

The Mark Degree

The Mark Degree is undoubtedly one of the most popular degrees in Freemasonry; there are some 1500 Mark Lodges in the English Constitution with London being the largest consisting of 100 Lodges and well over 3000 members. Our Order is non-denominational and open to all Master Masons in good standing who are members of a Regular Craft Constitution.

There is evidence a form of Mark Degree existed in Scotland as early as 1599, however the earliest records of a speculative Mark Degree being worked in England are in September 1769. That year, at a newly chartered Royal Arch Chapter (known as The Chapter of Friendship) held at the George Tavern in Portsmouth, the then Provincial Grand Master Thomas Dunckerley wrote:

"bro't the Warrant of the Chapter and having lately rec'd the 'Mark', he made the bre'n 'Mark Masons' and 'Mark Masters' and each chose their Mark...."

The working of the Mark Degree to the middle of the Nineteenth Century was at best, chaotic. Many degrees of varying types had been worked in Craft Lodges prior to the Union of the two rival Craft Grand Lodges in 1813 when, under the Articles of Union, the Mark Degree amongst others was not recognised as "Pure Ancient Masonry"; nevertheless many Lodges continued to work the Mark Degree.

On 25th August 1851, a group of London Brethren founded a Mark Lodge under a Charter obtained quite illegally from the Bon Accord Royal Arch Chapter No. 70 of Aberdeen and appointed William Jones as Master; this action resulted in the suspension of the Bon Accord Chapter and all the members thereof. Despite this, Bon Accord Mark Lodge continued to meet and became very successful; by 1855 it had 120 members growing to about 150 by 1856.

The Grand Mark Lodge was established on the 23rd June 1856 with Lord Leigh, (Provincial Grand Master for Warwickshire in the Craft), as the first Grand Master and gradually almost all the bodies conferring the Mark Degree in England and the existing Mark Lodges, acceded to, or came under its authority.

In common with most disputes, time was a healer and in 1883 HRH The Prince of Wales, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, was Advanced becoming Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons in 1886. He went on to expressly state that he wished to see the Mark remain independent of the Craft and any other body.

More recently there is no doubt that a vast number of brethren who have attained eminence in the Craft have been no less eminent in the Mark showing the strong bond between our two Orders. If you have found this leaflet of interest and wish to join our wonderful Order, please complete the form overleaf and return to your proposer or to either:

The Provincial Grand Secretary of London:
provincialgrandsec@markprovincelondon.com

Are you Worthy to Receive your Mark?

Masons' Marks have been found on stones throughout the Middle East as well as the castles, churches and cathedrals of Europe. Medieval stained glass windows, carvings and manuscripts detail such marks and give us some idea of the methods adopted by the stone masons of that time. Masons carved stones for ordinary building blocks and also for decoration and it became customary for stone masons to place marks upon stones in the quarries to identify the work of a particular mason for the payment of wages and signify that the stone was acceptable for use. Other marks indicated where a particular stone might be placed within the structure.

Ceremonies and Regalia

The Ceremony of Advancement to the Degree of Mark Master Mason centres on the traditional practice of choosing and using a distinguishing mark to identify each craftsman's work so that he may be entitled to receive his wages. The themes of the degree include regularity, diligence and discipline and as the second degree of Craft Freemasonry encourages learning, the Mark Degree instructs how that learning can be most usefully and judiciously employed for our own honour and the benefit of our fellow man.

While motives may sometimes be misinterpreted, attainments underrated and reputations traduced, the Mark Degree demonstrates the merits of persistence in the face of adversity and the conviction that truth will prevail.

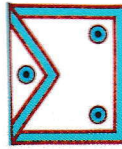
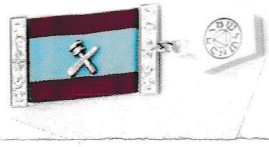
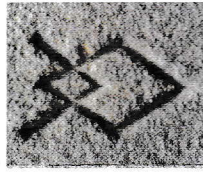
The Mark Degree is one of hope and encouragement, the ritual is built around a single verse from Psalm 118: "The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner". It deals with the building of King Solomon's Temple and the various craftsmen employed but the real message is the contemplation of human strengths and weakness.

On occasion a lecture is given using a tracing board which contains symbols from which lessons can be drawn. The tracing board includes the method of decoding the Masonic Cipher, (based upon the lines used in a game of noughts and crosses), which was originally used to preserve the secrecy of minutes and other writings in Freemasonry.

The Mark Degree contains many messages for the discerning mason and it is for each to put his own interpretation on the message which the Degree proclaims but there is a firm statement that no man is beyond redemption and the possibility of distinction is always within his grasp.

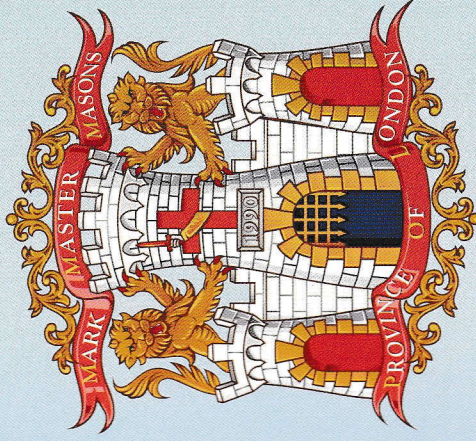
In addition to the apron and jewel of the Order, some Mark Lodges also have a special token, known as a Mark Penny, to symbolise the payment of wages.

Distributed by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of London, with grateful thanks to Bro. Scott James Dunn for the design work.



The Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons

Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of London



Exploring the legend of the building of the Temple
teaching that appreciation is the reward of labour

Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

To be Completed by the Candidate for Advancement, Joining or Re-joining.

This form must be completed using typescript or block letters and sent within fourteen days of admission of the candidate via the Provincial/District Grand Secretary to:
The Grand Secretary, Mark Masons' Hall, 86 St. James's Street, London SW1A 1PL

1. LODGE NAME																																																																			
2. NUMBER					3. PROVINCE/DISTRICT																																																														
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14. MASTER OF MARK LODGE	No.					DATE OF INSTALLATION																																																																														
15. PRESENT PROVINCIAL/ DISTRICT GRAND RANK																															DATE																																																					
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PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ALL THE MARK LODGES OF WHICH YOU ARE OR HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OVERLEAF																																																																																				
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I hereby certify that the above is a correct record and the Candidate's Mark has been en-grossed overleaf.																																																																																				
21. NAME OF SECRETARY (Initials & Surname)																																																																																				
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23. Enclosed is the Registration Fee of £ REGF01 + VAT of £ VATOUTPUT A Total Fee of £ GFDAR																																																																																				

Data Protection Act 1998: I, the above signed, hereby consent to the processing of personal data and information supplied on this form by the LODGE, PROVINCE and the GLMMM