



Freemasonry@86 News - 11 December 2020



Welcome to your news and information update for the progressive/companion Orders of Freemasonry administered from Mark Masons' Hall, 86 St James's.

This bulletin is emailed to all 'leaders' in the Provinces, Districts & Divisions and their Secretariats.

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If you don't currently receive this email directly but would like to subscribe please email communications@mmh.org.uk¹

¹<mailto:communications@mmh.org.uk>



The Most Worshipful Grand Master, HRH Prince Michael of Kent, *GCVO*

Sent this message to all Brethren on Tuesday, 8 December, the day of what was to have been the Annual Assembly of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner.



KENSINGTON PALACE

December is traditionally a time when we look back over the past twelve months and hope for the New Year that beckons. This year, perhaps more than any other, we hope for brighter prospects and a return to some form of normality as soon as that may be possible.

2020 has seen every aspect of our daily lives blighted by the coronavirus and our masonic activities have not been immune from that. I have been greatly encouraged by the way in which you have all adapted

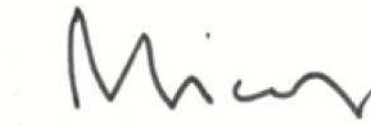
to the challenging circumstances we have faced and by your willingness to commit to helping those in need within our Order as well as the vulnerable within the communities in which we live.

Charity has always been at the heart of what we do and throughout the last nine months, the Trustees of the Mark Benevolent Fund have ensured that we remained focused on supporting worthy causes, particularly those engaged in the fight against Covid-19.

In more normal circumstances, many of you would be looking forward to attending Grand Assembly today to witness the investiture of those Brethren I have appointed to Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank – a distinction which recognises faithful and distinguished service and is a relatively recent introduction in the Order, having first been bestowed on deserving Brethren in 1967. To each of you being promoted today, I send my warmest congratulations and trust that you will have many opportunities to enjoy your new status.

In my Address to the Annual Investiture meeting of Grand Mark Lodge in June last year, I reflected on the many changes I have seen since my Advancement just over 40 years ago. Little did I know then what was to come but I feel sure that a spirit of optimism still prevails among us; that our collective reaction to the adversity we have faced in recent months will positively influence the way in which our Order develops; and that our heritage will be the foundation upon which we will build our future.

The festive season is just a couple of weeks away and even though our celebrations this year may be somewhat different, they will undoubtedly be a welcome distraction in these difficult and unprecedented times. I wish you all a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Kent', with a stylized, flowing script.

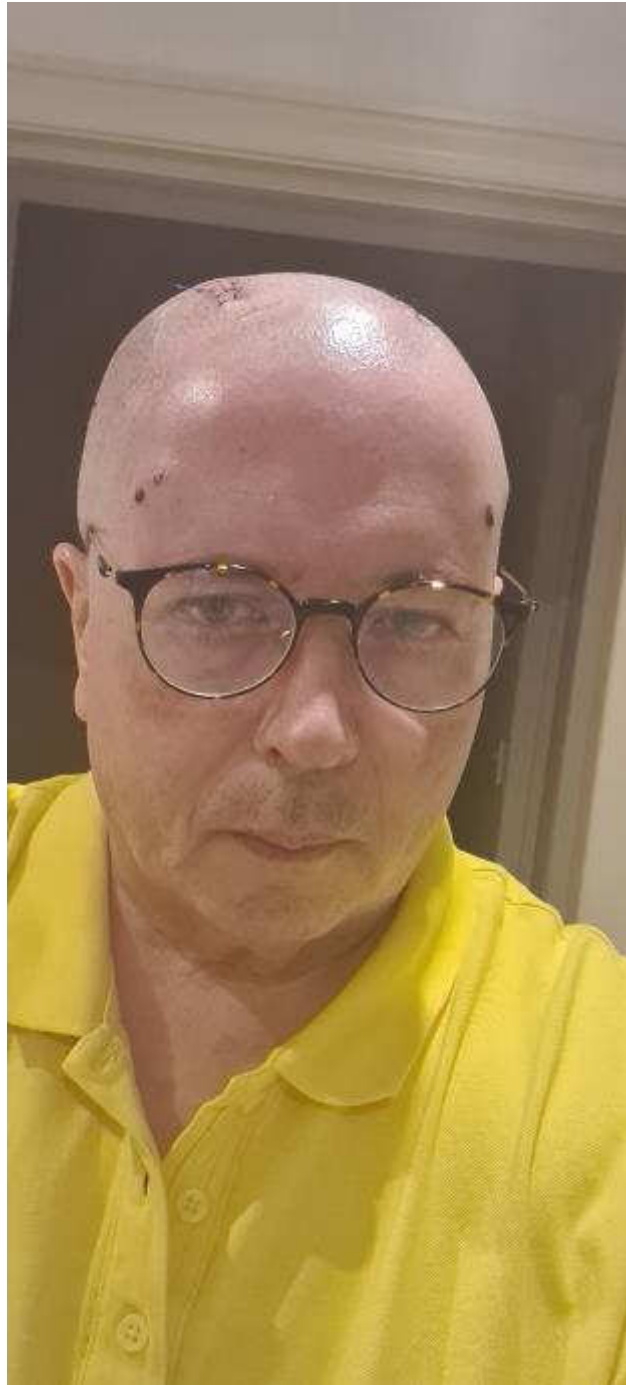
M.W. Bro. HRH Prince Michael of Kent, *GCVO*

Grand Master



A parallel account of a Mark Mason with Parkinson's Disease

By W Bro Patrick Burridge, P.G.S.W.



Brethren, I sit here on a glorious December Sunday lunchtime counting my blessings and very thankful to an outstanding group of Healthcare professionals from the NHS. Let me explain:

In 2011 I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which I already knew I had, but I didn't want anyone to know; but by now the signs were obvious to everybody.

At this time I was the political leader of the medium size rural district council - East Hampshire District. Being very much in the spotlight, the dithering, forgetfulness, balance issues etc had been well and truly noticed and it was frankly, a relief to resign early. I was moved by all the well wishers at that time,

particularly by one of the senior staff members, who told me that he had suffered for years, but whose symptoms had been radically reduced by undergoing some pioneering brain surgery. I resolved to find out about it when I next met my consultant and neurologist.

I guess I was lucky when my lovely old consultant moved to Southampton hospital and was replaced at Basingstoke by a Parkinson's specialist, Dr. Claudio Ruffman, who also had links to the University Hospitals at Oxford. Over the next few years, at six monthly meetings I set about persuading Dr. Ruffman that I was a good candidate for the operation. In fairness I think I was pushing an open door, and he referred me to the John Radcliffe Hospital at Oxford - where the operation had been pioneered in this country. But they seem to take an age to get back to me.

In the meantime, quite out of the blue, I was lucky enough to be offered an active rank on the Hampshire Provincial Mark team and I threw myself into the role – loving every second of it. Whilst out and about accompanying the VIP on the various official visits, I noted how the various lodges visited were moved to make extremely generous charitable donations in favour of the Mark Benevolent Fund. I also noted the ease with which the two Wardens “swindled” the visiting team out of every spare penny they could. These lessons would be put to good use in future!

Eventually the letter came. I was summonsed to attend The Neurology Clinic at the John Radcliffe Hospital. They explained to me that I had been recommended by Dr. Ruffman as a potentially suitable candidate for “Deep Brain Stimulation”. It seems the process entailed placing two electrodes deep within the brain, approximately directly behind each eyeball; the electrodes were connected by two wires which would run subcutaneously down my neck where they would connect with a “pacemaker” (about the size of a box of Swan Vestas) placed in a pocket of muscle close to my heart. The pacemaker would stimulate the electrodes in the brain with the resultant effect that the symptoms of my Parkinson's disease would reduce drastically, enabling me to cut right back on my medication - and its attendant side effects. In order to be offered the chance of having this potentially life changing operation, I would first have to undergo two days of tests: the first day having taken none of my Parkinson's medication, the second day with my full complement of drugs. My responses to each test would be observed and recorded. I would need to show the 40 per cent improvement on day 2 over day 1.

Meanwhile, at a particularly cordial pre-Christmas luncheon in December 2019, the PGM took me to one side telling me that it was his intention to offer me the Provincial rank of Active Senior Warden the following April. To say I was stunned would be an understatement, in fact during the meal, I began to doubt what I had heard and afterwards had to ask the PGM if I had heard him correctly. He affirmed.

In February I attended Oxford for the crucial tests. I tried to appear “managerial” and wore a sharp suit and dyed my hair a shade darker! The tests ranged from simple to downright difficult, but one of them – a test which measured my ability to memorise things (such as new ritual) was at 38% - I knew it was true! They would let me know the outcome in a few days.

A new Coronavirus was sweeping through Wuhan Province of China which threatened the whole world.

My Brother Warden elect, Richard Cox invited me to his palatial pad for afternoon tea with him and his charming wife. We hit it off instantly, and I knew we would have a fun year.

In early March I heard the news I longed to hear. I was passed suitable; and was thus asked to attend a preoperative assessment with the surgical team prior to a date for surgery of 23rd March 2020, so close to the day of the Mark Provincial Meeting.

On my 61st Birthday, 20th March 2020, with the virus threatening to overwhelm the NHS, the UK went into lockdown, the Mark Provincial AGM was postponed, and my operation was cancelled.

Blast!

A series of statements appeared from UGLE and MGL which were overtaken by events, seemingly within hours and confusion was rife... then as if by magic Zoom appeared and we filled our life with Zoom meetings and quizzes, I became quite adept at using it. Eventually, we were even able to hold our Provincial AGM on Zoom, but not before my Bro Warden and I had started to toast Absent Brethren every Monday evening at 9:00 p.m. - using Zoom, we were able to "meet" remotely and broadcast live on The Provincial Facebook page. At first we embellished the 9 p.m. toast with our own renditions of Stanley Holloway monologues or we would even sing (I use the term very loosely) something from the Flanders and Swann catalogue. Then we branched out into interviewing other Masons, with the emphasis on interesting rather than high ranking. My favourite was eaves-dropping the 50th anniversary in the Mark of David Smith, including his surprise, simultaneous field promotion by the Deputy Grand Master.

Richard and I discussed how we might continue the work done by past Wardens raising charitable donations and decided to set up a "100 club". We asked the Brethren to buy a ball or two every month, and the Brethren responded in the way that only Mark Masons do - generously. We held the draw on the first Monday of each month. Eight months in, the Brethren have raised well over £3,500 for charity. Tradition dictates that it is split equally between the MBF and the Warden's chosen charity; I'm so grateful to Richard for joining me in patronising Parkinson's UK.

Of course we unashamedly promote the 100 club every Monday evening and when one such Monday we were challenged to dress up in drag for our presentation, we jumped at the chance for what we saw as a further fund raising opportunity. And so, in a few weeks time we will do just that, but not before we have been sponsored to the tune of £1,000+. We're nearly there.

Throughout all this time Neurosurgery at Oxford was put on the back burner., but when in November the UK encountered the second wave and the country was re-immersed in lockdown, I had still heard nothing. So I resolved to find out what was going on.

Telephoning the Hospital involved negotiating a vicious voice mail system which would often lead to a recorded message; nevertheless I persevered. On Friday the 13th November I was told that neurosurgery would recommence, I was pencilled in for Wednesday 25th November with a new pre-operative assessment and swab for C-19 on the preceding Monday. Excited and nervous in equal measure I was struck by one thought - how much could I raise for charity if I shaved my head at my village local, the Castle of Comfort. Sadly they were in lockdown, but the Landlord graciously offered to pass the hat round on their first day open. I spent most of the next week making Christmas puddings to sell at the Christmas produce stall in the village the first Saturday after lockdown ended.

My daughter accompanied me to Oxford on the due date, we arrived at 6:50 a.m.! There was a reception committee of nurses and an anaesthetist to welcome me. They worked fast and by 8 a.m. I was in theatre being put under...

6 ½ hours later, back on the ward, I was aware of my daughter looking over me. I burst into tears of joy and relief. The next morning I felt fantastic, better than I had felt for years. The surgeon came round early and explained that no, They had not turned on the pacemaker by accident, but the trauma undergone by my brain was not unlike the experience of being stimulated by the pacemaker, but that it would wear off in a week or two. I begged him to let me go home - and to my utter amazement, he agreed.

So to end where I began, it is now Sunday the 6th December, 11 days afterwards. I still feel terrific.

The NHS is a wonderful thing. Let us continue to treasure it.



Mark Masons' Hall re-opens for meetings and the Elves have been busy



We are delighted to have welcomed several Lodges back to meetings in Mark Masons' Hall under the Rule of 6 this week and during the recent closure our team of Christmas Elves (Carol, Indu, Jyoti, Linda & Millie) have been busy decorating the Christmas Tree.

AMD Face Masks now available from the District of London



At the recent Annual Meeting, the District Grand Prefect announced the launch of a new initiative - the sale of AMD-branded face masks. Each mask costs just £10, and all the profits are being used to help those brethren needing assistance with technology to access meetings and to stay in touch with their friends and family. Many Brethren have already benefited from this initiative and - with your help - so much more can be achieved. So please [Click Here](#)² to order one and wear your AMD face mask with pride!

The Scarlet Cord - An Ancient Order for the 21st Century

Continuing our collaboration with FMT (Freemasonry Today) Magazine, this month's edition looks at the Scarlet Cord. [Click Here](#)³ to download a PDF of the article.



Bedfordshire Mark Masons Zoom in to present the Mark Tracing Board



Our Masonic meetings may be suspended due to COVID-19, but Bedfordshire Mark Lodge of Instruction (LOI) is still very active in engaging Bedfordshire Mark Masons.

²<https://amdlondon.org/component/formmaker/?view=formmaker&id=29>

³http://download.mmh.org.uk/Scarlet_Cord_FMT_2.pdf

On Tuesday 24th November, the team of 14 LOI members, including present and Past Dep.Prov.G.M's, assembled via Zoom to deliver a Virtual rendition of the Mark Tracing Board lecture. To help put the lecture into perspective, as each member delivered their section of the ritual, the LOI Secretary used a very effective PowerPoint presentation to highlight each relevant item.

Following a short rehearsal, they were joined by an audience of 20 Bedfordshire Mark Masons who were able to watch and hear the delivery of this enlightening lecture which is not commonly delivered in open Lodge.



The appreciation was reflected in comments received following the meeting including:

“What a great Virtual LOI and my congratulations to all involved. Superb to see such a full attendance, delivering a most professional presentation of the TB of our beloved Order.”

“Sincere thanks to the organisers and participants of tonight’s LOI lecture. It certainly brought home to me how much I miss our meetings, especially in Mark.”

The Beds Mark LOI will continue meeting every month until we can resume our ‘in-person’ meetings and ensure our Lodges can hit the ground running after the prolonged hiatus.



The latest news from our friends at Dogs for Good



This year has been one of our most challenging yet, but with your support and a lot of hard work from our amazing team we have made it through. However you are spending Christmas this year we wish you the very best and hope you have a safe and enjoyable time with your four-legged friends.



Imagine if... your child was born with a disability that no-one could diagnose.

Our assistance dogs give children like Charlie the confidence and independence to shine. Mum, Leanne says:

"Ronnie has made Charlie more independent, which has massively increased his confidence. He helps with practical tasks, such as retrieving items for Charlie, and helping him get dressed. I've also noticed a real change in Charlie's energy levels. It wasn't something I was expecting, but I think it's because he focuses on Ronnie and forgets about his tiredness. Whatever the reason, it is so wonderful to see."

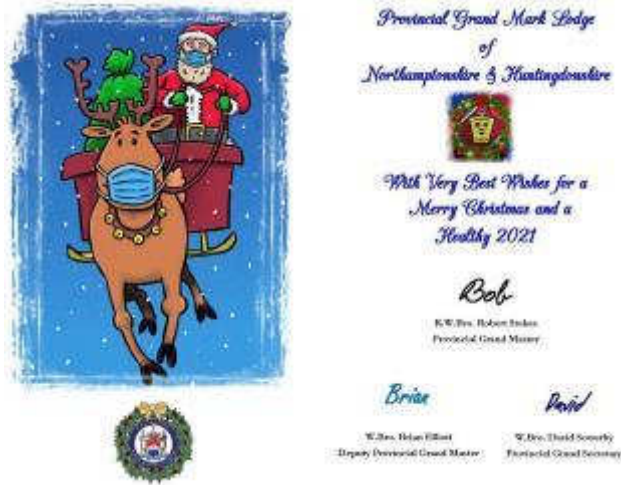
A gift of £4.69 this Christmas could help train more dogs like Ronnie. Donate today on our website [Here](#)⁴

Or Click Here⁵ to read the full Newsletter

⁴https://www.dogsforgood.org/imagine-if/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=December_Enewsletter_-_External&utm_content=December_Enewsletter_-_External+CID_7dc91283888d92767097d4ab0825ae3f&utm_source=Campaign+Monitor&utm_term=Donate+now

⁵<https://cm.dogsforgood.org/t/ViewEmail/t/6C83151FEC9ABFEC2540EF23F30FEDED/8630DB846D4A8C36667CCD A886AB700A>

The Mark Province of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire rollout their Christmas Newsletter



Click Here⁶ to read the full Newsletter

Across Social Media

On Facebook - The Mark District of Spain gather to share Christmas best wishes

Embed:</iframe

src="https://www.facebook.com/plugins/video.php?height=476&href=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FMMMSpain%2Fvideos%2F379589929796510%2F&show_text=false&width=357" width="357" height="476" style="border:none;overflow:hidden" scrolling="no" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen="true" allow="autoplay; clipboard-write; encrypted-media; picture-in-picture; web-share" allowFullScreen="true"></iframe>

On Twitter - Knights from the Provincial Priory of Northumberland join their Craft Brethren to deliver Meals on Wheels

<http://twitter.com/statuses/1335765488362795014>

And the Mark Province of Essex launch a new range of merchandise in time for Christmas

<http://twitter.com/statuses/1335522448155025408>

⁶<https://mailchi.mp/32e1088ce60a/northants-hunts-mark-masonry?e=6af1cd4231>

On YouTube - Freemasons Without Borders take a look at the lesser know Masonic Order of Knight Masons



<https://youtu.be/MFuNE72PoR0>

And Corsham Craft Lodge No. 6616 in the Province of Wiltshire spread a bit of Christmas Cheer with this video. Can you spot anyone you know?



<https://youtu.be/L-XgcWDpxh4>

Not seeing your news? Join us on Social Media

Social Media is becoming an increasingly important platform for how we get to hear about what is going on further afield in all of our Orders. If your Province/District/Division has a Facebook Page/Group or Twitter Feed, or if you represent a Masonic Club or Society linked to our Orders, please send us an invite to join or follow you.

We can be found at:

Facebook - Mark Secretariat⁷ - This is the contact account for the Mark Masons' Hall Facebook Page⁸

Twitter - @MarkMasonsHall⁹

⁷<https://www.facebook.com/mmh.secretariat.3>

⁸<https://www.facebook.com/MarkMasonsHall/>

⁹<https://twitter.com/MarkMasonsHall>

Or you can email us at communications@mmh.org.uk¹⁰

The KT 20 for 2020 Appeal has now passed £43,000 and continues to raise money



Please note that the MCF, who are handling donations to this appeal, have moved their payment collection site from the Everyday Hero platform to that of Just Giving. This doesn't impact how you make your donation but unfortunately it isn't possible for us to set the amount of your donation automatically to £20. The default set by the website is £30 and you will need to adjust it down.

You can support the Eye Hospital by making a £20 donation. Just Click Here¹¹ or use the Text Donate facility below.

100% of donations will be given to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group to support their vital work. To recognise your generosity and support, The Great Priory of Knights Templar is sending a limited-edition Swift tie/lapel pin to every donor.

The Swift pins are now being posted out but please bear with us as we are only in the office one day per week to carry out this task so some deliveries will take longer than others. Thank you for your patience.



Text KT2042020 to 70500 to donate £20

All monies donated to this text number go towards the **The Knights Templar 20 for 2020 Appeal**

For a text donation, you will be charged for one standard text message plus your donation of £20. Always get the bill payer's permission. The Relief Chest will receive 100% of your donation. If you do not want to be contacted by text in the future, add the words NO INFO when texting your donation. All donations are administered by the Relief Chest Scheme (Grand Priory Registered Charity No. 281942). Text donation helpline: 020 3146 5352. Malank. Charitable Foundation Charity No. 1184703, Company No. 09751836

60 Great Queen Street | London | WC2B 5AZ | www.mcf.org.uk

¹⁰<mailto:communications@mmh.org.uk>

¹¹<https://fundraising.mcf.org.uk/Appeal-KT2042020>

And there is still time to shop at the Gift of Sight Fair



Shop From 100+ Brands! 10% of proceeds donated to St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital

Click Here¹² to visit the Fair

The Shop@86 is temporarily closed



Due to the new Government Lockdown restrictions for England the Shop@86 will be temporarily closed from Thursday, 5 November but will re-open as soon as circumstances improve.

If you have any urgent enquiries about orders already placed please email ordersinfo@mmh.org.uk¹³

¹²<https://brilliantlittlebrands.com/pages/giftofsight>

¹³<mailto:ordersinfo@mmh.org.uk>



MBF Festival 2021



East Lancashire Province, hosts of the **153rd Mark Benevolent Fund Annual Festival in 2021**, have produced a unique **Souvenir Festival Calendar** for the year **2021** and copies are now available.

These large, wall hanging calendars feature twelve contrasting prints of iconic sights in East Lancashire, commencing with the beauty of Pendle Hill in January and ending with Manchester's colourful Christmas Market in December. The 12 original watercolours were painted by Annette Young over the past four years specially for this calendar without cost to the Province. Calendars are priced at £10 each and all proceeds will go to the MBF.

So, let us brighten your kitchen or office wall and at the same time provide much needed support for our Mark Benevolent Fund. Why not purchase several more copies to send to friends and family at Christmas?

Thank you very much for your support.



The calendar measures: 318mm x 228mm folded –318mm x 456mm open

To order:

By email: eastlancscalendars@gmail.com¹⁴ By telephone: 07766731307

Payment by **cheque to East Lancs Mark 2021 Festival** – post to:

East Lancs Calendars. 47 St Leonards Way, Woore, Crewe. CW3 9SS

Or contact them for electronic payment details

And don't forget, Stewardship, Badge and Festival orders can be places as well.

Click Here¹⁵ for the Stewardship and Festival Badge Form

Click Here¹⁶ for the complete Festival pack

And you can visit the Province of East Lancashire's website Here¹⁷

¹⁴<mailto:eastlancscalendars@gmail.com>

¹⁵https://www.markmasonshall.org/images/news_articles/2020/2021_MBF_Stewardship_Badge_Form.pdf

¹⁶https://www.markmasonshall.org/images/news_articles/2020/2021_MBF_Festival_Complete_Forms_Pack.pdf

¹⁷<http://www.wordpress.eastlancsmark.org/?p=11465>

Helping to Combat Covid



At the start of Lockdown the Grand Secretary, R.W.Bro. Ryan A. Williams, P.G.J.W., shared the COVID Symptom Study¹⁸ app.

As local lockdowns and UK cases increase, with over 4 million users, this app is a useful source of information regarding the situation in your area, as well as being a portal through which people of all ages and backgrounds are joining together to fight COVID, support the NHS, help scientific research and help get us out of lockdown safely.

¹⁸<https://covid.joinzoe.com/>

Business as usual for the Staff@86



Staff from the 4th Floor at Mark Masons' Hall are mixing time in the office with working from home but wherever they are, all departments and teams are available via email and telephone to help and support as usual.

Mark Masons' Hall is pleased to be

