope the earlier start time was more convenient for you. For those of you unable to attend I hope you will be able to next year, especially when the new railway behind the school will be open.

I am very pleased and proud to inform you that as the result of the three awareness events held so far our membership continues to grow with approx. 20 new members per event. A fourth event is planned to take place at Orsett on 4 October this year so please try and support that event if you can.

As you know our MBF Festival 2030 draws another year closer and the Festival team are planning ahead to introduce more new events for you to consider. You don't need me to tell you how important the MBF is and how it supports charities and other organisations who have members or look after those less unfortunate than ourselves. For those who haven't read the quarterly MBF review or watched the videos available on line a few examples of how your generous donations have been spent in 2022 are as follows:-



£237,000 supporting Ukraine refugees

£40,000 to foodbanks

£30,000 supporting Autism

£11,000 Volunteer emergency doctors

£10,000 scouting movement

£50,000 to Hospices

£25,000 to Lennox Children's Cancer treatment (Essex based and supported).

These donations and the many others are paid for by your individual donations and monies raised via the

Provincial MBF Festivals so please try and support ours, as every penny raised makes a difference. Please consider a monthly standing order, or the purchase of a Festival jewel to help the Province raise an amount we will be proud of.

Make sure you keep up to date with events near you via the website, the dedicated Festival 2030 website and the Provincial Facebook group.

Can I once again thank the Active Provincial Officers for their wonderful support they give on my visits to your Lodges, I really do believe their attendance adds so much to the meetings they attend.

Thank you for reading this edition and please remember without you there is no Province and we always welcome ideas for the future.

Stay In Touch

Website: www.essexmark.co.uk

www.mbffestivalessessex2030.co.uk

Email: essexmarkcomms@gmail.com

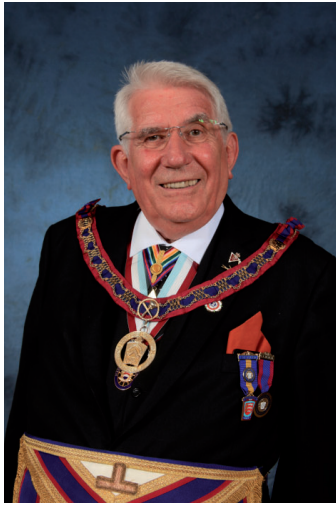
 **Facebook**
www.facebook.com/groups/essexmarkandram

 **Twitter**
www.twitter.com/PGLessexMark

 **Instagram**
www.instagram.com/pglessexmark



Interview with APMG John Stannard



John, tell us why you first joined Freemasonry?

Looking back, I suppose it was due to my late wife, Sandy. She, unfortunately, lost her Dad in a road traffic accident when she was nearly twelve. He had been an ordinary Craft Mason, and his Lodge Almoner, a Mr Barber, naturally took the family

under his wing. One significant achievement he managed was to get Sandy admitted to the Masonic Girls School in Rickmansworth which was a wonderful opportunity for her. The result of that was that as her family held Masonry in such esteem, I believe that regard rubbed off on to me. When I was approached by a dear friend who knew me as a Brightlingsea Cinque Port member, I was easily persuaded to join up. Perhaps the second-best decision in my life! I'll leave you to guess what was the best decision!

What does Freemasonry mean to you? Especially the Mark Degree?

I consider it to be the way that everybody should live their life. Wouldn't it be a perfect world if we all abided by its precepts? As for the Mark Degree, my preferred Order, it is the friendliness and brotherly love that is always apparent that really appeals to me. "Among Mark Masons you will ever find friends" is a real truism, and I have found so many genuine friends as a result.

Has the role of the Assistant Provincial Grand Master changed?

I am sure it has, but I am still very much on a learning curve, so I have some way still to go.

My time as the Provincial Grand Secretary gave me a good understanding of the structure and administration of the Order and especially, of course, of our own Province. Having said that, the Province has developed and blossomed immensely over the years and, I am pleased to say, is regarded highly within the Order and by other masonic degrees too; something of which we can all take pride.

What would you say has been your greatest achievement in Masonry?

That is a difficult one to answer; I think I can say that I honestly get tremendous satisfaction from being a team-player in whatever I try to do, whether that might be as Master of the Lodge or just guiding and supporting a new recruit.

It is lovely to be acknowledged and recognised for what we do. Indeed, I have been fortunate to gain Grand Rank in the Mark Degree and achieved high office, but simply to get a "thank you" for helping a brother, proves perhaps the greatest achievement and reward.

What are your outside interests?

My chief pleasures come from enjoying my family, of course. However, I am active in my local community, especially as Brightlingsea is the only Cinque Port Limb north of the Thames. We are perhaps the most dynamic community in the Federation with a rich history that extends back about 750 years, to feudal times – way before Parliament and the Royal Navy. I was privileged to be elected as Mayor Deputy (Deputy to the Mayor of our Head Port in Sandwich, Kent) in 2000 and as such am a life member of the Cinque Ports' Mayors Association, and still active in the current ceremonies and committees of our own town.

During my year of office I established the Brightlingsea Free Music Festival and was their Chairman for five years. I am proud to say that the event continues to this day.

I was also the founding Chairman of Brightlingsea in Bloom which has won many awards, however, when looking at my own garden at the moment, you wouldn't think so!

John, thank you for this interview and all the good work you carry out around the Province





MAGIC OF THE MARK

Essex Mark Recruitment and Awareness Events 2022-2023

In the year April 2022 through to March 2023 the Provincial Recruitment Team held three major Awareness events. The first at Kirby Cross in North Essex, followed by Colchester a little further South and finally at Chelmsford located centrally in the Province.



These events continued the highly successful format of previous events and saw Essex Mark Men bring their Craft brothers to the events, arriving nice and early for a buffet style full English breakfast, followed by a presentation in the Temple. The format of the events seems to fit very well with the work and life commitments of those who attend, the presentations are finished by midday leaving the remainder of the day free to catch up with family life and importantly not having to use up valuable holiday allowance for those who work in regular jobs.

The guests who were each invited by their hosts, all Essex Mark Men, who were keen to promote the Friendly Degree and to give them the opportunity to learn why they themselves hold the Mark Degree so dear.



After the customary sit-down breakfast, where everyone mingles to informally discuss all things masonic and what the day was to bring, all were invited into the Temple in readiness for the presentation. The cost of each event is partly met by the Province with the reminder of the costs being equally shared amongst the host lodges.



W.Bro. John Finlay, Deputy Provincial Grand Master who attended each event, began by welcoming everyone before giving a short introduction to, and thanking the host Lodge's for their support in making the event a success. The format of a group of lodges getting together to pool resources and sharing the organisational burden makes the workload much easier to cope with and of course we see more potential candidates in the temple making for a much more conducive atmosphere for all.

Of course, these events do not simply happen, much work and planning goes on well before any event reaches fruition. The Province is divided into two recruitment groups, one in the North and the other in the South, with the border drawn roughly East/West, from Harlow across to Chelmsford. W.Bro Andy Sylvester looks after the Northern Group, with W.Bro. Billy Robb looking after the Southern Group. The Dep.P.G.M. assisted by W.Bro. John Stannard A.P.G.M. oversees the whole Group.



The Temples are laid out as if for a Mark meeting, with all the officers in place each dressed in full regalia, showing those present the full splendour of a working lodge. The officers are made up of brethren from the host lodges. Part of each presentation is given over to a perambulation by two brethren specially recruited for this purpose. W.Bro. Rob Whitfield takes the lead



as a Mark Master Mason conducting a Fellow Craft around the lodge giving him a perspective of what is to come before and after Advancement, also how he can use his Craft knowledge to understand the steps he is going to take on his journey forward in Masonry. The perambulation ritual written by the Dep.P.G.M. is a unique piece developed specifically for these presentations. As it unfolds in the temple, you can see the lights coming on and hear the cogs start to whir in our guests during this part of the presentation as the connections are made. Both of the participants are dressed to reinforce the stonemason connection and bring a little drama to the proceedings.



At each event two presenters were involved, usually W.Bro. Mick West and W.Bro. Roger Davis, however the Dep.P.G.M. has had to stand in on occasions. Each presentation begins with the presenters explaining how the Mark Degree fits in with the other Solomonic degrees in Freemasonry, moving onto how the Order is ruled and managed from an international, national and provincial perspective. The presentation works its way through the qualifications needed to take the 4th regular step in Freemasonry, onto the Officers' roles, regalia, progression, and finally onto a lively question and answer session.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master closed each event by thanking everyone for their attendance and finally concluding that he hoped the event had been enjoyed by all and had perhaps been inspiring enough for the guests to consider taking their 4th regular step and joining the Mark Degree in Essex.



Such has been the success of these three events, that upwards of 60 of the guests attending were inspired enough to complete application forms for

Advancement into Essex Mark Lodges, confirming an exciting future for Mark Masonry in Essex. However, these events can only be successful if you and your Lodges support them by being involved, attending, and bringing along potential candidates for Advancement into our Order. It has been glaringly obvious that those putting in the effort and getting guests to attend have had the greatest success.



Not every guest attending will join one of the host lodges. He may have been brought along by a Mark Man from another area to sample the presentation, but if he joins, we all win by his membership in that, the more our Order grows the more successful we will be in attracting more candidates. All Freemasons are welcome at any event, you do not have to be a member of a host lodge. Nor do you need to be a member of a lodge that meets at the particular centre where the event is being held. Craft brethren wanting to attend but have no host to invite them are equally welcome to book in and attend, they soon find themselves amongst friends!



Whilst many brethren recruited from these events have already been advanced into our Lodges, monitor the Essex Mark Facebook page and the Provincial Website for notice of a number of double Advancements, and possibly, a quadruple Advancement, in the not-too-distant future.

Further Mark Awareness events are planned around the Province in the future with the next one at the Orsett Masonic Hall in October this year.

Companion Orders

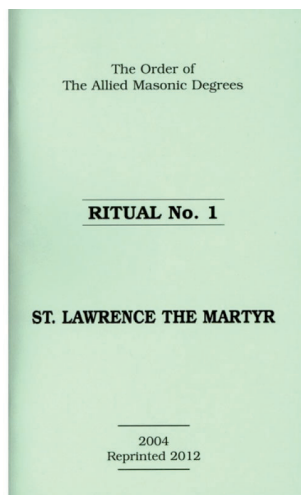
The Allied Masonic Degrees

We continue our exploration of other Companion Orders accessible to Mark Masons by looking at the Allied Masonic Degrees (A.M.D.) in some depth. The A.M.D., although “relatively” new as an Order in its own right, contains various “Orders and Degrees” worked separately and independently some of which have a real “operative” and true, side Order flavour.

So, today the Order consists of five independent (and unrelated to each other) rituals which, taken together, form a significantly impressive and interesting body of Freemasonry. The individual degrees are listed below in the same order as listed in the ritual book. However, first one must be admitted into the St Lawrence the Martyr degree after which the remaining four degrees may be taken in any order.

Membership today requires the candidate to be a subscribing Craft Master Mason, Mark Master Mason, and a Royal Arch Mason. Each unit or lodge is referred to as a “Council” which are then grouped together as a “District” under a “District Grand Prefect” and, in Essex, this is Right Worshipful Brother Jeffrey Conway who will be well known to most (if not all) Mark Masons and who is also well known in Essex Craft.

So, let us have a look at the various Degrees which comprise the Order.



The first is that of **St. Lawrence the Martyr**. This is the Degree which must be taken first and is the Degree in which the Council must be opened and closed and all the “administrative” matters dealt with. The actual date when this ritual was introduced is not known, but it is believed to have been worked in England two centuries ago. It is

generally accepted to be the remnants of an old operative ceremony originating from Lancashire and designed to distinguish the true craftsman from the speculative mason. The ritual is based on the legend of the martyrdom of St Lawrence who was afterwards canonized for his fidelity and Christian attributes.

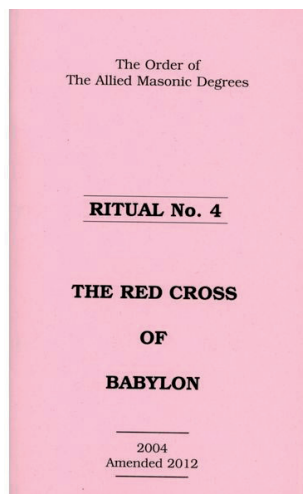
It is from his death that the Gridiron has such prominence in the Order. Understandably the lesson taught is fortitude.

Knights of Constantinople. The Degree of Knights of Constantinople relates to the Emperor Constantine the Great who reigned during the fourth century AD and is what was referred to in the true sense as a “side

degree”. Prior to the Allied being formed it could be conferred on a brother following a Lodge meeting with a simple obligation and entrustment. Its origins are thought to lie in that period of transition from Operative to Speculative Masonry. The meeting takes place in The Council Chamber arranged like a Craft Lodge with Officers similar to that of a Craft Lodge but in this case the Master is called Illustrious Potentate. The Brethren are referred to as Brother Knights. This Degree shows that by the sharing of responsibilities and the acceptance of man for what he is, we can and will open our hearts to a greater understanding of our inner self, there is also a lecture which imbues the lesson of justice.



Grand Tilers of Solomon. Under an early title of “Select Masters of Twenty-Seven”, this degree is known to date back in America to 1893. It is very similar in character to the degree of Select Master worked in the Order of Royal and Select Masters and relates the story of the accidental intrusion of a craftsman into the secret vault of King Solomon, where his fate is determined by the three Grand Masters. This degree was conferred on the Earl of Euston, (then the Grand Master of the Allied Masonic Degrees) in 1893 with powers to propagate it in England and accordingly it was incorporated under the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees.



The Degree of Red Cross of Babylon. This is the most profoundly mystical of all the Allied Degrees, it is of considerable antiquity, being closely associated with the Holy Royal Arch and the rebuilding of the second Temple of Jerusalem with the candidate bearing the name of Zerubbabel. The legend beginning in the days of Cyrus, King of

Persia, continues through to the time of Darius. It is said that it is one of those ancient degrees from which the Royal Arch was formed. The degree is set in two distinctive parts. The tragedy at the building of King Solomon’s Temple described in the third degree of the Craft inspires a connection with the building of the second Temple. In each part of the ceremony the scene is set partly in Babylon and partly in Jerusalem. The Council is opened in the Throne room of a Persian Court at Babylon by the Thrice Illustrious Sovereign. The scene changes and the ceremony is then conducted in a Royal Arch Council at Jerusalem by the



Reverend Prelate (or 1st Principal). The candidate in this ceremony represents Zerubbabel. The ceremony is concluded at Babylon when Zerubbabel procures the help of King Darius in his enterprise. The degree culminates with an intricate debate taken from the First Book of Esdras which established the profound maxim 'great is truth'. The faith, Zerubbabel displays, in his enterprise is the main story line of this degree.



The Holy Order of Grand High Priest has preserved its title from the time when it was taken under the control of Grand Council and is therefore not known as a Degree but an Order. Again this Order is closely associated with the Royal Arch Masonry and carries us to a higher realm of Masonic thought. The ceremony is carried out in a Tabernacle in the form of a Chapter layout and with the principle office being occupied by a Most Excellent President. The degree is founded on

the Blessing of Abraham and the consecration of Aaron, and the candidate is admitted by the President and set apart with due ceremonial to the Holy office of Grand High Priest in a most beautiful and uplifting enactment, The ceremony is in two parts when the Companion, who is admitted, is left in no doubt that he is set apart for high duties and responsibilities in life, both as a Mason and as a man to dedicate himself to the service of the Most High God.

So five degrees seemingly unrelated to each other, but related in that each one is espousing true Masonic virtue. Some of the degrees being intertwined with the better known Solomonic degrees cannot fail to interest the enquiring Mason.

The regalia worn by members is simple and therefore inexpensive, consisting of simply breast jewels.

Each degree has its own individual jewel presented when the candidate receives the degree. Originally the five jewels were set on a bar each being suspended on a ribbon, these could then be displayed after receipt of the individual degrees. The newer more compact jewel is a five pointed jewel showing the insignia of the degrees, although the original jewel bar configuration is still permissible.

The Officers of a Council wear a collar of office, and the District Grand Officers a collar of plain green with a jewel suspended and a matching collarette. A Grand Officer wears a dress collar of green with embroidered oak leaves or an undress collar of plain green both with jewels suspended and again a matching collarette. There is no apron worn in today's Councils but you will see them worn in Scotland and in Councils on the Continent.

In Essex there are currently six "ordinary" Councils covering the entire County (including a "daylight" Council at Upminster) plus an Installed Master's Council, all of which generally meet three times a year.

So, in conclusion, a fascinating, impressive, and educational set of Degrees contained in one Order. One where questions remaining from earlier Degrees are answered, education can be taken forward, and a great deal of enjoyment can be had in the company of like minded Masons.



The Mark in America - By Michael J Ramos

2 years ago, I was asked by the Provincial Executive to make a presentation to the Mark Master Masons of Essex, via Zoom,



concerning the history and current state of the Mark degree in the USA with an emphasis on California. Accepting such a request, with great enthusiasm, has proved one of the best decisions I have made

in my masonic journey! It opened the door to new friendships and has provided me with the opportunity to serve as an assistant editor for the Essex Mark Comms Team.

Many of you may have been in "virtual" attendance for this presentation, but for those of you who were not I have been asked to write this article to serve as a truncated version of such, to hopefully provide an enjoyable and informative account of the Mark across the pond.

History

The degree of Mark Master Mason has been worked in America since the mid to late 18th century. Initially conferred within "Royal Arch Lodges", prior to the now standard nomenclature of "Chapters", and within Craft Lodges owing allegiance to the Antient Grand Lodge.

After the formation of the General Grand Chapter International in 1797, the degree of Mark Master Mason was officially adopted as the first of four degrees which one receives within an American Royal Arch Chapter. Utah is the only state which has a single Mark Lodge, to which joining membership is granted in exclusivity



to those already possessing the degree who have demonstrated exemplary service to freemasonry.

Governance

The General Grand Chapter International serves as a unifying organisation for all state Grand Chapters which all ultimately operate with sovereignty. This organisation exists to maintain international recognitions, provide charitable opportunities, offer masonic education, and issue service awards for merit.

Each state has its own Grand Chapter which holds authority over the private Chapters within their respective jurisdictions. In California, the jurisdiction is further divided into Departments overseen by a Department Grand Officer, and then further into Districts overseen by District Inspectors.

Chapters in California

There are currently 50 Royal Arch Chapters spread throughout the state of California, which are composed of several thousand Royal Arch Companions, all of whom are obviously Mark Master Masons. The average age of a member is 60 years, with each Chapter being made up of an average membership of 45 Companions. There is one Chapter of Research and the Grand High Priest's Chapter, that solely exists on paper, as a holding tank for those members whose Chapters have surrendered their warrants and who have not yet found a new Chapter to join. Without said Chapter these members would be deemed unattached and suffer an infraction in their subscribing years of service.

Workings and Composition of an American Chapter

An American Chapter confers four degrees: Mark Master Mason, Virtual Past Master (a demonstration of a bygone American version of a Board of Installed Masters), Most Excellent Master (as worked in Royal & Select Masters Councils in England), and the Holy Royal Arch.

American Mark ritual and overall officer composition differs in many areas as compared to England. Many instances could be given in minutia, but for the sake of brevity I will offer only a few. For example, a Chapter calls down to work as a lodge of Mark Master Masons, so a Mark Lodge is never truly opened or closed, nor is the Master ever entrusted with the secrets of the Chair. The First Principal (who is J and goes by the title Most Excellent High Priest during Exaltation) temporarily adopts the title of Right Worshipful Master, and not Worshipful Master, and all regalia is switched to suit a closer semblance to an American Craft Lodge vs the standard Mark regalia known elsewhere. The signs of the degree differ slightly and the ceremony itself is much longer due to additional patchwork segments that clearly linger from antiquity, which sadly force the ceremony to come together in a less than congruent manner. More could be said.

It is also worth noting that the Holy Royal Arch, although carrying the same symbolic messaging and overall purpose also differs quite drastically to its English cousin, with much of this alteration stemming from the imaginative pen and ritual interests of Thomas Smith Webb. Webb was an early American masonic lecturer and ritual writer / compiler whose brainchild it was to form the "York Rite".

The "York Rite"

The Royal Arch Chapter – and hence, the Mark degree - falls in as the second of several masonic units comprising a system known as the York Rite. The concept of masonic rites and progression through a series of degrees towards an ultimate state of superior knowledge was a popular fraternal venture during the time when early American freemasonry was becoming formalised. Thomas Smith Webb illustrated his York Rite system by rewriting degree ceremonials and expanding upon existing symbolism and allegory to create a (somewhat) cohesive narrative from the Craft Lodge to the Mark degree and Royal Arch Chapter, and then onto a digressive timeline jaunt in the Royal and Select Masters Council, with the journey finally terminating in the Knights Templar Commandery (known as a Preceptory in England).

This narrative has long proved problematic for many obvious reasons and, has sadly, at various times diminished the importance and beauty of such degrees as the Mark, which to some becomes merely a steppingstone towards the next degree in the rite. Luckily, as we now find ourselves in a day and age where newer members yearn to engage in the fruits of academic masonic research and seek a sense of universal masonic tradition, this concept of the York Rite's legitimacy and functionality is being pushed to the realm of regional myth more than usefulness, as ample brethren embrace the Mark and the other Chapter degree offerings based on their own merit and sense of friendliness, fraternal wholeness, and direct relationship to the Craft Lodge experience. It goes without saying that the degree of Mark Master Mason stands as a favourite in California and throughout the USA.

2023

JOIN OUR RITUAL SUPPORT TEAM

WE'RE NOW

RECRUITING



SEND YOUR CV TO;

W. Bro Phil Richardson.
Email: pwrichardson@virginmedia.com

01 The Task;

Visit Lodges to take office and assist with ceremonies where the lodge is struggling to carry out their own work. Varied role, from W.M. to Tyler, M.M.M. or S.M.M.

02 Skill Set Required;

Competent Ritualists, not word perfect but with a good working knowledge of the degree being worked.

03 Where & When;

Could be any lodge located within Essex. You can give your preferred area. Mostly weekday evenings! but some Saturday mornings.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Essex
W. Bro John Finlay. Email: jfinlay1319@gmail.com



Essex Mark Bonus Ball Game 2023

The Essex Mark Bonus Ball Game has proved to be very successful after its launch in May 2018, and has to date produced much needed funds for the Essex Mark Welfare Fund.

The game has developed since then to its present success with individuals purchasing numbers for themselves, and many Mark and RAM Lodges purchasing under their unit's name.

However, **"You have to be in it to win it"**. The cost is £10 for a single number in a game that runs for 10 weeks on consecutive Saturdays, and each week the owner of the winning number will receive £30.

Each year we run a Christmas Special which attracts a great deal of interest as we pay out £200 to the winner!

We are now hoping that more individuals and Lodges will consider purchasing a number on a regular basis.

£50 will purchase a number for 50 weeks over 5 consecutive games, which is the best part of a year, and 2 wins during that period would see the entrant's money returned with £10 to spare.

Purchasing numbers can be done via the Mark website at www.essexmark.co.uk or by sending an email to emwfbonusball@gmail.com requesting a number. You will receive a return email with your allocated number. And remember if you would like to purchase a regular number for the year costing £50 which would run for 5 consecutive games of 10 weeks each, this is possible.

Vital Statistics

- 29 Games played at 59 balls per game = 1,711 balls sold making £17,110.
- 29 Games with 10 winners per game - Winnings paid out £8,700.
- Total of £8,410 made for the Essex Mark Welfare.

There have also been Extra Games like:

- Golf Day
- Festival 2030
- Bingo 90
- 2 Christmas Games.

These have netted a further £2,940

And of course the present Festival 90 Game that recently sold out made £550.

A Happy Total of £11,900.

Thank you for your continued support.

Steve Yates
Essex Mark Bonus Ball Game Coordinator

Brentwood Mark Lodge No.377 Race Night

Saturday, 18 March, saw Brentwood Mark Lodge No. 377 go "to the races" when they held a virtual horse racing evening in aid of the MBF Festival Essex 2030.

The event took place at Mount Avenue Banquet Suite in Hutton and brought together over seventy attendees consisting of members of the Lodge and their guests.

The Lodge Charity Steward, David Harvey, opened the event with a warm welcome and an overview of the MBF.



The venue was then transformed into a virtual racecourse, with screens displaying the races, along with the "Mark Well" betting tote, run by Gavin Burgoyne, Roy Kaye and Peter Maloney. Guests were invited to bet on their favourite horses and were also able to sponsor horse ownership or the jockey for a race, with winners earning themselves a bottle of bubbly presented by Lodge DC, John Waters.

The atmosphere was electric as the races unfolded, with guests cheering on their chosen horses.

Throughout the evening, guests were also treated to a delicious Indian meal, prepared by the talented chefs at the Mount Avenue Banquet Suite.

At the end of the evening the Lodge Secretary, Jack Saunders, thanked everyone for their attendance. He also thanked Mervyn Revell and his staff for making the evening such a success.

And the amount raised for the Festival from this event ... over £1750!!





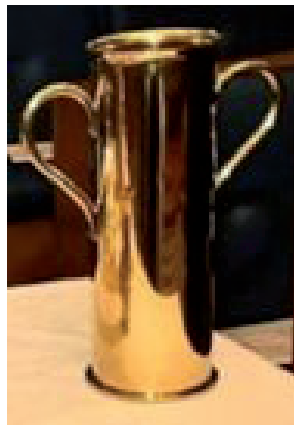
ESSEX ARMED FORCES LODGE of MARK MASTER MASONS No.2016

The Essex Armed Forces Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 2016 is the second Lodge in the Mark Master Mason Degree to be formed specifically for serving and former members of the Armed Forces. The premier Lodge is the Middlesex Armed Forces Lodge No. 1999.

The Essex Armed Forces Lodge was consecrated on 15 October 2019 at the St Giles Masonic Centre, Colchester. The Consecrating Officer was R.W.Bro. Terry Sheern, Provincial Grand Master for Essex, and the Installing Master was W.Bro. Mark Reeve, Assistant Provincial Grand Master for Essex. The Lodge had nineteen founder members and the consecration meeting was attended by seventy two Mark Masons.

Despite its infancy, the Essex Armed Forces Lodge has achieved the Mark Benevolent Fund Grand Patron Gold Award.

The Essex Armed Forces Lodge have established certain "customs" to mark its unique raison d'être. For example, the members of the Lodge wear their service headdress in the bar prior to dining. Headdress is also worn immediately prior to the opening of the Lodge.



The Director, and Assistant Director of Ceremonies do not carry the traditional wands but have Pace Sticks, and Alms are collected in polished Artillery Shell Cases.

The wearing of medals, or miniatures is optional, but the wearing of the Veterans Lapel Badge is encouraged.

The three services are currently represented by former members of the Navy, (17%), The Royal Marines, (8%), the Army, (67%) and the Royal Air Force, (8%). The Army is represented by former members of the R.E.M.E., The

Royal Pioneer Corps, The Parachute Regiment, The Royal Corps of Transport, The Royal Corps of Signals and the Royal Logistics Corps.



In February 2023, R.W.Bro. Terry Sheern, Provincial Grand Master for Essex was installed as Worshipful Master of the Middlesex Armed Forces Lodge No.1999, and in October 2023 R.W.Bro. Eddy Garty, Provincial Grand Master for Middlesex will be installed as Worshipful Master of the Essex Armed Forces Lodge No.2016. When future histories of the Lodges are written, the record that twinned Lodges had concurrent Masters who were also serving Provincial Grand Masters is sure to be a talking point.

All Mark Masons are welcome to attend the Lodge meetings regardless of having served in the Armed Forces.



Membership is open to Craft Masons who are serving or former members of the Regular, Reserve and Territorial Services who are interested in joining the Mark Degree, as well as Mark Masons from the same background.

The Lodge currently meets twice per year; at the Colchester Masonic Hall in October for the Installation meeting, and at the Chelmsford Masonic Hall in March.

For further information please contact:

W.Bro. Ray McKerron.

Email: Essexefl2016@gmail.com.





Centurion Lodge of Mark Master Masons No.1804

CENTURIO RENATUS

Centurion Lodge No. 1804, like some other Lodges was struggling with membership, after discussion they contacted Province to ask for assistance in saving the Lodge.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. John Finlay was tasked with the role and hatched a plan to save the Lodge. It involved changing the meeting place and dates and re-purposing the Lodge as a brunch Lodge.



So, on Saturday 4 February, the Lodge held its first meeting in its new venue at Fraternity Hall, Leigh on Sea. The new membership of the Lodge is comprised of some of the existing membership, supplemented by new members from the North as well as the South of the Province making it a unique Lodge in one way.

The Lodge members assembled at 0800hrs to set up for the first meeting in its new home, and to cross the T's and dot the I's as it was due to welcome the Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Terence D. Sheern accompanied by his Active Provincial Officers..

The Lodge was opened in due form by V.W.Bro. David Garston, who was the Primus Master back in the year 2000. The Prov.G.M entered with his retinue of Provincial Grand Officers and was welcomed to great acclaim by all present. The Prov.G.M. took the chair and introduced his accompanying Provincial Grand Officers as his usual custom.

The main work of the day was to Advance Bro. Steve Bull. The Ceremony was carried out in an exemplary manner by David, he was assisted by another Founding member of the Lodge, W.Bro. Terry Birdseye who gave

a faultless explanation of the Signs and Secrets of the Degree.

Steve was in very safe hands, as the Dep.P.G.M. John Finlay. normally the Director of Ceremonies of the Lodge acted as Senior Deacon, he was ably assisted by W.Bro. Peter Maloney who managed to smile all day!! Steve was very nervous but really enjoyed the Ceremony and is looking forward to taking an active part in the Lodge. The Lodge also welcomed two Joining members, with a further 5 in the pipeline as well as two candidates for Advancement.

The Lodge donated £200 towards the forthcoming Wing Walk by the Provincial Grand Master.

Once the meeting was closed, 46 Brethren retired to the Festive Board full English "Brunch". This was, some believe the main reason for the Prov.G.M's visit as he is very keen on fried bread.



The Festive Board was a very lively and friendly event with the raffle raising £250.

The Brethren parted company before midday with all looking forward to their next meeting in April.

The Lodge has a couple of unique selling points, firstly it is the only Saturday brunch Lodge in the Province. Secondly, the Lodge name "Centurion" is taken as the theme of the lodge, with some aspects of the ancient Roman Centurion to be woven into the procedural workings and festive board.

The Lodge meets on Saturday mornings in January, April, and July, ideal for those who struggle to attend weekday meetings and the early start allows members to be home early to attend to family weekend life.

If you would like more information on this unique Lodge, please contact their Secretary by email: centsec1804@gmail.





Events

PROVINCIAL OFFICERS MESS



The 2023 Provincial Officers Mess is to take place at the historic location of St. Giles Masonic Centre in Colchester on Friday 24 November, with timings to be confirmed.

The site on which St. Giles Masonic Centre now sits is steeped in history. Its known history extends back nearly 2k years to the time of the Roman Occupation being near to the St. Botolph's Gate which was part of the Roman Wall. It features again through the Norman invasion and conquest and also to the time of the Civil war. It is also adjacent to one of the newer "Colchester Gates" the Abbey Gate.

The Grade II listed building, as a church was, in its time, the largest parish in Colchester and has served the community for over 800 years.



"Would you like to know who next years Wardens and Grand Stewards are? Then come and join us at the officers Mess"

The Mess event is, of course, open to all Grand and Provincial Grand Officers and is a convivial evening where members of the Executive dine with those attending to make for a relaxed atmosphere. Members will get the chance to talk to the Executive, as well as listen to the Mess Presidents speech to the Prov.G.M, which has been very interesting at past meetings, and can prove to be very entertaining!!

This meeting hosted by the current Junior Warden will see the Provincial Grand Master announce his choice for Senior and Junior Wardens for the coming year, as well as his recommendations for his Grand Steward.

So, make a date in your diary for this prestigious event. Full details will be published on our website and Facebook site nearer to the event.



Aurelius Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners will be holding a banner dedication to mark its 75th anniversary on Friday 13 October, at Colvin Memorial Temple, Clacton-on-Sea. If you would like to attend please contact their Scribe:

aurelius814@hotmail.com.

Essex 2030 MBF Festival

Brethren you will all by now know we have started our fund raising for our 2030 Festival. We start this early to ensure we have enough time to raise as much as we can for the marvellous MBF charity, which does so much for charities and other deserving causes. You only need to spend a few minutes watching the latest charity video released by the MBF to see where the causes your money goes to. Remembering it is every penny donated that goes to these charities and causes

As one of the largest Provinces it is only right that the MBF look to us to raise as much as we can, to this end we as individuals can sign up to a monthly giving covenant via a direct debit arrangement, which I would encourage you all to do consider please.

Just £1 a month would mean you would be donating at least £90 plus any gift aid of 25% £112.5

£2 - £180 plus 25% £225

£5- £400 plus 25% £500

£10 - £760 plus 25% £950

These monthly donations would add a considerable amount to our total when you consider the number of members there are in the Province.

All your donations also go towards your personal MBF patronage and collarettes.

Please consider a monthly donation if you can. The necessary form is enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you



Mark of Industry will be celebrating their 50th anniversary at their meeting on Saturday 18 November 2023, at Upminster Masonic Centre. If you would like to attend please contact their Secretary: moimm1413@gmail.com



Essex Armed Forces Installation meeting on Friday 29 September at St.Giles Masonic Centre, Colchester. Where R.W.Bro. Eddie Garty, Provincial Grand Master for Middlesex will be Installed as Master.

If you would like to pre-book, please contact their Secretary: essexaff2016@gmail.com



Festival Update

MBF Festival Essex 2030

Since the launch of our Festival by the Prov.G.M. we are now in our 3rd year and have managed to get off to a good start towards a bumper total.

The Festival will culminate in a Grand Banquet in July 2030 and the total raised will be announced during that evening. Until then we have a long way to go, and some great events planned over many parts of our Province.

It is fair to say that we are in uncertain times at present with the economic situation in the country as it is and, as Chairman of the MBF Festival 2030, I must apologise to you if you feel it is a case of continually asking for members of our Province to keep dipping into their pockets. We have many fund-raising events planned and any support you can give will be wholeheartedly appreciated. But, and I must stress this a "but", support is voluntary and if any particular event is not for you, do not worry but look out for the next one as that might be.

The Festival 2030 merchandise is selling well and available from our shop on the Mark website. As well as from those brethren that are selling items around our Province, to whom I extend my heartfelt thanks for their time and efforts. The Festival 2030 Committee members, all of whom are hard-working volunteers, can be seen at many of our fund-raising events and, of course, the members of the committee are also responsible for certain events and promotions.

May 2024 will be a special date in our history as we will celebrate the 125th year of the Mark Province of Essex! To celebrate the event there will be a big 'White Table Dinner' with entertainment planned for somewhere in our Province. It will be an opportunity to celebrate the anniversary of this milestone in our Essex Mark Province with others, and details of the event will be published around the different masonic centres and through the website and our social media promotions.

I am particularly keen to mention and, as we get closer, to remind you, of that particular milestone and the special function as all the proceeds raised will go towards the Festival 2030 fund.

With your help our Province of Essex will raise a total to be proud of; but remember, you are not being asked to contribute or support to each initiative every time, but simply to do what you can as and when you can. It is hoped that you will get family and friends involved in the planned events and enjoy the fund-raising themes with others. I intend to meet up with as many of you at the various venues around our Province and sincerely believe that, with your help as well as the help of many others, the Festival 2030 will go from strength to strength.

I offer my personal thanks to each and every person that has contributed so far towards the Festival 2030 as well as those whose efforts as we go forward which will make OUR Festival one to be proud of.

W.Bro. Richard J. Goodwin P.G.J.D.; A.P.G.M.
Chairman Essex MBF Festival 2030



Festival Dining 2023

- BBQ** - Sat 15 Jul - David Awcock
- Il Mondos** (Italian Cuisine) - Thu 20 Jul - Westcliff-on-Sea - Austin Latham
- The SHIP** (Pub Grub) - Sat 12 Aug - Kirby-le-Soken - Andy Sylvester
- ZEN CITY** (Chinese Buffet for all the family) - Sun 8 Oct - Westcliff - John Engledew
- KANCHANS** (Indian Cuisine) - Sun 19 Nov - Gant's Hill - Ranjit Bhogla

Other Events

- Quiz I** - Sat 10 Jun - Wivenhoe - Michael Howarth
- Race Night** - Oct - Northern Cluster - John Kerr
- Quiz II** - Fri 3 Nov - Saxon Hall - Barry Coombes

**Further details
will be published
on our websites**

The Travelling Maul (nicknamed Mauly) was launched at the start of the Festival a couple of years ago and will continue its journey for the next 7 years. All Mark Lodges in the Essex Province will at some point in time receive the Travelling Maul and use it at their meeting, and on its journey, it will hopefully raise a small amount towards the Festival total.

Having spent Christmas with Dunmow Mark Lodge No.527, Mauly continued its journey to Grays Thurrock Mark Lodge No.570 and was presented to that Lodge in February by W.Bro. David Thomas.

It continued its travels via a visit to the seaside and was presented to Aurelius Mark Lodge No.814 at Clacton in April. It only spent a few weeks with Aurelius, as it then travelled the short distance to Brightlingsea and was presented to Beriffe Mark Lodge No.825 in May at the Northern Cluster meeting.

Mauly will spend the summer in the North before continuing its journey to Chelmsford and The White Stone Mark Lodge in October.

