

Provincial Grand Secretary's Report – June 2010

Membership and Lodge changes

During the year ended 31st August 2009 the changes in membership of the Province were as follows (last year's figures in brackets):-

Order of Mark Master Mason:

46 (42) brethren were advanced and 61 (43) became joining members.

The Province lost 41 (31) brethren through death, 84 (78) resigned, 7 (9) were excluded and 10 (6) were made honorary members, resulting in a net loss of 35 (39) compared with last year.

The total Lodge membership is 1727 (1778). There are at present 62 Mark Lodges.

Degree of Royal Ark Mariner:

30 (37) brethren were Elevated and 61 (57) became joining members.

28 (15) brethren were lost through death; 34 (44) resigned; 2 (2) were excluded and 3 (1) were made an honorary member, resulting in a net gain of 24 compared with a loss of 5 in the 2008 / 2009 year.

Total membership is 927 (903). The Province now has 35 Royal Ark Mariner Lodges.

Provincial Grand Lodge activities during the year

There have been several notable events since the last Provincial meeting.

On 3rd November 2009, Lathom Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No. 136, celebrated their 125th Anniversary.

Fabric Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 939 celebrated their 75th Anniversary on 16th February 2010.

The "Centenary" Banners, being carried into Provincial Grand Lodge for the first time today were dedicated by the Provincial Grand Master in the East Lancashire Provincial Grand Officers Lodges No. 990. The Royal Ark Mariner Banner at Bridge Street, Manchester on 29th March 2010 and the Mark Centenary Banner at Hemsley House, Salford on 27th April 2010, both meetings being very well attended. The two Banners were purchased by the Mark Fellowship.

Sadly, three Mark Lodges have begun the process to return their Warrants to the MW Grand Master. The brethren of these Lodges are intending to join "en bloc" one of the local Mark Lodges. It is expected that at least two of the Lodges will have closed by the start of the new season.

Kinship Meetings

During the year there were two Kinship meetings. One held under the banner of Goulburn Mark Lodge No. 680 on 23rd September 2009 at Bridge Street Manchester. The second was held under the banner of Gawthorpe Mark Lodge No. 1014 on 12th November 2009 at Nelson House, Burnley. Both of these meetings were well attended and attracted many Craft Freemasons wishing to find out more about the Mark Degree. Towards the end of the calendar year it is hoped to have a Kinship meeting under the banner of Mossley Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 1381 at Westholme, Mossley Masonic Hall. It is the wish of the Provincial Grand Master to continue to hold these successful Kinship meetings throughout the Province.

The Provincial Grand Master

Again our Provincial Grand Master has had a very busy year! Brethren will recall our Provincial Grand Master was the President for the very successful visit, on 14th April 2009 of the 125th Annual MW Grand Master's Lodge of Instruction Festival team to Manchester. As the Immediate Past President, he attended the 126th Festival which was hosted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Surrey at Mark Masons' Hall on 29th April 2010. It was his pleasure, at the Banquet following the meeting, to propose the health of the new President, the Provincial Grand Master of Surrey. On the day before, at the Annual Investiture meeting of United Grand Lodge of England, he was promoted to the Craft rank of PJGD.

Personal Anniversaries

During the year, brethren of the Province celebrated one personal 60th and two 50th anniversaries. On 21st April 2010, VWBro Eric Raymond Duckworth, PGJO, of FW Broadbent Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 1132 was present and in very good form to receive from the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, WBro David Anderson, his 60th year certificate from Grand Lodge. WBro Stanley Brooke, PProvGJW, was Advanced in St Martin's Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 414 meeting in Chesterfield in the Province of Derbyshire. He became a Founder and the third Worshipful Master of Integrity Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 1369. On the 13th October 2009 he received his 50th year certificate from the Assistant Provincial Grand Master, WBro Reginald Newsome. On 14th April 2010 WBro David Dugmore Banks, PProvGSW, of Perseverance Lodge of Mark Master Masons No. 403 will officially reach his 50th year in the Order. However, due to date clashes, his presentation will be held on 13th September 2010.

Our thanks go to the members of the Provincial Grand Stewards Lodge No. 1272 for their valued assistance in the front-of-house and stewardship duties for the meeting. To WBro Ian Ronson, the Provincial Grand Tyler and his helpers for moving the Lodge furniture and setting up this magnificent room. To Bolton Masonic Hall for their support with the loan of Lodge furniture. Our sincere appreciation to the Paramedics for their attendance and to Bro John Hesketh for his expertise with the sound system. To the Deputy and Assistant Provincial Grand Secretaries, WBro Frank GH Smith, WBro Trevor E Parvin and WBro David J Kelly, for all their hard work and dedication in the day to day administration of the Province.

WBro Francis R Baxendale, *PGJD*

Provincial Grand Secretary