



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of London.
Held at Freemasons' Hall, Great Queen Street, London
on Thursday 13th July 2023**

Processions

The meeting commenced at approximately 14.20 with the first Procession formed of Deputy Provincial Grand Masters, Assistant Provincial Grand Masters and other Distinguished Brethren.

The second Procession entered Provincial Grand Lodge formed of Right Worshipful Brethren and Past Senior Members of the Province.

The third Procession consisted of the Past Provincial Grand Masters, accompanied by the banners of the Time Immemorial Lodges of the Province.

The fourth Procession consisted of the Provincial Officers for 2022-2023. After they had turned inwards the Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Thomas Quinn, entered Provincial Grand Lodge to the music of the Pipes & Drums and took his seat on the dais. After which the Provincial Grand Officers took their seats.

Delegations

The fifth Procession was a delegation of Worshipful Masters of the Province.

The sixth Procession was a delegation of Worshipful Commanders of the Province.

The seventh Procession was a delegation of newly Advanced Brethren of the Province.

To Open Provincial Grand Lodge

Provincial Grand Lodge was opened in due form at 14.45.

To Salute the Provincial Grand Master

The Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies called the Brethren to order to salute the Provincial Grand Master with Seven.

To Salute the Past Pro Grand Master

The Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies called the Brethren to order to salute the Past Pro Grand Master with Eleven.

To Salute the Right Worshipful Brethren

The Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies called the Brethren to order to salute the Right Worshipful Brethren with Seven. R.W. Bro Eric Rymer, Provincial Grand Master of Worcestershire, responded on behalf of all the guests.

To receive the Assistant Grand Master R.W. Bro. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson

The Right Worshipful Assistant Grand Master entered the Lodge & having taken his seat was saluted with nine and he then thanked the Brethren for their warm and fraternal Salutation.

Welcome Distinguished Guests

The Provincial Grand Master introduced all the Distinguished Brethren attending the meeting which was followed by the Brethren of the Province of London giving them all a warm welcome.

In Memoriam

The names of all those Brethren of the Province who had passed away in the preceding year were printed in the Order of Proceedings, which was also distributed to all members via email. The Provincial Grand Master mentioned the Senior Brethren who had passed, followed by prayers offered by the Provincial Grand Chaplain. The assembled Brethren then sung "Abide with Me" after which the Last Post was played.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Provincial Annual Meeting held on 14th July 2022, previously distributed by email, were taken as read and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

Roll of Provincial Grand Officers and Roll of Lodges

The Provincial Grand Secretary confirmed that all the Provincial Grand Officers were present except for those unavoidably absent by reason of sickness or other pressing emergencies. Also, that all of the 109 Mark Lodges and 87 Lodges of Royal Ark Mariner within the Province were represented. The Provincial Grand Secretary reported that over 250 apologies had been received via the online booking platform and that from these apologies an additional £4,135 had been donated to the alms collection.

Report of the Provincial Secretary

The Provincial Grand Secretary stated that he would like to thank all those mentioned in his report, as published in the Order of Proceedings booklet, for their assistance during his tenure of Office.

Report of the Provincial Treasurer and Accounts

The Provincial Grand Treasurer's report and the audited accounts for the year ended 31st August 2022 being included in the Order of Proceedings, the Provincial Grand Treasurer then went on to say "R.W. Provincial Grand Master, My script says that I have nothing to add to my report; that alone would guarantee that I have!

The Provincial accounts and those of our benevolent fund have of course been circulated and are on our website. Clearly no one has looked at them, except for one observant member who commented on the change of auditors for our benevolent fund. The excellent firm of Sterlings Ltd has had to retire. This I assure you, and especially given the somewhat strange and heavy accent of our Provincial Grand Master, is not a decision akin to the Scottish National Party. The explanation is far simpler. I became a partner in Sterlings Ltd, as a result of which they are ineligible to act and Shenkers LLP will shortly be nominated.

For the first time in my term as Treasurer, I have proposed an increase in dues. The explanation is again straightforward; if you want to hold the Annual Meeting in the Grand Temple and these surroundings, the costs have substantially increased.

Finally, you may have noted that we made a significant surplus in 2021 but a deficit in 2022. Covid prevented a 'live' meeting in 2021 and two were held in 2022. Despite our Provincial Grand Master asking me to remove my reported comment in my official report in the order of proceedings, I would just note that I can achieve a much better financial result if there is no Annual Meeting.

A proposition by W. Bro. Nigel Reese, Provincial Grand Senior Warden, seconded by W. Bro. Paul Cutts, Provincial Grand Junior Warden, to approve and adopt the Accounts, previously distributed by email, was passed by the Brethren.

Approval of the revised Provincial Bylaws & Regulations.

A proposition by W. Bro. Robert Anderson, Provincial Grand Secretary, seconded by W. Bro. Derrick Silver, Provincial Grand Registrar, to approve and adopt the revised Provincial Bylaws and Regulations of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of London, previously distributed by email, was passed by the Brethren. These included an increase of Provincial Annual Fees to £4.50 per member, for both Mark and Royal Ark Mariner Lodges.

The RW Provincial Grand Master then asked the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies to present VW Bro, Stephen Fenton to him, and then delivered the following address-

V. W. Bro. Stephen you have now been the Province's Treasurer for 14 of its 33 years of existence but are in fact our 6th Treasurer – the first 4 incumbents having survived only one year each in the job. You have therefore brought a considerable period of stability to that Office and I am now the 3rd PGM who has 'enjoyed' the skill and experience which your accounting knowledge brings to the job. You do indeed look after our money extremely well and have proved to be a tremendous bullwork against any profligacy which PGMs and Benevolent Fund Trustees might try to exert over the monies entrusted to your keeping. In recognition of that length and quality of service which you have given to the Province, it is my great pleasure to select you as this year's recipient of the PGM's Award of Service. This is the official citation signed by me, this is the much coveted engraved Token for this Award and finally, this is the bill for the engraving of that token, which I'm sure you will be happy to settle in early course.

Report of the Provincial Grand Almoner & Charity Steward

The Provincial Grand Master advised the Brethren that he had it on the highest authority that these Reports as contained in the Order of Proceedings, had nothing further to be added to them. He also thanked these Provincial Officers for their Reports and their hard work throughout the year.

Elections

A proposition by W. Bro. Antonious Antoniou, Provincial Grand Master Overseer, seconded by W. Bro. David Thompson, Provincial Grand Senior Overseer, to re-elect V.W. Bro. Stephen Fenton as Provincial Grand Treasurer was received and passed by the Brethren.

A proposition by W. Bro. Robert Anderson, Provincial Grand Secretary, seconded by W. Bro. Derrick Silver, Provincial Grand Registrar, to elect W. Bro's Michael Shenker and Keith Goodman as Account Examiners was received and passed by the Brethren.

A proposition by W. Bro Robert Anderson, Provincial Grand Secretary, seconded by W. Bro. Antonious Antoniou, Provincial Grand Master Overseer, that V.W. Bro. Henry Hobson and also W. Bro's Derrick Silver and Marios Stylianides be elected as Trustees of the Provincial Grand Lodge Benevolent Fund, was received and passed by the Brethren.

A proposition by W. Bro Derrick Silver, Provincial Grand Registrar, seconded by W. Bro. Antonious Antoniou, Provincial Grand Master Overseer, that Shenkers LLP. Be re-appointed as Account Examiners to the Provincial Benevolent Fund was received and passed by the Brethren.

Donations

V.W. Bro Stephen Fenton, Provincial Grand Treasurer, proposed and W. Bro. Derrick Silver, Provincial Grand Registrar, seconded that the sum of £5,000 be donated to the personal list of the Provincial Grand Master for Cheshire in support of the 2023 Mark Benevolent Fund Festival; the proposition was carried. The Provincial Grand Master then presented a cheque to R.W. Bro. John Gary Horstman Provincial Grand Master, who gave a suitable reply.

Appointment and Investiture of a Deputy Provincial Grand Master

The Provincial Grand Master informed the Brethren that it was his intention to re-appoint V.W. Bro. Tim MacAndrews as the Deputy Provincial Grand Master. V.W. Bro. Tim MacAndrews was saluted with Five and gave a suitable reply.

Appointment and Investiture of Assistant Provincial Grand Masters

The Provincial Grand Master informed the Brethren that it was his intention to re-appoint V.W. Bro. John Ellis, V.W. Bro. Howard Markham and W. Bro. Christopher Damp as Assistant Provincial Grand Masters. The Provincial Grand Master announced that V.W. Bro Wes Hollands was standing down in rotation after four years sterling service and thanked him for his unstinting dedication.

The Provincial Grand Master then stated that W. Bro Marios Stylianides had accepted the Office and it was his intention to appoint and invest him as an Assistant Provincial Grand Master.

The Escort was formed and retired then re-entered with the Assistant Provincial Grand Master designate.

The Provincial Grand Secretary then read the Patent of Appointment. After the Provincial Grand Master formally introduced the Assistant Provincial Grand Master as follows-

W. Bro. Marios Philip Stylianides; Given your extensive involvement in many aspects of Metropolitan Grand Lodge and more recently London Mark, there can be hardly any one present, who has not been "touched" in some way by your masonic activities over the last 40 years.

You were born in London on 23 December 1951. What an early Christmas present that was for your mother and your family! After school and higher education you took your HND Diploma into the building industry and over the years have built up many successful businesses in building, design and construction.

You are married to Judy who has put up with you for nearly 49 years. In fact tomorrow -14 July is your wedding anniversary. Fortunately the 14th July 2024, your Golden Wedding Anniversary misses the date of our next Annual Meeting by three days; and so you will be able to celebrate both. You and Judy have two sons and you are a much-loved husband, father and grandfather to your family. You are also a kind and generous host to your friends.

Marios your Masonic activities are just as extensive as your professional CV.

You were initiated in 1983 in Isambard Brunel Lodge. How appropriate, as he too was famous for building things. Within the various lodges where you have held memberships you have been at various times - Treasurer, Secretary, Preceptor, Charity Stewart, Mentor and Royal Arch Coordinator. In the Craft you are Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies and the holder of Senior London Grand Rank. You have occupied all the Royal Arch offices up to the Principals' Chairs. You were Advanced into Chevalier Mark in Hertfordshire in 2009 but were converted to London missionary work when you joined Prince of Wales No. 4 in 2011, and became a Founder of Metropolitan Mark in 2014. You are a Founder and Primus Master and Primus Commander respectively of the Aegean Lodges, where it was my great pleasure to install you during my time as Deputy Provincial Grand Master. You are a member and founder of several other lodges.

You are a seasoned organiser of Ladies Festivals, international travel, charity events including riding for blind children, the Masonic Trout and Salmon Fishing Charity and as recently as last Saturday, our London to Brighton Bike Ride - the list is almost endless. You possess the energy and enthusiasm of a man half your age. You were appointed Grand Steward in 2020 and, most deservedly, will be promoted to Past Grand Senior Deacon in September this year.

In terms of the commitment of your time and your resources to our beloved Mark Degree, Marios, I can think of no better qualified brother to fulfil the duties of one of London's APGMs.

The Assistant Provincial Grand Master designate then took the Solemn Obligation of an Assistant Provincial Grand Master, was Invested and given the Patent and Constitutions and Regulations. W. Bro. Marios Stylianides having taken his seat, all the Assistant Provincial Grand Masters were saluted with Five; W. Bro. Marios Stylianides then thanked the Brethren for their salutation on behalf of all the Assistant Provincial Grand Masters.

Appointment & Investiture of Provincial Grand Officers

The Provincial Grand Master appointed and invested the Officers for the year, after which he gave promotions and first appointments to Past Rank to a further 110 Brethren.

Presentations

During this section of the Agenda the Provincial Grand Master made several significant presentations and the following is an extract of his wording on this topic:-

Wes, this is the moment which you and a number of your colleagues have been looking forward to, for 4 years. The moment when you demit Office as an APGM and sail gracefully off into retirement. However, I speak absolutely in jest as you have discharged your duties as one of my London Chains, faithfully, conscientiously and with great enthusiasm. Your Official Visits to the Lodges of your aegis have all been carried out with great dignity but with a tremendous sense of fun and good humour, which has been the trademark of the period of your Patent. You have been a great support to me personally during these past years Wes and amongst your many successes I would single out your help and advice to Jon Wallis our Provincial DC; obtaining the services of the Pipe Band, which has thrilled the Brethren and added a special sparkle to these our Provincial Meetings; you have steered the Provincial Officers' Mess Committee in the right direction on a number of fronts; you have been instrumental in the revival of the 50-50 Club in the way that you have managed the personalities involved; you have acted as Toast Master for our Burns Event in Bournemouth; and you have worked right up to the wire, by co-ordinating and orchestrating the successful Reponement of the Scriveners' Lodge. Wes you have now arrived at the end of your highly successful term of Office and it is with the greatest of pleasure that I now invest you with the collarette of an APGM and offer you my most sincere thanks for a job well done. Thank you.

"Brethren. you will all be aware of my great interest in the ceremony and ritual appertaining to our Advancement and Elevation ceremonies. Three years ago I instigated a new award of an Olive Branch Pin for an Excellent Elevation Ceremony, to augment the longstanding Silver Pin Award for an Excellent Advancement Ceremony; and I'm delighted to announce that we have the following recipients for each Award today. Brother Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies would you please present W. Bro. Jeff Reese and W. Bro. Douglas Sehsuvaroglu to receive their Silver Pins, W. Bro. Graham Ludar-Smith who receives both awards and W. Bro's Terry Hall, Ravi Patel and Paul Burgess to receive their Olive Branch Pins."

All of these presentations were greeted with great acclaim by the Brethren present.

Assistant Grand Master's Address

The Assistant Grand Master then addressed the meeting.

Provincial Grand Master's Address

Brethren this is now the fifth time I have had the pleasure and honour to address you as Provincial Grand Master. So can I begin by welcoming you all again formally and thanking you most sincerely for

your attendance and support here in London within these iconic surroundings – the very heart and soul of English Freemasonry.

Our Annual Meeting is a time for looking forward to the start of a new Mark Masonic season but also the opportunity to reflect on the activities or at least some of the activities, of the past 12 months. And what another wonderful year this has been once again for your Province of London. We have worked hard and played hard, combining leisure and social activities with fundraising and charitable events; and still finding plenty of opportunities for the serious or formal side of our Mark Masonry.

There have been 2 organised excursions to the Tower of London to accommodate the number of you who sought to witness the Ceremony of the Keys; the Provincial Golf Day at Leatherhead; Provincial Officers' Mess Lunch at the Union Jack Club and a dinner in the beautiful surroundings of Bakers' Hall, where we will be returning for the Autumn Mess Luncheon on 6th October. There was our End of Year Party at the Holiday Inn and of course the Annual Burns Event in Bournemouth.

The consecration of Prince Michael of Kent Lodge in Bucharest and the subsequent Consecration of two R.A.M. lodges in the District of Romania, were also well supported by London Members, who gave further support to R.A.M. Elevation and Installation Ceremonies in that country. Freemasons Without Borders, our largest London Lodge by memberships, has lived up to its name by taking two of its meetings outside of England, one to Edinburgh and one to Gibraltar; and we look forward to supporting R.W. Bro. Cristian Mihutoiu by travelling in force to Bucharest in September to see him perform an Advancement Ceremony, as that London Lodge's newest W.M.

We have had a Banner Dedication at Aegean Lodge, the Centenary celebrations of Public Schools Lodge with another four Centenaries planned for next year; plus a 150 Year Celebration for New Era Lodge. The Province continues to grow, as we have Consecrated a new Royal Air Force Lodge and Reopened the former Gibraltar Lodge as a new lodge for Secretaries. And we will be keeping Grand Secretary busy next season too, when we present Petitions to Consecrate another 3 Royal Ark Mariner lodges for Irenic, Loyalty and Royal Air Force. Those proposed Consecrations will take our numbers to 109 Mark Lodges & 90 RAM- that's 199 Units – just one short of the magic 200 Lodges!!

Our membership numbers are more than keeping pace with losses. Since our last Annual Meeting we have Advanced 133 Brethren and Elevated 106. Plus we have seen 149 Joiners in the Mark and 53 in R.A.M. taking our overall numbers to 3,400 Mark and 1,900 RAM members. Brethren you are all great recruiters for your Lodges – keep up the good work! Remember that the Province will continue for another year to pay the Grand Lodge Registration Fees for Mark Joiners and Advancements.

I am delighted to see so many of our newly Advanced Brethren here today. Amongst them is Brother James Ballantyne of Maguncor Lodge whose ceremony of Advancement and Festive Board only finished at 10 p.m. last night. Brother Ballantyne would you please stand and take a bow; and indeed would all our new Brethren of the season please stand so that you can be acknowledged and welcomed by us all.

Innovations this year have included the building of our own Travelling Ark, courtesy of V.W. Bro. John (Noah!) Ellis. This symbol of Royal Ark Mariner brotherly affection is intended to promote good attendance and inter-Lodge visiting between Royal Ark Mariner units and a formal programme will be in place for the start of the new season. My thanks to the WC of Connaught Army & Navy Lodge, for carrying the Ark today and presenting it to Provincial Grand Lodge.

In our Welcome Packs we now include a newly designed explanatory booklet for our new Members and our Business Cards for issuing to potential candidates at Chapter meetings. Another marvellous opportunity for introducing Royal Arch and Craft masons to the Magic of the Mark Degree.

One of the impacts of Covid and Lockdown was the non-production of our Year Book. But thanks to the sterling efforts of W. Bro. Andy Bull of Ubique Lodge, this publication has been revived and copies of the new 2023 edition are available and will shortly be distributed to all Lodge Secretaries.

Alongside our efforts towards our own membership drive, we were pleased to support the Metropolitan Grand Chapter's Awareness Event at Freemasons Hall; and of course you are all aware of our support for the Metropolitan Grand Master's Air Ambulance Appeal, when, along with others I cycled in the London to Brighton Charity Bike Ride! Brethren your contributions to that Appeal both from Lodges and individuals is nudging towards our target and on your behalf I hope to be able to present a large cheque to Sir Michael Snyder at the London Grand Ranks Investiture Meeting on 1st November. Brethren of the Mark Province of London the level of your charitable giving's to a whole host of beneficiaries is outstanding – particularly to the Mark Benevolent Fund to whom you contributed well in excess of £50,300 towards the 2023 MBF Festival. I applaud your generosity.

These are only some of the highlights of 2022/2023. For a more detailed and comprehensive list, I commend to your attention our London Group Facebook page and Website and our quarterly magazine the London Mallet. My thanks go to Richard Criddle and his team for the upkeep and creation of these important communication channels. As ever my undying and heartfelt thanks to all on the Secretariat and Jonathon Wallis' Ceremonial teams who make this meeting happen and who ensure the smooth running of the Province throughout the year. I have already thanked Robert Anderson for his past services and he, having passed the Secretary's quill pen to Gurdeep Virdee, I wish you, Gurdeep, all the very best in your new and demanding role. Brethren of the Province of London you and I are blessed with an excellent Executive team of Chains, Treasurer and other hard-working individuals who keep the show on the road 365 days of the year and on a voluntary basis too! You know who you are Brethren and for your continuing efforts you have my very grateful thanks.

To our musicians, the London Celtic Pipes & Drums; our trumpeter W. Bro. James Deller, the Organist and Deputy Organist W. Bro. Bob Alder and V.W. Bro Doug Black, thank you for your memorable and talented contributions to today's programme.

At the very start of this Address, I mentioned the honour and pleasure I have of holding the Office of Provincial Grand Master. My continuing in that role is only possible through the support and affection, however great or small, I derive from each and every one of you. Thank you all most sincerely for the continuance of that support. I would like to end this Address by thanking all the outgoing Officers and congratulating all those who I have had the greatest of pleasure this afternoon in Promoting in and Appointing to, Provincial Grand Rank. May you all enjoy your appointments Brethren, and may the honour of those ranks bestowed, lead you to an even greater affection and level of service towards this wonderful Province of London.

May the Great Overseer of the Universe bless and preserve us all.

Assistant Grand Master to retire from Provincial Grand Lodge

The Assistant Grand Master retired under the guidance of the Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies

To Collect Alms

Alms were collected and raised £2,315.26 (plus Gift Aid where appropriate). This will be added to the further £4,315 which had already been donated via the online booking platform. These amounts will be deposited in the Provincial Benevolent Fund.

To Consider any other Business

The Provincial Grand Secretary reported that he had received apologies from a number of Provincial Grand Masters, Brethren from other Provinces and Brethren of this Province, all of whose names have been duly recorded. All had sent their best wishes to the Provincial Grand Master and all present.

The Provincial Grand Secretary informed all present that it had been agreed with UGLE that regalia etc would be removed the Robing Rooms prior to the banquet and deposited in the cloak room at the Grand Connaught Room's.

There being no further business to be brought before Provincial Grand Lodge, the meeting was closed in due form at 17.30. All present then joined in singing the National Anthem followed by Jerusalem as the closing hymn, after which the Provincial Grand Master retired in Procession.

After the receptions were finished more than 450 Brethren dined together in the New Connaught Rooms, where the customary toasts were honoured.

Gurdeep Virdee **G.Stwd.**
Provincial Grand Secretary
July 2023