

Provincial Grand Masters Address Royal Ark Mariner Assembly 2018

Brother Royal Ark Mariners I bid you a very warm welcome to this our 14th Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Assembly and would like to say how pleased I am to see so many of you here this morning to help celebrate another successful year of this Ancient and Honourable Fraternity. I have already welcomed our distinguished guests individually and may I again thank them for their attendance and for taking the time out to support this the Province of Somerset.

I also extend a very warm welcome to those newly Elevated Brethren who have attend this Assembly today.

This morning I have had the pleasurer to invest seven of our Brethren with Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank in recognition of their services and hard work within their respective Lodges. I say to those Brethren many congratulations on your preferment and I must remind them that these appointments carry additional responsibilities, duties and masonic commitments. I sincerely hope that every recipient will enjoy their new status in this wonderful Order.

I am pleased to report that our Membership remains fairly constant and that resignations and exclusions are low. May I again take this opportunity to remind you that visiting and supporting Lodges other than your own within the Province is a great virtue and demonstrates fraternal affection and good will. We must also encourage those Brethren who are not Royal Ark Mariners to come and join this beautiful and interesting degree.

I am very well aware that some Lodges are finding it difficult in attracting candidates and might I again suggest that Lodges use the same format as used by the Mark Degree by holding open evenings and inviting Mark Master Masons to an introduction to the Royal Ark Mariner Degree. As I have said in the past I and the Deputy Provincial Grand Master and members of the Provincial Executive would be happy to assist. I am pleased to report that the Deputy Provincial Grand Master conducted such an evening at the William Long Lodge of Royal Ark Marines at Burnham on Sea which resulted in very positive results with benefit to the Lodge.

The Travelling Ark has continued its circumnavigation of the Province and I was very pleased to receive it from the Exmoor Lodge this morning. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master with some members of the Provincial Team will start it off again on its circumnavigation around the Province and will deliver it to the Herbert Fuller Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners on the 24th September. Unfortunately, I shall not be able to attend as on that day I and other members of the Provincial Team will be attending the Royal Sussex Lodge of Mark Master Masons to deliver the lecture on the Mark Degree Tracing Board.

Brethren may I encourage you all to make every effort to support your Worshipful Commander when he is delivering the Travelling Ark to another Lodge.

May I again remind those Commanders and Past Commanders who are not yet members of the Somerset Commanders Lodge to seriously consider joining and, for those brethren who are members to support it by attending its meetings. I regret to say that attendance is quite low. The Lodge only meets twice a year, the Installation and one other and on each occasion, we have a lecture on a topic of interest. These topics in my view need not be Masonic in nature so why not invite the ladies to join us to hear the talk and then join us for dinner on the meeting night other than the Installation evening. If you would like further information about the Commanders Lodge contact the Lodge Scribe W.Bro. Barrie Baker who would be pleased to give you every assistance.

I am very pleased that our Royal Ark Mariner Lodges continue to deliver the Lecture on the Tracing Board and I would very much like this to continue with the lecture being delivered once a year. The Team of Development and Improvement would be more than happy to assist if necessary, and if their help is required on other matters please contact W.Bro. Derek Wilton. Who will be happy to assist in any way possible.

On visiting Royal Ark Mariner Lodges within the Province, it gives me great satisfaction to witness the high standard of ritual delivered generally in most Lodges. May I again remind the Brethren that in this Province we take great pride in ensuring that the Ritual is learnt and not read. I disapprove of Ritual Books being used during the Ceremony except in exceptional circumstances and also with the exception of the Immediate Past Commander.

I do appreciate, however, that some brethren find learning Ritual difficult, but I would encourage those Brethren to at least have a go. The distinction is very noticeable between a brother having tried to learn his part and one who has not made an effort. At the end of the day you can only do your best. We must always think of the impression the Ceremony has on the candidate and our guests so that they come away having enjoyed the meeting and found it an interesting and enjoyable experience

I was delighted to be present at the Grand Assembly of Royal Ark Mariners held on 11th December last year when the Pro Grand Master Most Worshipful Brother Raymond John Smith invested three of our Brethren with Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank. W.Bros. John Nicholson, Neil Hawes and Graham Gamble. It was a most enjoyable day and I do hope the three Brethren enjoyed the occasion as much as I did.

The conferring of Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank is a very special promotion in our Order and a brother so honoured is required to serve the degree, his Province and his Lodge and use his considerable experience to instruct and encourage the newer members in the beautiful ritual and ideals of the Degree.

I look forward to announcing in the next few weeks the names of those Brethren who will be honoured with Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank and who will be invested at the Grand Assembly on Tuesday 11th December at Freemasons Hall, Great Queen Street.

During the past year I and members of the Provincial Team carried out a Lodge Collars Dedication at the Thackeray Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners. I also had the pleasure of presenting in March along with W.Bro. Roger Blake the Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Gloucestershire & Herefordshire a 50year Certificate from Grand Lodge and a

Certificate from the Province of Somerset to W.Bro. Peter Cornall of the Nailsea Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners. Sadly, Peter past away in July this year.

I also presented a 50 Year Certificate from Grand Lodge and a certificate from the Province together with a 50year lapel pin.to W.Bro. John Morey of the Herbert Fuller Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners and later this year I shall be presenting a 50 Year Certificate to W.Bro. Denis Calderley of the Bath Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners

I would like to express my thanks and congratulations to W.Bro. Derek Wilton and those members of the Provincial Team of Development and Improvement for delivering an excellent explanation of the Royal Ark Mariner Degree Tracing Board to us this morning. I am sure it was appreciated and enjoyed by all.

I would also like to thank and congratulate the Deputy Provincial Grand Master for his most interesting and thought provoking talk, "The Choppy Waters of the Mark Degree". Again, I am sure it was enjoyed by all. Many thanks W.Bro. Phil.

Brethren this Assembly as with other Assemblies does not just happen but is planned and executed by the Provincial Grand Scribe W.Bro. Ian Strickland his Deputy W.Bro. Paul Cullum, the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies W.Bro. Mark Golding and his Deputy W.Bro. Tony Guthrie all of whom work hard behind the scenes to ensure that we all can enjoy a well organised Assembly.

On my behalf and on behalf of the Province I thank those Brethren for all the hard work and many hours of preparation that they have devoted to this Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Assembly.

May I also take this opportunity of thanking those Brethren who attended early this morning and setup this Assembly Room, believe me Brethren, it is very much appreciated.

Thanks also to the Webbington Hotel for their assistance and of course our thanks must go to the St. John Ambulance for their attendance.

My sincere thanks go to Exmoor Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No 679 for allowing us to host this Assembly under their Banner and for providing us with various Lodge furnishings this morning.

May I remind those who have not yet purchased the Provincial Royal Ark Mariner Tie that they are available from their Lodge Scribe or from the Provincial Scribe.

In passing, Brethren, the Provincial Weekend will be held on Friday 29th to Sunday 31st March 2019 at the Cumberland Hotel, Bournemouth. I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to support this weekend. Information and Booking forms will be circulated to all shortly.

Finally, Brethren I thank you all for your close attention to my address and for the courteous manner in which you have received me and my Provincial Officers this morning

I thank you for your attendance and to those who are staying for lunch I look forward to your company together with your wives or partners and for those not staying I wish you a safe journey home.

May the Supreme Commander of the Universe guide us through these troubled times and may he be a perpetual inspiration to us all and keep us safe within the Ark, that Haven of Rest.

God Bless you all and thank you.