MARK Times

Edition 11 Christmas 2023

The Newsletter for the Mark Province of Essex, incorporating the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners



Dear Brethren all,

As this will be my last Mark Times Christmas address before handing over the reins to W.Bro. John Finlay in May next year, I thought I could reflect on what you have achieved over the past 8 or 9 years. Firstly of course I can say the Province as a whole is back to the membership numbers from around 2008 which is excellent news and only achieved by your hard work and commitment. This included the introduction of the Active Officers accompanying me on my visits to Lodges, the reponing of both Fillebrook Lodge and Isthmian Lodge, and the re styling of Khalsa Royal Oak Tree, Centurion,

Also there was the Consecration of Northern Star & Southern Star Mark and Ram Lodges and the Essex Armed Forces Lodge. Plus, the many Banner and Bible dedications to name but a few. The sustained position of the Installed Masters and Commanders Lodges as being the largest in the whole Constitution and the many other events that have taken place.

Combined Stewards and Tudor Lodges.

You are also well known around the country and abroad for having one of the best if not the best Media and Communication teams, which many others have copied. The work you have undertaken for the Awareness events which again have been the envy of others and so successful in recruiting many new

members. And as we move towards the 2030

Festival, I have been so in awe of the many fund-raising events you have held to date. It is pleasing to see Lodges achieving their Diamond MBF award as well as some of the members and others wearing their MBF Stewards jewel and I do hope others will follow.

It would of course take me too much time and space to list all your achievements, but I do thank you all for your support, help and commitment. W.Bro. John Finlay will I know make an excellent PGM and with his skills and abilities the Province will enter

a new era of success for the benefit of all. I wish him and his new team every success.

I thank you again for your friendship, help and support and hope to meet many of you again after my period of Purdah. To those Lodges who have made me an Honorary member I thank you and ask you to continue to send me the summons for your meetings as I would love to attend if and when I can.

Brethren as we enter the Christmas holiday period I wish you all well and of course a very happy and successful New Year. Be kind to one another and look after each other.

Thank you.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

19 MARCH 24 - E.E.C & E.I.M.M.

Details to follow via social media

27 APRIL 24 - Centurion Banner Dedication

Leigh on Sea, To book - centsec1804@gmail.com

30 May 24 - P.G.L.

Venue to be confirmed

21 July 24 - Stisted Fete



Website: www.essexmark.co.uk

www.mbffestivalessex2030.co.uk

Email: essexmarkcomms@gmail.com



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The Mark Times is compiled by W.Bro. Phil Hind



Interview with the Provincial Grand Master

Conducted by W Bro. Geoff Newman, Prov. Dep. G. Sec.

When it was suggested that I might like to interview the Provincial Grand Master for Mark Times, I jumped at the chance. We all know about Terry the Prov. G.M. I really wanted to find out about Terry the man. I think the interview turned out well and Terry opened up with some honest and frank answers. I hope that you enjoy it.

Firstly, can you tell us where you were born and a little about your upbringing. Do you have any favourite childhood memories?

I was born in Hammersmith hospital but my family moved to Thundersley when I was 4 years old. When I was 12 we moved to South Benfleet. I have an older sister and two younger brothers. Whilst my childhood had problems, my father deserted the family when we were very young which caused financial difficulties as there was no real statutory support in those days. My family and in particular my late mother gained massive support through our local church St Peters, where I was a bell ringer and choir boy for many years until leaving home at 15 to join the Royal Navy.

One activity I remember and really enjoyed was the church youth clubs annual show for the parents. In those days Jimmy Tarbuck was making his name as a compare and I remember one year when I compared the show and called myself Terry Tarbuck. I also enjoyed my time as a cub and scout and have fond memories of taking my badges and camping out etc.

My senior school was King John in Hadleigh where I started in 1964 and I still remain friends with school mates from those days. Whilst at King John I became a qualified swimming life saver and instructor and took several other swimming awards. I guess I was pruned for the Royal Navy because of my love for the water!

What was your first job after leaving school, and as many of us have heard stories of your heroic adventures at sea during the Cod Wars, but can you tell us a little about your time in the Navy?

On leaving school at 15, I went straight into the Royal Navy and became a Ganges boy. After my training there, and after at H.M.S. Vernon in Portsmouth, I joined H.M.S. Whitby, an anti-submarine frigate, as a sonar operator. H.M.S. Whitby at the time was on tour in the far east so I had to fly from R.A.F. Brize Norton



to Hong Kong to board her. As a 15 yr old this was quite an exciting time, the first time I had flown (In a VCI O), first time abroad and first job. When I arrived in Hong Kong I was informed the ship was actually in Singapore so had to fly by R.A.F. Hercules to Singapore to meet



her. The ship then sailed back to, yes you guessed it, Hong Kong where I spent Christmas 1969. From there I was very lucky as the ship was given new orders and was sent to Australia to help celebrate Captain Cooks landing, Captain Cook sailed from the Yorkshire town of Whitby

hence our new orders. From Sydney we visited many ports around Australia before continuing around the world, visiting Fiji, Tonga, Mexico, states in the U.S.A.,

Subic bay, an American port used during the Vietnam war, Hawaii, and many other countries on route. We travelled through the Panama canal and also crossed the date line so had two Mondays in one week, but only got paid for the 7 days! I spent my 18th birthday in Panama city, which was an experience.



It was during this tour that we ended up in Greenland and Iceland and the now infamous Cod war. H.M.S. Whitby was part of the governments defence strategy to prevent fishing in our territorial waters. As history tells, we lost and the rest is history.

The ships tour ended in Gibraltar and I was flown home after over 2 years of being away.



I later joined H.M.S. Fox which was a small Royal Navy survey ship and spent time around the UK surveying for new shipping charts. Part of this tour included surveying between Scotland and Northern Ireland. We also surveyed and made new charts for the large ferry ships that ran from Stranraer in Scotland to Belfast, this included Loch Ryan where I spent several months living in a caravan site in Cainryan, which in those days was a small village on the shore of the Loch.

After our tour around the UK, the ship was sent to the Caribbean and I spent 2 years surveying around many of the islands, including Antigua, St Lucia, Tortola in the British Virgin Isles, Anguilla, Trinidad and Tobago to name but a few. It was during this time that I served



with the then Prince Charles. He was originally going to visit Hawaii but there had been an assassination attempt on the Governor so for safety reasons he was transferred onto H.M.S. Fox. I spent many hours in his company, many of them on a one to one basis when he was officer of the watch and I was at the ships wheel.

What was it that prompted you to place both feet on terra firma and give up the Navy?

So why did I leave, well I was obviously very lucky to have seen the world and experienced life to its fullest, but what I didn't like was the massive gap between Officers and Ratings in those days. I had difficulty with how some of the Officers treated the Ratings, how they spoke down to them etc. when many were fresh faced young men with no life experience. It was because of this that made me leave. I have always believed you should work your way up on merit, examination and hard work rather than what family you were born into.

Having settled down, where was your family raised?

After getting married to my wife Jenny in 1977, we moved to Westcliff on sea, from there to Prittlewell then back to Westcliff before settling in Barling Magna where we have remained. We have three Children Sarah, Lucy and Matthew and 4 grandchildren.



Sarah works for Southend Council Social Services as a family practitioner helping families and children overcome some of life's difficulties. Lucy is currently at home looking after her children after giving up her job as a dental nurse and Matthew is a freelance motion graphic designer who has worked with many TV, Film and other big companies such as Amazon, YouTube Paramount etc. Many would have seen his work on the big and small screen as he has been involved in some popular tv series. Anyone who watches Shed and Buried with Henry Cole will see his name on the credits at the end of the show.

So you joined the police force at what age, and where?

I joined Essex police in 1976 aged 23 yrs, and was originally stationed at Southend. I took my Sergeants and Inspectors exams at the earliest possibility and was successful in both, I was also part of the then Southend Police Sea Rescue team. After time on shift I was transferred to the Traffic department at Chelmsford headquarters. On being promoted to Sergeant I was posted to Thurrock division in Corringham.

From there I moved to Grays and then headquarters where I was part of a small project team who developed the forces communications strategy, purchase of a



new radio and telephone system and the design of the newforces communications centre. On being promoted to Inspector I was posted back to Thurrock at Grays as a Shift Inspector. I was then promoted to Chief Inspector and because of my experience in project management was posted to Headquarters and put in charge of the forces Project Management office, and was aide de camp to the Deputy Chief Constable. Having served my time at HQ, I was posted back to Thurrock as the Chief Inspector responsible for day to day Policing.

promotion Further to Superintendent saw me again back at HQ as part of the performance review team, helping division to produce annual plans and then holding them to account on their performance. This then lead to my final promotion to Chief Superintendent back to Thurrock as the Divisional Commander.



Google does make some mention of you in the Police Gazette, but did you get involved in any memorable cases, and are you able to share any of that with us?

I think one of the events I can share is that I was one of the ground commanders during the Afghan plane hijacking that took place in 2006, landing at Stansted airport. Part of my role was to liaise with other forces



and services, which was an interesting life experience.

At what point did you become a Freemason?

I became a Freemason in my early 40's which in my view is a good age to join. I had been asked previously but declined because I had a young family at the time and couldn't commit. On reflection I think I made the right choice

And where?

My Mother Craft Lodge is Beneficence 7978 which meets at Orsett, of which I am currently the Secretary. My Mother Mark Lodge is Thameside 1463 which also meets at Orsett.

Are you still in your Mother Lodge?

I am still an active member in my Mother Craft Lodge and was fortune enough to be made an honorary member of Thameside Mark and RAM

Your rise through the ranks of Mark Masonry is well documented, but at what point did you begin to realise that you might rise to the top?

To be honest I never thought in my wildest dreams I would become Prov. G.M. I suppose I was in the right place at the right time! I had been made active A.D.C. and during my year in office, the then Prov. Dep. D.C. John Chilvers had decided he wanted to stand down and I was luckily enough to be appointed Prov. Dep. G.D.C. Then again as luck would have it the Prov. G.D.C. stood down unexpectedly and I was asked to step up to the plate six weeks before the Provincial meeting, and to arrange the ceremonial side of the meeting, and to be appointed Prov. G.D.C. I remember the then Prov. G.M, Michael Spencer, asked me to meet him at his home where he told me he was standing me down as Prov. G.D.C and I thought "oh well, I had a good run and all things must come to an end!" He then asked me to become his Dep. Prov. G.M. and as you know I was appointed Prov. G.M. in May 2015.

When you were given the news that you had been proposed as Prov. G.M, was it an immediate acceptance or did you need time to reflect and consider it.

I didn't know I was to be appointed Prov. G.M. as I had not received any communications from GLMMM. The Prov. G.M. had told me I was in the frame and a name put forward but that was all I knew. It was at an Officers Mess being held at Saxon Hall in November 2014 when the Prov. G.M. said he had a letter from GLMMM on him and it was addressed to me. I went to the top table to receive it, opened it to find I was being appointed to Prov. G.M, so it took me completely by surprise and a nano second to accept.

Having accepted the role, what were your initial priorities and targets for Essex Mark, and did you achieve them all?

I wanted to mend the apparent rift with the Northern Lodges, and hopefully did that with the introduction of the Cluster meetings and making sure I visited lodges as many times as I could.

I wanted to give the active officers of the year a more prominent role and think I achieved that by the introduction of them accompanying me on my visits. I was aware that our numbers had been declining so introduced a number of recruitment and retention ideas and we are now back to 2008 membership numbers.

My one failure is not having been able to introduce an ancient ritual team, there have been a few starts at it but it never got off the ground.

The important point of all this is that this was not a one man team, or one man ideas factory, we have achieved all we have by team work, hard work and being lucky enough to have a vibrant Province with members up and down willing to get involved and make things happen!





What of your achievements as Prov. G.M. has most pleased you, and then, what if anything has disappointed you?

I think I have answered that already, but when I go to Lodges and take 15/20 officers with me, it changes the whole atmosphere of a meeting, especially if there is a candidate. The success around re-invented Lodges, e.g Combined Stewards, Centurion, Tudor, Isthmian, Kalsa Royal Oak Tree, Fillebrook etc. and the introduction of new Lodges, e.g. Northern Star, Southern Star, Armed forces etc.

My disappointment was the lack of a ritual team.

Apart from stupid questions, what really makes you angry?

Poor or bad ritual especiallyt when there has been time to learn it to the best of any individuals capabilities.

Lack of motivation or self-help to reinvent a struggling Lodge. We have seen several Lodges turn a corner through the hard work of a few dedicated individuals.

What motivates you to work hard?

Wow that's a hard one, and I don't really know, but it may have something to do with coming from a split family, not having much, and realising that if you work hard you can achieve. For example as a young bobby and with the help of my wife Jenny, I was able to study hard and achieve high exam pass results, which put me in the minds of others. I also realised that if I was serious about advancement I had to make sure I was suitable so spent 7 years studying. Remember I left school at 15 and was in the Navy at 15 years 1 month and 1 day old! So I took an A level in English Law to test myself to see if I was capable. Having achieved an "A" grade pass I then spent 3 years studying for an HNC in business administration, a further year to convert this into an HND and then a further 2 years to achieve a Bachelor of Arts in Technology. Having been invested as Prov. G.M. I took my obligation seriously and wanted to ensure the Province went from strength to strength and to succeed. I don't like failure and never have!

I really do want to stress again how this success has been through the hard work and commitment from a lot of members up and down the Province. To many to mention, along with the help and occasional guidance of the other Heads of Orders.

Thank you Terry for what has been a very interesting insight into your background and what makes you tick.







Match your Wednesday number with the Wednesday Bonus Ball and win £15.

Match your Saturday number with the Saturday Bonus Ball and win £15.

Match both and win upto £150. More than one person can have the same number and win.

Match both numbers in same week £150 (Wednesday followed by Saturday).

There can be more than one jackpot winner in the same week sharing £150.

Officers Mess '23



Friday 24 November saw the much-anticipated Essex Grand and Provincial Officers Mess held at the historic setting of St. Giles Masonic Centre in Colchester, with W.Bro. Geoff Waddoups as its president.

The Officer's Mess is an informal event, where the Prov.G.M and his Executive chat with those present.

The evening was well attended with 94 brethren waiting in anticipation of hearing the Provincial Grand Master name his Active Wardens and nomination for Grand Steward for the following year.



Following an excellent meal, the Provincial Grand Master was delighted to announce that W.Bro. George Lambeth will be appointed as Senior Warden and W.Bro. Andrew Hurrell as Junior Warden, with W.Bro.

Geoff Newman our Prov.Dep.G.Sec. being nominated for the prestigious office of Grand Steward.

As his after-dinner speech reached its climax, RW.Bro. Terence D. Sheern removed a sealed envelope from his jacket pocket, which hopefully contained the name of his successor, and although he had been asked to nominate three names, he gave the impression that he was unaware who had been chosen.!!

His announcement that W.Bro. John Finlay Prov. Dep.G.M. was to be his successor was met with a standing ovation and much applause and cheering by everyone present.

W.Bro. John was escorted to the Prov.G.M where he was congratulated on behalf of the province.



When John was asked to say a few words, his response was "Provincial Grand Master, you know as well as anyone that I am not usually short of something to say!

However, at this moment I can only say that I am flabbergasted!!".

The 13th Provincial Grand Master Designate will be invested at the P.G.L meeting on the 30th of May 2024.



The meeting finished shortly afterwards with the brethren all keen to congratulate John, George, Andrew and Geoff on their future appointments.



Aurelius Lodge of RAM No.814 BANNER DEDICATION



To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the members of Aurelius Royal Ark Mariner Lodge decided to commission a banner to mark the occasion. The meeting took place on Friday 13th of October at Colvin Memorial Temple,

Clacton-on-Sea. The Provincial Grand Master R.W.Bro. Terence D. Sheern attended the meeting as part of his "Farewell Tour".

The Lodge was opened by their Commander Alan Penney who suffers from early onset dementia. Once the minutes had been read, the Prov. G.M accompanied by members of his Executive and Active Officers entered the Lodge to much acclaim.

The Prov.G.M accepted the Sceptre from Alan and commenced the banner dedication ceremony, saying a few words about the history of the Lodge and it's seniority in the Province and in the RAM degree. The Prov.G.M then ask his Prov.D.C W.Bro. Tony Goater to

assemble the banner dedication party. The banner entered the Lodge and and was placed by the Prov.G.M. The Commander then asked the Prov.G.M to accept the banner on behalf of the members, which he did.



The Prov.G.M then took great delight in unveiling the banner. He then called upon the Provincial Deputy Grand Chaplin, W.Bro. Gordon MacLean, to give an oration about the banner. This was received with great interest by all those present.

Once this was completed, the banner was presented back to the Worshipful Commander, and the banner party was formed and the banner was paraded amongst the assembled Brethren.

Once the ceremony was completed, the Prov.G.M handed the Sceptre back to the Commander and the normal business of the Lodge continued , and was closed accordingly. After a short "comfort" break, the Temple was set up for the Mark Meeting. The meeting was very short, allowing for normal business to be conducted.



The Brethren retired to the bar, before the Festive Board. The Festive Board was a very lively and friendly event and saw the Prov.G.M presented with

an engraved glass tankard with both the Aurelius Mark and RAM crests engraved. The glass also contained a "Gift Voucher" entitling the Prov.G.M to free beer on his return visits on production of the tankard. The voucher was valid from 14 October (the next day) until 25 February 2025, when the Mark Lodge will be celebrating its centenary. The Prov.G.M thanked the



Brethren of the Lodge and stated that "He will be Back" to claim his reward. The Prov.G.M received a donation of £280 towards the 2030 Festival.

A great time was had by all, and the members of Aurelius Royal Ark Mariner Lodge would like to thank the Provincial Grand Master, the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies and his Deputy for the hard word and guidance in the ceremony.





Battlesbridge Mark Lodge No.1415 at 50

A splendid meeting was held at Battlesbridge Lodge on Monday 13th November. The RAM was a simple Proclamation followed by tea and biscuits. Then the main event was the fifty-year celebration of the Lodge.

The Provincial Grand Master took the chair and introduced his team of Active Officers and then the Lodge work was carried out in an efficient manner by W. Bro. John Smoothy. This was followed by an entertaining talk about the history of West Ham football club, presented by W.Bro. John Helliar.

The Prov.G.M. then gave us some interesting facts about the Lodge name and the year of its consecration - 1973.

It was appropriate that there were fifty attendees for a 50th anniversary, all retreating to a festive board and toasting, amongst others, W.Bro. Clive Dunnico, a founding member who was present at the meeting.

All in all, a great meeting. Congratulations Battlesbridge.



Southern Star Lodge of Royal Ark Mariner No. 2026

CONSECRATION



On 4 October, the Province conducted a rare ceremony, not seen for some considerable time in the form of the consecration of a new Royal Mariner Lodge, Southern Star number 2026. The new Lodge is moored to Southern Star Mark Master Masons Lodge.

The 36 petitioners were up early to attend a final rehearsal at 9 o'clock at Upminster Masonic Centre.

Once the was opened the Provincial Grand Master R.W.Bro. Terence D. Sheern entered to great acclaim. The Prov.G.M was warmly welcomed into the Lodge and was saluted accordingly, as were two guests from Belgium:

R.W.Bro.Jean Verbist District Grand Master, accompanied by W.Bro. Gilbert Denys Dep.D.G.M.

The ceremony was conducted in an excellent manner by a Provincial Grand Master.

In attendance were 62 of Essex's finest Royal Ark Mariners witnessing the consecration of our 41st Royal Ark Mariner Lodge.

After the Consecration ceremony was completed, W.Bro. Richard Goodwin Asst.Prov.G.M was invited to Install their Primus Commander Gordon Maclean, the Installation Ceremony was carried out in an exemplary manner.

After the ceremony, the normal Lodge business was conducted with first officers installed and a fine festive board was attended by 53 diners. At the end of the meal, the Lodge was presented with a money box in the shape of Noah's Ark by the Provincial Grand Master to be used during the arms collection in future meetings.

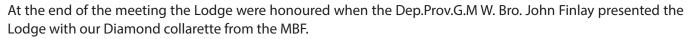


Crowstone RAM Lodge No.945 @ 75



At the Mark meeting which followed, the new Master, W. Bro. John Drabble was installed and it was a delight to see nine lay members return to the lodge after the inner workings. As part of installing his officers, the Worshipful Master appointed and invested W.Bro. Geoff as the D.C and presented him with a special pen holder

to clip onto his wand, thus proving that pens and sticks can mix!



A very special day was enjoyed by all.



Province's recent "initiatives" is the reinvigoration of TUDOR Lodge.

The Lodge was Consecrated in 1947 and, like many other Lodges, had seen the ups and downs of

membership during its lifetime.

To assist the Lodge to reinvent itself and to begin the reinvigoration, In July this year Asst.Prov.G.M John Stannard and three other Essex Mark members joined the Lodge. The decision to "Theme" the Lodge around its name was taken and at the October meeting a further nine Mark men joined.

Discussion took place regarding the location for the Lodge and it was decided that Maldon would offer the perfect opportunity for the geographical spread of members to come together. On 2 December the Lodge transferred its base from Upminster to Maldon. The Town of Maldon is steeped in history and much of it is associated with the Tudor period. Rumour has it that Elizabeth I was travelling from Suffolk in 1578 and then to Essex. From Colchester she apparently went on to Layer Marney and then stayed for a while in Maldon.

The Lodge members have been enthused by the idea of this special theme and have already provided the Royal flag and Ensign of the period - to be displayed resplendently during their meetings and at the festive boards. skilled Lodge member is crafting authentic halberds, to be used by the Warder / Tyler and Deacons, along with Tudor Goblets for the Master, Wardens and Tudor themed items for the IPM, and other

festive board.

Additionally, for use in the festive board, the Master, Wardens and RAM Commander will don specially produced resplendent Tudor robes. Tudor themed background music will play on occasions and the Lodge has adopted a special Tudor grace.

A grand banquet will be delivered for the RAM installation meeting, the first meeting in Maldon, in March. Two prime succulent Venison joints will be roasted and served. Sadly, we are unable to provide serving wenches, but we are aware of a few "court jesters" who may well be invited to join the Lodge.

Whilst we do not plan to have any Cock Fighting (very popular in Tudor times) we are planning to explore and cement the Tudor relationships, especially with the Cinque Ports of which Brightlingsea is the only such Essex port. It is hoped that we might be able to arrange a civic visit to Sandwich in Kent, Brightlingsea's head Cinque Port.

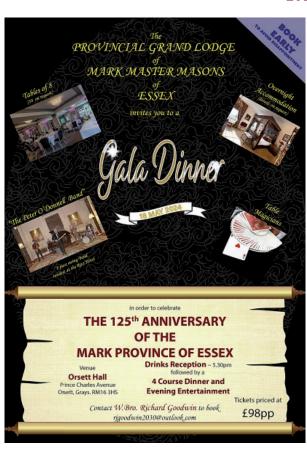
For information please contact Brian Dack, Secretary on 07504 090172.





Festival Update

EVENTS 2024



18 MAY 24 - 125th Celebration White Table

See poster for details

25 MAY 24 - Race Night

Saxon Hall - Details to follow

17 AUG 24 - Tudor Lodge BBQ

Colchester - Details to follow

27 AUG 24 - Il Mondo - Italian

Details to follow

14 SEP 24 - Go Karting

Lakeside - Details to follow

21 SEP 24 - Centurion Lodge Gala Night

Details to follow

6 OCT 24 - Zen City

Details to follow

24 NOV 24 - Kanchans





Your Media Team is looking for enthusiastic members to help with our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and website channels. If you have some free time and think you could help (training will be provided) then please contact our Media Manager W.Bro. Dave Todd via essexmarkcomms@gmail.com.



