

Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master
Masons of Berkshire



R.W.Bro. Graham David Seeman

Provincial Grand Master

V.W.Bro. Michael Frederick Sanders P.G.J.O.

Deputy Provincial Grand Master

Thursday 12th September 2024

Order of Proceedings

1. Brethren will assemble in The Berkshire
2. Provincial Grand Lodge will be opened
3. The Provincial Grand Master will be saluted
4. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master will be saluted
5. Visiting P.G M's and R.W. Brethren will be saluted
6. The Provincial Grand Master will welcome honoured guests
7. The Minutes of Provincial Grand Lodge will be submitted
8. The Roll of Provincial Grand Officers will be called
9. The Roll of Mark Lodges will be called
10. The Provincial Grand Secretary will submit his report
11. The Provincial Grand Almoner will submit his report
12. The Provincial Grand Charity Steward will submit his report
13. The Obituary Roll will be read and prayer offered

The Day Thou Gavest Lord is Ended will be sung

14. The Provincial Grand Treasurer will submit his report & Accounts
15. The Provincial Grand Treasurer will propose the level of fees
16. The Provincial Grand Treasurer for the ensuing year will be elected
17. The Account Examiners for the ensuing year will be elected
18. The Provincial Grand Master will appoint a Deputy Provincial Grand Master
19. The Provincial Grand Master will appoint & invest his officers
20. The Provincial Grand Officers of the Year will be saluted
21. The Provincial Grand Master will address Provincial Grand Lodge
22. The Provincial Grand Master will receive invitations for 2025
23. Any other business will be considered
24. Alms will be collected and proceeds donated to BeMBA

Jerusalem will be sung

25. Provincial Grand Lodge will be closed

The Provincial Grand Master R.W.Brethren Provincial Grand Officers and Honoured Guests will retire

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS OF BERKSHIRE

**Minutes of the Annual Communication held at the Berkshire Masonic Centre,
Mole Road, Sindlesham on Thursday 14th September 2023**

There were present: the Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Graham David Seeman. and the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, V.W.Bro. Michael Frederick Sanders, P.G.J.O. They were accompanied by 9 Provincial Grand Masters, 3 Past Provincial Grand Masters, 9 Deputy and Assistant Provincial Grand Masters, 10 Provincial Grand Secretaries and 25 other Honoured Guests. All the Mark Lodges in the Province were represented, together with guests, making a total of 160 Brethren.

The Past Provincial Grand Masters of Berkshire and the other Right Worshipful Brethren, followed by the Provincial Grand Master and the active Provincial Officers of the year entered the Temple in procession at 4.00pm. Provincial Grand Lodge was then opened.

The Provincial Grand Master was saluted with seven and he expressed his thanks.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master was saluted with five by the Brethren of the Province and he also returned thanks.

The visiting Provincial Grand Masters and other R.W. Brethren were saluted with seven. R.W.Bro. George Deacon Provincial Grand Master for Hampshire & Isle of Wight, thanked the Brethren on their behalf.

The Provincial Grand Master individually welcomed the Honoured Guests who were greeted with acclaim by the brethren.

Following a proposition by the Provincial Grand Senior Warden, W.Bro. Phillip Batten, seconded by the Provincial Grand Junior Warden, W.Bro. Ted Lewis G.Stwd, the circulated minutes of the Annual Communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Berkshire, held on Thursday 8th September 2022, were accepted and confirmed.

The Provincial Grand Secretary reported that, with the exception of four brethren who had tendered acceptable apologies, all Provincial Officers were present. The Provincial Grand Secretary called the Roll of Mark Lodges in the Province; all were found to be well represented.

The Provincial Grand Secretary's Report, having been circulated, was adopted on a proposition of the Provincial Grand Master Overseer, W.Bro. Bob Elmes and seconded by the Provincial Grand Senior Overseer, W.Bro. Bill Rhymes.

The Provincial Grand Almoner, W.Bro Bob Watson P.A.G.D.C. submitted his Annual Report, which having been circulated was approved after a proposition from the Provincial Grand Senior Warden, W.Bro Phillip Batten and seconded by the Provincial Grand Junior Warden W.Bro Ted Lewis G.Stwd.

The Provincial Grand Charity Steward, W.Bro. Jim Dance, P.Prov.G.J.O.. submitted his Annual Report and Accounts which, having been circulated, were approved after a proposition by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, V.W.Bro. Michael Sanders, P.G.J.O. and seconded by the Provincial Grand Chaplain, V.W.Bro. Digby Woods, P.G.J.O.

The Provincial Grand Chaplain then read the Obituary Roll while the Brethren stood to order in memory of those departed. The Provincial Grand Chaplain offered prayer after which the hymn "The Day Thou Gavest Lord is Ended" was sung.

The Provincial Grand Treasurer, W.Bro. Jim Payen,P.G.J.D., submitted the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2022 which, having been circulated, were proposed for adoption by the Provincial Grand Senior Warden, seconded by the Provincial Grand Junior Warden and adopted.

The Provincial Grand Treasurer reported that the Provincial fees for the forthcoming year remain unaltered.

The Provincial Grand Master, having received only one nomination, declared W.Bro. James E. Payen, P.G.J.D., elected as Provincial Grand Treasurer for the ensuing year.

The Examiners for the year were elected in the persons of W.Bro's. John Kirkpatrick, and David Arnold Prov.G.J.O., having been proposed by W.Bro. Huw Hopkin, P.G.J.D., the Provincial Grand Secretary and seconded by V.W.Bro. Mike Sanders P.G.J.O., Deputy Provincial Grand Master.

The Provincial Grand Master announced the re-appointment of V.W.Bro. Michael Frederick Sanders, P.G.J.O., as Deputy Provincial Grand Master and expressed his thanks and appreciation of his services in the past year.

The Provincial Grand Master then appointed and invested his Officers who were subsequently saluted with three. The newly appointed Provincial Grand Senior Warden, W.Bro. Julian Pacey thanked the brethren.

The Provincial Grand Master then made a presentation to the newly advanced Brethren of the year who were in attendance.

The Provincial Grand Master then addressed the Brethren; a copy of his address is attached to these minutes.

Invitations were received from Erleigh Lodge of MMM No. 1627 and Friendship & Care Lodge of MMM No.1555 to hold the annual meeting on Thursday 12th September 2024 under their banners. These was gratefully accepted.

The Provincial Grand Secretary reported that apologies had been received from Brethren of the Province and invited guests from other Provinces, all of whom sent their good wishes for a successful meeting.

The Alms were then collected during which the hymn, "Jerusalem" was sung. The Provincial Grand Master announced that the proceeds from the Alms collection would be donated to the Berkshire Mark Benevolent Association (BeMBA).

The Provincial Grand Master closed Provincial Grand Lodge at 5.45 pm.

The National Anthem was sung.

The Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brethren, honoured guests and Provincial Grand Officers retired from the Temple.

Signed _____

Dated _____

R.W.Bro Graham D.Seeman.
Provincial Grand Master

Signed _____

Dated _____

W.Bro. A.Huw Hopkin P.G.J.D.
Provincial Grand Secretary

BRETHREN WHO RECEIVED GRAND HONOURS IN JUNE 2024

First Appointments

W.Bro T.P. (Tim) Spriggs

Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies

Re-Appointments

R.W.Bro Richard J .Olliver G.M.R.A.C.

Deputy President of the General Board

BRETHREN WHO RECEIVED GRAND HONOURS IN September 2024

V.W.Bro Peter W. Hughes

Past Grand Junior Overseer

W,Bro Hugh E, Ranscombe

Past Grand Junior Deacon

BRETHREN WHO RECEIVED ROYAL ARK MARINER GRAND RANK IN DECEMBER 2023

W.Bro R.M. (Dick) Haydon

Provincial Grand Officers

W Bro Howard H.Martin	Senior Warden
W Bro David Arnold	Junior Warden
W Bro Ian A. Spence	Master Overseer
W Bro Richard J. Mackrow	Senior Overseer
W Bro L. Elwyn Hopkin	Junior Overseer
W Bro Jeremy (Jem) G. Whitmore	Chaplain
W Bro John A. Kirkpatrick	Treasurer
W Bro Leslie (Les) M. Canham	Registrar
W Bro A. Huw Hopkin P.G.J.D.	Secretary
W Bro Timothy (Tim) P. Spriggs.A.G.D.C.	Director of Ceremonies
W Bro J.Robert (Bob) Watson. P.A,G.D.C..	Almoner
W Bro T.F. Brian McCormack	Charity Steward
W Bro Michael (Mike) D. Hennessy	Inspector of Works
W Bro Stephen (Steve) B.Croston	Sword Bearer
VW Bro Peter W. Hughes, P.G.J.O.	Deputy Chaplain
W Bro Paul J. Tomlinson	Dep Secretary
W.Bro Laurence Riel	Dep Director of Ceremonies
W Bro Frank I. Paul	Senior Deacon
W Bro Vito Mingolla	Junior Deacon
W Bro Timothy (Tim) R. Sherwood	Asst Director of Ceremonies
Bro Fabio F.P. Marques	Organist
W Bro Stephen (Steve) W. May	Standard Bearer
W Bro Raymond K. Alexander	Inner Guard
W Bro David A. Gray	Steward
W Bro Mark N. Henley	Steward
W.Bro Henry Bishop	Steward
W Bro David A. Edmonds	Steward
W Bro Lee J. Farmer	Tyler

Promotion in Past Rank

W.Bro Adrian Lovell	Past.Prov.G.J.W
W Bro Howard Vyse	Past Prov.G.S.O
W Bro Colin Gilbey	Past Prov.G.J.O
W Bro Clive Blackburn	Past Prov.G.J.O
W Bro Peter Boden	Past Prov.G.J.O
W.Bro Colin Wills	Past.Prov.G.J.O
W Bro Timothy Weekes	Past Prov.G.Reg
W.Bro Andrew Bernstein	Past Prov.G.Reg
W Bro Iain Marnock O.B.E.	Past Prov.G Reg
W Bro Gary Mitchell O.B.E.	Past Prov.G .I of W
W Bro Richard Wilkins	Past Prov.G.S.D
W Bro Grant Frost	Past Prov.G.S.D
W Bro Robert Marchbanks	Past Prov.G.S.D
W Bro Trevor Raymond	Past Prov.G.S.D.

First Appointment in Past Rank

W Bro Anthony C. Howlett-Bolton O.B.E.	Past Prov.G.S.W
W Bro Peter Moody	Past Prov.G.S.W
W Bro Andy D. Blatchford	Past Prov.G.Std.B.

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF BERKSHIRE
Statistics

Based on Returns 1st September 2023-31st August 2024

Mark Lodges

Lodge No.	Members 1 Sep 2023	Gains 2023-24			Losses 2023-24					Members 31Aug 2024
		Advanced	Joined	Total	Died	Resigned	Honorary	Excluded	Total	
27	29	1		1		0			0	30
235	18	1		1		1			1	18
257	38	0		0		0			0	38
519	14	0		0	0	0			0	14
623	38	3		3		1			1	40
1094	18	1		1		1			1	18
1162	21	3		3		1			1	23
1207	18	1	1	2					0	20
1330	76	0	1	1	1	3			4	73
1342	23	2	1	3		0	0		0	26
1398	19	0		0	1	3			4	15
1430	15	0		0					0	15
1555	26	1	0	1		1			1	26
1568	18	2	1	3					0	21
1616	32	1	1	2	0	1			1	33
1627	15	1	1	2	2	1			3	14
1631	45	1		1		1			1	45
1657	30	1		1	1	1			2	29
1868	16	0	1	1					0	17
Memberships	509	19	7	26	5	15	0		20	515
Members	424	20	5	25	4	15	0		19	430

RAM Lodges

Lodge No.	Members 1 Sep 2023	Gains 2023-24			Losses 2023-24					Members 31Aug 2024
		Elevated	Joined	Total	Died	Resigned	Honorary	Excluded	Total	
27	23	2		2					0	25
235	13	1		1					0	14
257	29			0					0	29
519	19		1	1					0	20
1162	18	2		2					0	20
1330	42	0		0					0	42
1398	16	1	1	2	1				1	17
1555	21	1		1					0	22
1568	12		1	1					0	13
Memberships	193	7	3	10	1	0	0	0	1	202
Members	160	7	1	8	1	0	0	0	1	167

PROVINCIAL GRAND SECRETARY'S REPORT

Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master.

It is with much pleasure that I present my Fifth report as the Provincial Grand Secretary covering the year 2023-24.

There was no opportunity to dwell too long on the success of your Annual meeting of Provincial Grand Lodge as you presided over the first full Provincial Team visits of the year to Wallingford Lodge on 27th September. You and the lodge were well supported with a near full turn out of your newly appointed Provincial Officers, which can only have enhanced the enjoyment for the candidate advanced on the night and for all those present. Your second team visit was to Wantage Lodge in January 2024. The lodge not having a candidate available for advancement meant that an ideal opportunity was presented for the Provincial Grand Officers to assist the lodge in undertaking a demonstration of the Advancement Ceremony accompanied by a narrative and explanation of the major elements of the ceremonial. The evening was well attended, and all present seemed to gain some additional knowledge and understanding of the ritual.

The 'unofficial team visit' originally introduced in the aftermath of Covid 19 to assist lodges whilst attendance levels were lower than normal., has continued, and is still a useful tool in helping lodges fill vital offices, if needed, to ensure that the brother to be advanced enjoys the full experience of the Mark Advancement ceremony, or to convey elements of the ritual such as the Mark Lecture or Explanation of the Tracing Board.

The Provincial RAM Assembly on 2nd October 2023 under the auspices of the Leopold Lodge of Royal Arch Mariners No.235 was well supported. Those attending were treated to a very well-presented ceremony of Elevation prior to the opening of the Tenth Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Assembly where you conferred the rank of Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank. The whole evening went off extremely well.

In May of this year, you had the pleasure of presiding over the Centenary Celebration meeting of Windsor Castle Royal Ark Mariner Lodge No.519. The lodge having been founded in July 2021 the celebration meeting had to be delayed in light of the Covid -19 pandemic. It was well worth waiting for, the meeting being fantastically supported in the splendour of the Windsor Masonic Hall and afterwards at the festive board in the Windsor Castle Hotel.

The year has seen 18 new brethren being advanced into this wonderful order and a further 10 becoming joining members of lodges within the Province, 6 of those having joined a lodge in the province for the first time.

I feel sure that this will not lead to complacency, and the aim of giving every Master Mason the opportunity of becoming a Mark Man continues. To this end the Mark Presentation events will continue, with emphasis on Masonic Centre locations. Mark lodges meeting at Wantage Wokingham Windsor Wallingford and Sindlesham can host an event on the same day as their lodge meeting. Upon completion of the presentation the non-mark men are invited to join the festive board and experience the spirit of the Mark. The co-operation of the Craft lodges who meet there is essential, and much appreciated.

The PGM's Reception Dinner was again held in April and proved to be very popular with the brethren and their partners, a total of 105 being in attendance. BeMBA was again the recipient of funds generated.

The initiative of meeting incoming active officers over dinner prior to their investiture was again this year hosted by you and continued to be a well-attended and enjoyable event held again at the Calcot Golf Club, The atmosphere throughout the night was excellent and gave you the opportunity to encourage the incoming officers to be proactive in their support of the Province and above all to enjoy their Mark Masonry and their year in office.

The Investiture meeting of Grand Lodge in June 2024 saw over 20 Berkshire brethren witness the appointment of Tim Spriggs as Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies. On 10th September 2024 a similar contingent will witness the well-deserved promotion of Peter Hughes to P.G.J.O. and W.Bro Hugh Ranscombe to P.G.J.D. Both have served the Province as active officers for many years as well as being dedicated and active members of a number of Mark lodges in the Province

At the RAM Investiture in December 2023 W.Bro Richard Haydon was promoted to RAM Grand Rank for his many years of support to the Order locally.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank W.Bro Elwyn Hopkin who has carry out the duties of Deputy Provincial Grand Secretary so ably. His assistance and wise council over the past six years have been much appreciated. I wish him well as he takes up his new role as Provincial Grand Junior Overseer. I welcome W.Bro Paul Tomlinson who is crossing the floor and trust he will enjoy the role of Deputy Provincial Grand Secretary.

As we continue to restore attendance in lodges and resume visiting both locally as well as far and wide, let us remain vigilant and understanding to the circumstances of others, especially as economic considerations become more important as the cost of living continues to increase. Let us continue with the primary objective of making our order accessible and, above all, ensure those who have accessed it, continue to enjoy their Mark Masonry. The province remains in good heart and ready to face the challenges ahead and I'm sure we can look forward to a happy and successful year under your continued leadership and guidance.

A. Huw Hopkin

A.Huw Hopkin P.G.J.D

Provincial Grand Secretary

Provincial Grand Almoner's Report 2023-2024.

Including BeMBA

This year has been a quiet one for the Provincial Grand Almoner with thanks to all the lodge Almoners who have looked after their widows in an excellent manner in both the Mark Master Masons and Royal Arch Mariners Lodges also with Covid not being prominent any more.

Although our meetings with the Craft and Royal Arch have been put on hold for the time being we have still been able to keep in touch with regards to any brethren that have required assistance.

This year is the last donation to the Thames Valley Hospice totalling £9000 along with other donations to Mark Benevolent Festivals as they supported our festival. We are therefore looking for another long term (3 yrs) good cause to support from BeMBA. One suggestion that has been forth coming is to support the NHS First Responders Transport where a lot of their expenses have to come from their own pockets, we will keep you up to date on any progress we make.

The Executive have been able donate small amounts to local charities which are struggling with other donations not being so generous due to the economy.

We must also abide with the Charity Commissions regulations in that we must donate money given to the BeMBA to use for charity purposes.

I must thank all the lodge Almoners and BeMBA representatives for all their donations as without them we would be unable to support local charities and others within the Province.

W Bro Bob Watson, PAGDC

Provincial Grand Almoner

PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS OF BERKSHIRE

Treasurers Report

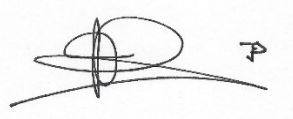
It is with pleasure that I present my 5th and last report as Provincial Treasurer for the year ending 31st December 2023

There are 2 major fund raising events for BeMBA in our Masonic year, the PGM's Reception and Provincial Grand Lodge. As a result of a raffle, a small profit from the Reception and the PGL collection we were able to pass £1,778.00 to boost BeMBA's funds, maintaining their ability to support Brethren in need and other good causes.

The Province had an excess of income over expenditure of £1,500 due to a much smaller loss than expected for the Provincial Grand Lodge meeting. Most of the other expense items were in-line or lower than expectations – we pay for the ongoing website hosting and of course for the administration of the Province. Some of this excess will be used to pay for maintenance of the Provincial Regalia and the purchase of some new wands for our DC team.

I have really enjoyed my tenure as Provincial Grand Treasurer. It has been a real education to be part of the Provincial Mark Executive. I'd like to thank both the current and former PGMs for the opportunity. I will of course be active in support of W.Bro John Kirkpatrick who will be my successor as I move into the Deputy PGM role.

I'd like to end by thanking the Provincial Examiners W.Bro John Kirkpatrick and W.Bro David Arnold for their assistance and advice in auditing the accounts for this and previous years and also the Lodge Treasurers who take the time to pass me their Lodge Accounts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Payen', with a small arrow pointing to the right.

W. Bro James (Jim) Payen PGJD
Provincial Grand Treasurer

**Provincial Grand Lodge of MMM of Berkshire
Accounts for the period ended 31 December 2023**

**GENERAL FUND
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	2023			2022		
	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME						
Annual Dues			3,360.50			2,650.50
Fees of Honour			1,230.00			990.00
Year books			700.00			700.00
Ties and Regalia Sales			1,525.50			267.50
Sundries, tokens and donations			26.50			1,509.83
Incoming Officers Dinner	Receipts	500.00		506.00		
Incoming Officers Dinner	Costs	454.80	£45.20	460.00	46.00	
			<u>6,887.70</u>			<u>6,163.83</u>
EXPENDITURE						
Prov Grand Lodge	Fees and contributions	3,828.00		3,743.00		
Prov Grand Lodge	Costs	<u>6,481.14</u>	2,653.14	<u>6,073.16</u>	2,330.16	
PGM's Reception	Fees	3,985.36		3,844.00		
(surplus to Ben Fund)	Costs	<u>3,985.36</u>	0.00	<u>3,844.00</u>	0.00	
Year books			751.00			725.00
Post, Print, Secretarial & Insurance			403.69			419.60
Ritual & Regalia & Folders			0.00			0.00
Website annual costs			56.54			85.68
Zoom Conference Calls			0.00			0.00
Retiring PGM Gift			0.00			1,420.00
GL Joining Fee			41.50			0.00
Stock	Opening Stock	1,031.60	0.00	1,277.06	0.00	
	Stock Purchases	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	Less Closing Stock	551.82	1,479.77	1,031.60	245.47	
General Expenses			<u>0.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>	
			<u>5,385.64</u>			<u>5,225.91</u>
Surplus/(Deficit)			<u><u>1,502.06</u></u>			<u><u>937.92</u></u>

**BENEVOLENT FUND
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Donations/Raffles Incl. surplus from PGM Recep'n		1,849.41		1,032.50
Interest		<u>7.66</u>	1,857.07	<u>0.00</u>
				1,032.50
EXPENDITURE				
Donations BeMBA		1,778.77		1,146.63
Transfer Relief Chest-BeMBA		<u>0.00</u>	1,778.77	<u>0.00</u>
Surplus/(Deficit)			<u><u>78.30</u></u>	<u><u>-114.13</u></u>

BALANCE SHEET as at 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
ASSETS				
Stocks: members ties and tokens etc.		551.82		1,031.60
Debtors		0.00		0.00
Cash at Bank		<u>21,057.37</u>		<u>19,145.04</u>
		21,609.19		20,176.64
LIABILITIES				
Creditors and accruals				200.00
Deferred income	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
		<u>21,609.19</u>		<u>19,976.64</u>
Represented by:				
GENERAL FUND				
Brought forward		12,625.47		11,687.55
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		1,502.06		937.92
Carried forward		<u>14,127.52</u>		<u>12,625.47</u>
PROV. PROJECTS FUND				
Brought Forward		7,346.17		5,797.67
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		52.20		1,548.50
Carried forward		<u>7,398.37</u>		<u>7,346.17</u>
BENEVOLENT FUND				
Brought forward		5.00		119.13
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		78.30		-114.13
Carried forward		<u>83.30</u>		<u>5.00</u>
		<u><u>21,609.19</u></u>		<u><u>19,976.64</u></u>

We confirm that in our opinion the above accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 for the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Berkshire are in accordance with the books and records.

James E. Payer
Treasurer

Dated 23/08/2024

David Arnold
Independent Examiner

John Kirkpatrick
Independent Examiner

Provincial Grand Charity Steward Report

Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master

It gives me great pleasure to write my second Charity Stewards report.

The generosity of our lodges continues to impress me with their unfailing support of BeMBA allowing us to carry on the incredibly important work we do in assisting our charitable recipients.

This year we have supported three provincial festivals with a final contribution of £5000, to Berkshire Craft Masonry, whos' Festival was a huge success, with further donations of £1200 to Cheshire and to the province of Oxfordshire as they celebrated and head into their own Mark festivals.

This is also the final year, of our three year commitment, to support Thames Hospice, as our main recipient. The final donation, of £3000, rounds off a total of £9000. The annual running costs, of the hospice, are now in the region of £18,000,000, or £49,3515 each day. It is very evident that support, such as ours, is vital for the continued support the hospice provides, at their superb purpose-built facility, along with targeted community care. The BeMBA executive took the opportunity to once again visit and present a cheque in person.

A new, larger charitable project is being sought that will hopefully engage with the brethren.

BeMBA once again adopted the "little & lots" approach, whereby smaller local charities were identified, as detailed in my previous report. These charities are listed and received donations as stated. First Steps - £750, Wallingford accessible boat club - £750, Mortimer handibus - £500 & cycling without age - £500. Beyond these three, we were also able to assist three other charities that our brethren brought to our notice. £500 was donated towards a Trikinetic wheelchair, for a 7-year-old who suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, £200 to a brother who was raising funds in memory of his late wife, and £200 to Bracknell youth rugby club. Each of these recipients have benefitted enormously as a result.

On a more immediate note, this year we have been able to give swift assistance to several brethren who had approached BeMBA, at very short notice. The speed that BeMBA can assist is very satisfying indeed, once again showing how vital a role it plays. Brethren, BeMBA is your immediate mode for assistance so, please, if you need our help, or know someone who does, get in touch.

One process for donating, I'm keen to continue to drive forward, is the use of QR codes. In the last year, two more lodges have adopted this process and are seeing the benefits. QR codes help everyone in the following way. Each year RCS spends around £60,000 printing donation envelopes, which then have to be processed manually. With most of the envelope going in the bin, this is a huge waste of funds. Using a QR code will not only reduce the amount spent printing envelopes, but also significantly reduce the time taken to input those details as the electronic upload takes seconds, not the hours currently spent by RCS colleagues processing them manually. Gift aid is also automatically applied where appropriate.

Finally, my thanks to V W Bro. Tim MacAndrews & W Bro Gary Strattman, the account auditors, for their diligent assistance and W Bro. Jim Payen, our outgoing Provincial Grand treasurer, and, from today, our new Deputy Provincial Grand Master, for him keeping me on the right path.

Brethren, you can continue to be enormously proud of the assistance your generosity allows and BeMBA looks forward to your support in the coming year.

W Bro. TF Brian McCormack

Provincial Grand Charity Steward

The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, Is Ended

The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended,
The darkness falls at Thy behest;
To Thee our morning hymns ascended,
Thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

The sun, that bids us rest, is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.

Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?

And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?

And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!

Bring me my arrows of desire!

Bring me my spear: o clouds unfold!

Bring me my chariots of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight;
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.