



# MAKING OUR MARK

The Newsletter of Staffordshire & Shropshire Mark Master Masons

## Provincial Grand Lodge Makes Virtual History Read all about it

This year's Provincial Grand Lodge was a uniquely different affair. Because of the current restrictions on group gatherings, it was not possible to hold the meeting at the usual venue of the Staffordshire County Showground. Instead, and for the first time in the 139 year history of the Province, this year's PGL was held using Zoom video conferencing.

In the event 121 Mark Masons joined the Provincial Grand Master, RW Bro Michael Heenan, to conduct, on-line, the business of Provincial Grand Lodge. The PGM, was joined by the DepPGM, W Bro Kevin Spencer, the AsstPGM, W Bro Dennis Hill, and other senior Provincial Officers; Distinguished guests included the senior officers of both the Craft and Royal Arch in Staffordshire and Shropshire as well the heads of Knight Templar and Rose Croix Orders.

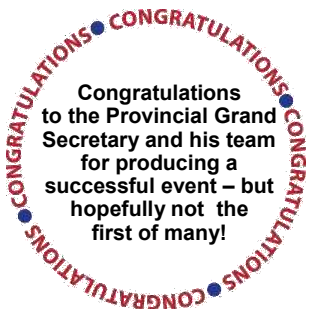


Despite the proceedings being constrained by the rules for conducting virtual meetings – a restricted Order of Business, no masonic regalia, ritual or signs – there was nevertheless a distinctly “masonic feel” to the event.

The highlights of the meeting were the Provincial Grand Treasurer's announcement that there will be no Provincial Dues charged for 2020 (received with applause), and the PGM's confirmation of Provincial Appointments and promotions. Although Grand Lodge rules prevented the “virtual” investiture of individual officers, the PGM was able to collectively thank the outgoing Wardens and Officers – regretting that the current circumstances had cheated them of the full Provincial experience; and to congratulate all those who had been appointed and promoted. This was followed by the PGM's address to the brethren.

He began by saying that Grand Lodge instructions were to keep it short! As part of his “short address” the PGM paid tribute to the kindness of the brethren in supporting all those individuals and organisations affected by coronavirus – as well as the efforts of the many brethren to keep in touch with their Lodges. He went on to give a summary of the past year's activity – such as it was – and concluded by reminding brethren of the value of fraternity and the hope for the future.

**Click on the photo of the PGM for the full text of his Address**



So I am now about a new challenge?



A few weeks ago, out of the blue came a phone call from the Provincial Grand Master. He explained to me that RW.Bro Ian Dingwall was stepping down from his role as Chairman of the Mark Membership Committee (MMC) and would I consider taking over as his replacement. Cutting my long deliberations short, I have accepted this challenge for a period of one year to take on the difficulties posed by Covid-19 to guide the MMC through this difficult time for Freemasonry.

Recruitment is going to be very difficult, if not impossible, at the present time so I see our role as that of retention. Our Provincial Grand Master is to be congratulated on his initiative of waiving Provincial Grand Lodge dues for all Mark and RAM Lodges for this year. It is a small but very significant help. We would like to appeal to ALL our Lodges Worshipful Masters and Commanders, their Secretaries and Scribes to keep in regular communication with their Brethren. Almoners have a critical role to play, please try to phone round your Brethren to demonstrate that your Lodge cares: if you are in a larger Lodge, why not ask a fellow member to share your role with this.

Even if Masonic activity in your region is suspended, please consider a regular short letter to all your members and where possible do try to hold informal meetings within the Rule of Six. It doesn't have to be at a Masonic Hall. On a personal note I am meeting up with a group of long-standing friends at a local Pub, but at a quiet time mid-week. It's keeping us in touch which is important as well as keeping us sane!

Brethren, this is YOUR Newsletter. Please let us have some of your views and anything you might think of interest to the other Brethren in our Province. In the meantime, please keep safe keep well, keep our spirits up to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

VW.Bro.Ian CM Smith

**Save The Date! On 26th November at 7.30pm you are invited to join the members of Round Table and Rotary Lodge No.1630. They are hosting a talk entitled "Historic links between the Craft, Mark and Royal Arch", given by W Bro Tony Harvey, the 2012 Prestonian Lecturer.**

A rectangular event poster with a blue border. At the top left is a crest with a shield and a crown. At the top right is a logo of a lamp. The text in the center reads: "Round Table & Rotary Lodge M.M.M. No. 1630", "Mark Province of Staffordshire & Shropshire presents", "THE HISTORIC LINKS BETWEEN THE CRAFT, MARK & ROYAL ARCH", "by V.W.Bro. Tony Harvey P.G.J.O.", "The 2012 Prestonian Lecturer". At the bottom, it says: "Via Zoom on Thursday, 26th November at 19.30 pm GMT, including live Q&A", "All bookings via <https://hlinks-rtr1630.eventbrite.co.uk/>".

**Numbers are limited to 100, so registration is on a 'first come first served' basis. To register your attendance please click this link and follow the instructions:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/masonic-talk-the-historic-links-between-the-craft-mark-royal-arch-registration-125792487717>

**The talk may be attended by any Freemason. No aspect of any Degree will be revealed. Candidates interested in joining the Mark degree are very welcome.**

## Updating the History of the Province

Sometime ago the Provincial Secretary circulated all Lodges requesting items of interest for inclusion in the updated History of our Province since the Centenary in 1982. A number of Brethren have sent me scans of Summonses and information regarding their own Lodges and I am extremely grateful to them.

I'm sure you all would like to see your Lodge recorded in this document when it is completed so please Brethren, can I request you all to have a look in your personal archives for anything of interest about your Lodge, did you have a Silver or Golden Jubilee, was there a Banner Dedication or any special event? If so, please scan a copy of the Summons or Menu Card and send it to me. The period from 1990 to the millennium is where I am particularly short of information, can anyone give me some information on Provincial BBQs that Dieter Funk and Graham Redfern used to run? Were any of the Provincial Weekends particularly memorable, in fact the more Copy I get, the more interesting will the History be. Please email me your info to [iancmsmith@gmail.com](mailto:iancmsmith@gmail.com) and thanks for your anticipated help.

VW.Bro.Ian CM Smith

## STOP PRESS

### Suspension of Face to Face Meetings



You will all be aware that the Government has imposed a new lockdown across England. As a result, Grand Lodge has suspended all face to face meetings until further notice. This suspension supersedes any local suspensions currently in place.

Virtual meetings can still go ahead. If you are not sure how to go about this, please contact our Provincial Grand Secretary and he will guide you through the process.



Above photo - North Shropshire Masonic Rooms open for business - Thanks to the Stirling efforts of the Rooms Committee, Talbot number 1021 were able to proclaim W.Bro. David Whiteley, Master for the ensuing year. The rule of six and social distancing were faithfully observed.

**A Timely Warning—Look After Your Health**

Though no spring chicken, bless him, Dave Griffin - a member of Eccleshall Mark 1827 wasn't feeling too spritely late last year and recently he found out why. But, like Britain's Got Talent, everybody has a back story and here is a little flavour of Dave.

Born in 1964 at Sheldon, B'ham the third son of Jean and Sid he moved with the family to Lichfield as a three year old. He attended King Edwards Grammar School leaving at 16yrs and started as a planning engineer with Hermes Doors and Windows. Night school beckoned and with an A level in Business Accounting he moved to Staffs C.C. where he was a finance officer for elderly folk in residential care.

By 25yrs of age he was a financial adviser with Co-Op Insurance before leaving for a stint with HSBC and a career with Barclays where he rose to be a Senior Financial Planning Manager.

At school it was rugby in the winter and cricket in summer - God forbid if you were seen kicking a football! But Dave's a proud Brummie and an ardent Blues fan.

Dave's Masonic career began at Jasper 3934 in 2014 after which he became a joining member at the Consecration of Universities Lodge 9907 in 2015 and also of The Trent Lodge 4269 in 2018.

Having taken early retirement he ran the Little Vic Pub in Newcastle which was where I and most other masons met him. Dave and I have formed a strong friendship which was cemented in December 2019 when he married the love of his life Anthea and I was honoured to be chosen as their Best Man.

Dave's health has generally been good. He was a rugby prop - 16st of muscle at one time. He played through injuries - he had spinal operations at 28 & 34 and he injured until he was 45 when the injuries caught up with him.

Rugby has an active social side

and weight gain was inevitable. I can't tell you what he weighs - but I wouldn't like him to fall off the wardrobe onto me!!!

Now, to the warning. In October 2018 aged only 54yrs Dave had a bad weekend where everything ached, he had double vision and was so tired he didn't leave his bed for 3 days. The next weekend he and Anthea visited Wales - well you could then - and try as he might he couldn't get his breath and was permanently worn out. 'You'll see the Doc when we're home' instructed Anthea and sure enough he did. Only to be told that he'd had a mild heart attack recently. Atrial Fibrillation was diagnosed with stable angina and he was prescribed statins, blood thinners and GNT spray for the angina.



In March and September 2019 he attended hospital where his heart was stopped and restarted using 'electric paddles'. He didn't really enjoy it and he had burns from the procedure where his back was on the table!

Though on various meds In July 2020 he reached the stage where he couldn't walk upstairs, couldn't walk the dog, was permanently breathless with chest and arm pains that resulted in three visits to A & E.

On Tuesday 4th August Dave asked if I could take him to a Consultants appointment and I dropped him off at 9am. At 10am he rang asking me to collect Anthea as he was to undergo angioplasty and the insertion of a stent to open his arteries. The call came with the rider that 'if that didn't work' he

would undergo open heart surgery the next day. Well the stent did work but Investigation of his heart showed that he had an unusually small upper chamber which, the consultant felt, meant that a further heart attack would not be survivable.

He actually told Dave that his blood supply to the heart was allowing only 5% capacity through. He used the analogy of the mobile phone battery - once the other 5% is gone IT DIES!!

There's a big lifestyle change underway - lose weight, reduce drinking, exercise. He has had to leave the licence trade to escape the heavy lifting, as he restocked shelves and the general stress of an industry where not every customer is a pleasant one. He's feeling better but knows it's a long road.

Brethren, the back story may ring a bell with some of us? It certainly has with me. Take care of your health, visit the doctor, don't be afraid of change and don't let your lifestyle be the last thing that you live for!

Steve Bird PPR GSW

Gough Mark Lodge 45 and Gough Royal Ark Mariners 45.  
W.Bro. William Harold Timmis, Gough 45 – A Brothers Lasting  
Legacy.



The Province of Staffordshire And Shropshire last held a Charity Festival in 2007.

Each Lodge did its bit to raise money and Province kept a log of how much each collected. Knowing there was a 'Leader Board' kept everyone's mind focused and the Charity Stewards would urge each member to redouble his efforts and charitable giving.

One Brother paid particular heed - W.Bro. 'Timmy' Timmis,  
P Pr GSW, P Asst G STD B

On his sad passing to The Grand Lodge Above in 2005, bequests were made by W.Bro. 'Timmy' Timmis to his Mark and RAM Lodges for the benefit of the members. In addition to these, Timmy had in fact already donated three separate cheques to the Festival for £1,000 each which with Gift Aid came to £3,800. This added considerably to the totals raised. Indeed on 7/7/2007 at the Festival's Ball, Gough Mark Lodge were announced as the lodge that had raised the most with a total of £18,032.

But the story doesn't end there. On 23rd October 2020 the R.W.PGM wrote a letter to Ken Bell, Gough 45 Secretary, who had been the Charity Steward of the lodge for some years leading up to 2007. The letter reads as follows:

'I am writing to advise you I have received notice from the Mark Benevolent Fund that they have received a legacy of £10,000 from the Estate of the above named which is to be credited to Gough 45 Mark. (Gough RAM has received a similar amount).

This gift now entitles the Lodge to be presented with a Grand Patron Diamond Award, the collaret and certificate of which I have received. This is the highest award currently given.

I have already communicated this news to your Worshipful Master and it has been agreed between us to present it when this is next allowed in Lodge. I hope the Lodge does not mind, but I will give publicity to this in 'Making our Mark'.

May I congratulate the Lodge on the award, made possible only by the generosity of W.Bro Timmis.

Kindest regards,

Michael R Heenan, Provincial Grand Master'

So Brethren, there we have it. Masons good deeds transcend time itself and will be remembered for many years to come. The monies raised have benefitted the general world already but W.Bro. Timmis, being a good steward, continues to raise the profile of Masonry still. Let's hope we may join him in our thoughts and that his example will be a guide to us all.

Steve Bird, P Pr GSW.

