

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



MINUTES OF THE  
COMMUNICATION OF GRAND LODGE

held on Tuesday, 7 March 2023

at 2 p.m. in the Grand Temple, Freemasons' Hall  
60 Great Queen Street, London, WC2B 5AZ

PRESENT

PRO GRAND MASTER

M.W.Bro. John Herbert Prizeman

DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

R.W.Bro. Francis Charles Spencer

AS ASSISTANT GRAND MASTER

R.W.Bro. Herbert Keith Emmerson, P.Dep.G.M.

PAST PRO GRAND MASTER

M.W.Bro. R. J. Smith

PROVINCIAL & DISTRICT GRAND MASTERS

R.W.Bro. M. A. Cooper .....	District Grand Master for Germany
R.W.Bro. J. Steggles .....	Provincial Grand Master for West Yorkshire
R.W.Bro. J. Verbist .....	District Grand Master for Belgium
R.W.Bro. K. J. Hicks .....	Provincial Grand Master for Cornwall
R.W.Bro. I. N. Clark .....	Provincial Grand Master for Surrey
R.W.Bro. D. R. Clancey .....	Provincial Grand Master for North and East Yorkshire
R.W.Bro. K. A. Beardmore .....	Provincial Grand Master for West Lancashire
R.W.Bro. T. D. Sheern .....	Provincial Grand Master for Essex
R.W.Bro. E. J. Rymer .....	Provincial Grand Master for Worcestershire
R.W.Bro. M. J. L. Whelan, <i>JP</i> .....	Provincial Grand Master for Dorset
R.W.Bro. D. A. Upton .....	Provincial Grand Master for Channel Islands
R.W.Bro. G. J. Deacon .....	Provincial Grand Master for Hampshire and Isle of Wight
R.W.Bro. T. R. E. Jones .....	Provincial Grand Master for South Wales
R.W.Bro. P. J. Mann .....	Provincial Grand Master for Leicestershire and Rutland
R.W.Bro. E. R. Garty .....	Provincial Grand Master for Middlesex
R.W.Bro. D. R. Powell .....	Provincial Grand Master for Monmouthshire
R.W.Bro. S. Rawlings .....	Provincial Grand Master for Bristol
R.W.Bro. P. C. Voisey .....	Provincial Grand Master for Somerset

R.W.Bro. I. W. Wright.....	Provincial Grand Master for Oxfordshire
R.W.Bro. R. F. Richardson.....	Provincial Grand Master for Sussex
R.W.Bro. J. S. Evans.....	Provincial Grand Master for North Wales
R.W.Bro. R. A. Walton.....	Provincial Grand Master for Northumberland
R.W.Bro. D. J. Boswell.....	Provincial Grand Master for East Anglia
R.W.Bro. C. C. Adkin.....	Provincial Grand Master for Nottinghamshire
R.W.Bro. G. D. Seeman.....	Provincial Grand Master for Berkshire
R.W.Bro. P. D. Williams.....	Provincial Grand Master for Kent
R.W.Bro. J. H. Smith.....	Provincial Grand Master for East Lancashire
R.W.Bro. G. R. Horstman.....	Provincial Grand Master for Cheshire
R.W.Bro. G. Hutchinson.....	Provincial Grand Master for Derbyshire
R.W.Bro. B. P. Gargett.....	Provincial Grand Master for Gloucestershire and Herefordshire
R.W.Bro. S. Lee.....	Provincial Grand Master for Wiltshire
R.W.Bro. K. D. Bristow.....	Provincial Grand Master for Buckinghamshire
R.W.Bro. J. D. Harrison.....	Provincial Grand Master for Hertfordshire
R.W.Bro. A. Bonechi.....	District Grand Master for Italy
R.W.Bro. B. Kirkbride.....	Provincial Grand Master for Cumberland and Westmorland
R.W.Bro. D. C. Purdie.....	Provincial Grand Master for Devonshire
R.W.Bro. K. J. Spencer.....	Provincial Grand Master for Staffordshire & Shropshire
R.W.Bro. D. N. Hanson.....	Provincial Grand Master for Durham

#### PAST PROVINCIAL & DISTRICT GRAND MASTERS

R.W.Bro. R. J. Wade, P.Prov.G.M., Kent (2003–2008)
R.W.Bro. R. S. H. Hussey, P.Prov.G.M., Surrey (2004–2014)
R.W.Bro. P. Hawken, MBE, P.Prov.G.M., Devonshire (2006–2016)
R.W.Bro. P. J. Sands, P.Prov.G.M., Berkshire (2007–2013)
R.W.Bro. G. C. Craigs, P.Prov.G.M., Northumberland (2009–2020)
R.W.Bro. P. A. Norman, P.Prov.G.M., East Anglia (2010–2020)
R.W.Bro. D. Thomas, P.Prov.G.M., Monmouthshire (2013–2018)
R.W.Bro. A. I. Torrance, P.Prov.G.M., Kent (2013–2021)
R.W.Bro. His Hon. I. D. G. Alexander, KC, P.Prov.G.M., Oxfordshire (2014–2019)
R.W.Bro. F. J. Gillo, P.Prov.G.M., Gloucestershire and Herefordshire (2015–2022)
R.W.Bro. K. M. Blackburn, P.Prov.G.M., Isle of Man (2017–2022)

#### PAST GRAND WARDENS

R.W.Bro. Dr J. L. W. Wright, RD, P.G.S.W., 2011
R.W.Bro. R. A. H. Morrow, P.G.J.W., 2004
R.W.Bro. J. A. Harrison, P.G.J.W., 2018
R.W.Bro. J. C. Edgcumbe, P.G.J.W., 2019
R.W.Bro. Lt Col. J. C. Chambers, P.G.J.W., 2019
R.W.Bro. J. C. Whitaker, JP, P.G.J.W., 2022
R.W.Bro. J. Bell, P.G.J.W., 2022

#### GRAND OFFICERS OF THE YEAR

R.W.Bro. T. F. Jackson.....	Grand Senior Warden
R.W.Bro. D. Aspinwall.....	Grand Junior Warden
V.W.Bro. G. Hughes.....	Grand Master Overseer
V.W.Bro. C. G. Maiden.....	Grand Senior Overseer
V.W.Bro. The Revd J. T. Parker.....	Grand Chaplain
V.W.Bro. W. A. Divall, P.G.M.O.....	President of the General Board
R.W.Bro. J. Bell, P.G.J.W.....	President of the M.B.F.
R.W.Bro. R. A. Williams, OStJ, P.G.J.W.....	Grand Secretary
V.W.Bro. C. M. L. Davies.....	Grand Director of Ceremonies

V.W.Bro. V. J. Driver, P.G.J.O.....	Grand Inspector of Works
W.Bro. A. E. Farrar.....	Grand Sword Bearer
V.W.Bro. Revd A. W. Avery, P.G.J.O. ....	Deputy Grand Chaplain
R.W.Bro. R. J. Olliver, P.Prov.G.M. (Berkshire) .....	Deputy President of the General Board
R.W.Bro. D. F. Ashbolt, P.Prov.G.M. (London) .....	Deputy President of the M.B.F.
W.Bro. D. M. Heath .....	Deputy Grand Secretary
W.Bro. G. W. Allen .....	Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. A. Cleightonhills.....	Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. A. J. Brown .....	Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. R. Wade .....	Deputy Grand Inspector of Works
W.Bro. D. M. Wheeler .....	Deputy Grand Sword Bearer
W.Bro. R. Deacon .....	Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. S. C. Finn .....	Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. J. H. V. Moore .....	Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. Lt Col. M. Winter .....	Grand Senior Deacon
W.Bro. M. J. Foster .....	Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. Dr P. Mycock .....	Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. D. S. Rose.....	Grand Junior Deacon
W.Bro. D. L. Armstrong .....	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. F. W. E. Hatton .....	Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies
W.Bro. D. Mersh .....	Assistant Grand Inspector of Works
W.Bro. A. C. Rainbow .....	Assistant Grand Sword Bearer
V.W.Bro. M. Rizzardi, P.G.J.O.....	Grand Organist
W.Bro. R. J. Povall .....	Grand Standard Bearer
W.Bro. I. P. Vincent.....	Grand Standard Bearer
W.Bro. T. P. Sefton .....	Assistant Grand Standard Bearer
W.Bro. P. G. Bowen .....	Assistant Grand Organist
W.Bro. D. Topp .....	Grand Inner Guard
W.Bro. V. E. Murphy .....	Assistant Grand Inner Guard
W.Bro. G. Andrews.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. P. A. H. Bowler .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. O. J. Coddington .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. T. Conroy.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. R. J. Cox .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. S. Cox .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. T. D. Dallas-Chapman .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. W. E. Davies.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. S. M. Hyland.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. C. A. Lemin.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. F. E. Margot.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. R. O'Malley-White .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. Capt. C. F. Phillips.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. J. M. B. Phillips, TD.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. L. Smith .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. S. Spooner .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. R. F. Summers .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. M. D. Vidler .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. C. Warham .....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. M. J. West.....	Grand Steward
W.Bro. P. Busby, A.G.D.C. ....	as Grand Tyler

## HEADS OF ORDERS

R.W.Bro. J. Spence, <i>DL</i> , P.G.S.W.	Pro Grand Master – Craft
Pro 1st Grand Principal – Supreme	Grand Chapter of England
R.W.Bro. P. R. Clement, P.Prov.G.M. (South Wales)	Grand Master – KT
R.W.Bro. G. L. Flight, P.G.S.W.	Grand Sovereign – RCC
R.W.Bro. K. J. Jones, P.G.S.W.	Grand Master – RSM
R.W.Bro. T. F. Jackson, G.S.W.	Grand Master – AMD
R.W.Bro. A. C. Sweeney, P.G.J.W.	Grand Supreme Ruler – OSM
W.Bro. Dr P. Mycock, G.J.D.	1st Grand Master Mason – The Operatives
V.W.Bro. C. G. Maiden, G.S.O.	Grand High Priest – KTP
W.Bro. A. W. Llewellyn	Supreme Magus – SRIA

## OVERSEAS BRETHREN

### BELGIUM

V.W.Bro. F. Clarembaux, P.G.J.O.  
W.Bro. G. E. A. Denys, P.A.G.D.C., Dep.Dist.G.M.  
W.Bro. P. Neefs, Dist.G.Sec.  
Bro. I. Pakten

### GERMANY

V.W.Bro. M. A. Walton, P.G.J.O.  
W.Bro. D. Pearson

### ITALY

W.Bro. Dr D. Testerini, P.A.G.D.C.  
Bro. Avv. T. Cristalli

### NIGERIA

Bro. A. K. Bakare-Olanrewaju

### ROMANIA

Bro. I. Sucala Gorgos  
Bro. C. Teodorescu

## DEPUTATIONS FROM OTHER GRAND LODGES

### GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS OF SCOTLAND

Bro. A. T. Riley

And a number of Past Grand Officers, Masters, Wardens, Overseers, Past Masters and other Brethren.

## Report of Proceedings

### 1. OPENING

Grand Lodge was opened in Ample Form and the Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master was saluted under the direction of the Grand Director of Ceremonies.

### 2. IN MEMORIAM

The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master referred with great regret to the number of Brethren called to higher service since the last Communication of Grand Lodge. He mentioned in particular the loss of R.W.Bro. Joseph De Haro, Past District Grand Master for Gibraltar. In addition, there were 105 Grand Officers detailed in the report of the General Board. The Brethren stood to order while the Grand Chaplain offered prayer.

### 3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the Communication of Grand Lodge held on Tuesday, 13 September 2022, which had been circulated with the Summons, were taken as read, approved and adopted.

### 4. REPORT OF THE GENERAL BOARD

The Report of the General Board for the six months ended 31 December 2022, as printed in **Appendix A** of the Summons, was taken as read, approved and adopted.

### 5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE GRAND LODGE OF MARK MASTER MASONS

The Grand Secretary presented the Financial Statements of Grand Lodge for the year ended 31 August 2022, as printed in **Appendix B** of the Summons.

'Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master and Brethren, the financial statements for Grand Lodge for the period ended 31 August 2022 reflect an operating deficit of £856,948 resulting primarily from the one-off discount on Annual Dues of £10 given during the reporting period. Adverse movements in the investment markets resulted in realised and unrealised loss on investments of just over £1 million meaning that the capital fund decreased by £1.37 million.

'Net assets were therefore slightly lower at £7.54 million compared with £8.185 million the previous year and we are confident of an improved performance this year save for any unexpected charges.'

### 6. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE MARK BENEVOLENT FUND

The Grand Secretary presented the Financial Statements of the Mark Benevolent Fund for the year ended 31 August 2022, as printed in **Appendix C** of the Summons.

'Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master and Brethren, the financial statements for the Mark Benevolent Fund for the period ended 31 August 2022 reflect an operating surplus of £604,459. Adverse movements in the investment markets resulted in realised and unrealised loss on investments of £2.9 million which has reduced the fund balance carried forward to £21.2 million. The Fund continues to receive a strong income stream from among our members and the Trustees are confident that this will enable them to maintain the commitment to supporting worthy causes and petitioners.'

### 7. ELECTION AND PROCLAMATION OF THE GRAND MASTER

In accordance with the notice of motion given at the Communication of Grand Lodge held on Tuesday, 13 September 2022, W.Bro. Glen Gary Parker, P.A.G.D.C., proposed that M.W.Bro. H.R.H. Prince Michael of Kent, GCVO, be re-elected as Grand Master for the ensuing year. W.Bro. Parker then stated:

'Most Worshipful Brother Pro Grand Master and Brethren, during the 40 years that Prince Michael has been our Grand Master, His Royal Highness has been a commanding presence in our Order and an example to us all of dignity, dedication, and duty for which we are very thankful, and of course we wish him many more years of good health for the future.'

'Last November, he visited Romania to constitute our newest District and was welcomed on that occasion by over 600 Brethren which emphasised just how much he is our rallying point and the embodiment of the strength of our Order.

'In his capacity as Grand President of the Mark Benevolent Fund, Prince Michael takes an active interest in the work of the Fund and is particularly keen that today we are celebrating all that we have achieved in the last year through grants to many worthy causes.

'Therefore, Brethren, pursuant to the notice of motion given at the last regular communication of Mark Grand Lodge, I am delighted and immensely proud to propose the re-election of Most Worshipful Brother His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas.'

The proposition was seconded by the Grand Secretary and carried with acclamation, whereupon the Grand Director of Ceremonies proclaimed:

Be it known that HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE MICHAEL GEORGE CHARLES FRANKLIN OF KENT of Kensington Palace in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in the County of Greater London; A Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order; A Knight of Justice of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem; Honorary Vice-Admiral of the Royal Naval Reserve; Honorary Colonel in Her Majesty's Army; Honorary Air Marshal of the Royal Air Force; Provincial Grand Master for Middlesex in the United Fraternity of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of England; Past Grand Scribe Nehemiah in the Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of England; Sovereign Grand Inspector General 33rd Degree and an Honorary Member of the Supreme Council 33rd Degree in the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales and its Districts and Chapters Overseas; Grand Master, etc., etc., etc., etc., has this day been elected Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas and of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariner; whom may the Great Overseer and Supreme Commander of the Universe long preserve.

#### 8. ELECTION OF THE GRAND TREASURER

The President of the General Board proposed that R.W.Bro. John Norman George Howitt, P.G.S.W., be re-elected as Grand Treasurer for the ensuing year.

The proposition was seconded by the Grand Registrar, put to Grand Lodge and carried unanimously.

#### 9. MARK BENEVOLENT FUND

The Deputy President of the Mark Benevolent Fund advised the Brethren that the trustees of the Mark Benevolent Fund had made grants totalling £837,745 to the following worthy causes during the six months ended 31 December 2022:

Stape Silver Band.....	£1,916
The Bailiff's Island Appeal (Jersey, Channel Islands).....	£10,000
East Midlands Immediate Care Scheme (EMICS) .....	£11,005
Haverigg Inshore Rescue Team .....	£11,573
St Peter & St James Hospice .....	£16,102
Greater Manchester Blood Bikes.....	£18,801
The Bike Experience .....	£24,794
Lennox Children's Cancer Charity.....	£25,000
Autism Bedfordshire .....	£30,000
Ospreys Wheelchair Rugby.....	£33,400
North of Tyne Mountain Rescue Team .....	£37,500
East Yorkshire Foodbank.....	£38,118
Disability Challengers.....	£40,167

Millom Network Centre .....	£46,090
Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade .....	£55,751
The Rock Youth Project .....	£87,528
Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital.....	£100,000
Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust .....	£100,000
District of Romania – Ukraine Refugee Fund .....	£150,000
TOTAL .....	£837,745

10. ANNUAL DUES

The President of the General Board proposed that the standard rate of registration and other fees payable by Lodges to Grand Lodge for the financial year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 shall be as set out in the schedule in the summons for this meeting.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Grand Secretary gave notice of motion that at the next regular Communication of Grand Lodge, due to be held on Tuesday, 13 June 2023, he will propose changes to the Constitutions and Regulations.

12. TO CALL OFF MARK GRAND LODGE

Grand Lodge was called off.

13. CHARITY PARADE

The Grand Secretary addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master and Brethren, it is through the lens of history, even the most recent past, that we should view our achievements and so give us hope for tomorrow. It is this belief that inspired us in 2019, to give over the March Communication of Grand Lodge to showcase the outstanding work of the Mark Benevolent Fund. Under the banner of 'Holding Hands, Touching Hearts, and Changing Lives', we took the opportunity to reflect on the work of the Mark Benevolent Fund in 2018 and celebrate with representatives of 37 charities which had benefited from worthy causes grants. Such was the success of the meeting that we repeated the exercise in the following year but the intervention of the Covid pandemic prevented us continuing this practice until now.

'The Mark Benevolent Fund is all about opportunities – creating opportunities for those in need, for the youth sector, for the aged and much more. It is about responding to opportunities – identifying those charities where funding from us can help them achieve their goals quicker than might otherwise be the case, and it is about giving us, as members of the Order, the opportunity to feel proud about what we do.

'It is worth remembering that it is often the small steps, not the giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change, aptly describing the shift of focus within the Mark Benevolent Fund which now seeks to distribute more smaller grants to a wide range of deserving charities where the impact is often greater than might be the case with a single major capital grant.

'The number of organisations represented in today's Grand Parade and the diversity of sectors they come from is a strong testament to the success our new approach has achieved, but the opportunity to support more significant projects with perhaps a national rather than a local reach remains.

'During the last one hundred and fifty-five years, the Mark Benevolent Fund has carved out a reputation for disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others, giving an average of over £200,000 each year to individuals in need and worthy causes which benefit the wider community. So, today, after a three-year gap we again take the opportunity to look back – this time on 2022 – and celebrate the continuing work of the Mark Benevolent Fund in so many areas of the communities in which we live.

'Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master and Brethren, the work of the Mark Benevolent Fund does not just happen but relies on the commitment of a Board of Trustees responsible for stewardship of the Fund's resources and making key decisions, on our behalf, about where and how it should be distributed.

'Please welcome a representative group of Trustees led by Right Worshipful Brother David Ashbolt, Past Provincial Grand Master for London, Deputy President, and Chairman of the Worthy Causes Committee; Right Worshipful Brother Ian Clark, Provincial Grand Master for Surrey; Right Worshipful Brother Kevin Hicks, Provincial Grand Master for Cornwall; Right Worshipful Brother Michael Whelan, Provincial Grand Master for Dorset, and Chairman of the Petitions Committee; Right Worshipful Brother Roger Richardson, Provincial Grand Master for Sussex; and Right Worshipful Brother Richard Olliver, Past Provincial Grand Master for Berkshire.

'Let us now welcome into Grand Lodge the Portal Jewel presented to the founder and inspiration for our charity in 1873 in appreciation of his eminent services to the Order, carried by Right Worshipful Brother John Bell, President of the Mark Benevolent Fund.

'Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master and Brethren, as you look upon this jewel let it be a reminder to you of the guiding principle of our charity: he gives twice who gives promptly.

'For over one hundred and fifty years, Mark Provinces in England and Wales have taken turns hosting a Festival to raise funds for the MBF. This has proved to be hugely successful not just in financial terms but as a vehicle to bring together Brethren of the host Province, their families, friends and Brethren from elsewhere, to celebrate the fundraising success. This year, the Province of West Yorkshire hosts the Mark Benevolent Fund Festival, and we are delighted to now welcome into Grand Lodge, representatives from that Province led by Right Worshipful Brother James Steggle, the Provincial Grand Master. He is accompanied by Very Worshipful Brother Richard Puttrell, Festival Committee Chairman; Very Worshipful Brother Ian Wolstencroft, Festival Treasurer; Mrs Ruth Drury, Ladies Committee Member; Mrs Pam Bolton, Ladies Committee Member; Worshipful Brother Chris Oldfield, Festival Committee Member; and Worshipful Brother Michael Nowell, also a Festival Committee Member.

'The scene is now set for us to welcome into Grand Lodge representatives of recipient charities, and I am sure you will give them a very warm welcome indeed. We are all familiar with the vital role played by the frontline emergency services, but we cannot forget the part played by our other emergency services in saving lives. Representing the secondary emergency services sector today we are delighted to receive: from **East Midlands Immediate Care Scheme**, Tim Gray, Chairman and Founder; representing **Haverigg Inshore Rescue Team**, its Chairman Martin George; from **Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team**, Gary Clarke, Public Relations and Incident Call-out Officer; representing **Greater Manchester Blood Bikes**, Worshipful Brother Reverend Doctor Robert Murphy, a Trustee and Response Driver; and from **Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade**, Honorary Captain Norman Peters, a Director and Honorary Treasurer.

'Mahatma Gandhi said, "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver", so we are delighted to now welcome into Grand Lodge representatives of recipient charities working in the health and hospice sectors. Representing **Lennox Children's Cancer Charity**, Lindsay Bidwell, Relations and Partnership Manager, and she is joined by Natalie Wren, Events Co-ordinator; from **Autism Bedfordshire**, please welcome Emma Reade, their Chief Executive Officer; on behalf of **Derian House Children's Hospice**, we are delighted to welcome John Pye, their Trusts and Statutory Funding Manager; and from **Merlin Cornwall**, Sarah Snell the Centre Manager.

'The Mark Benevolent Fund has long been a supporter of community-based charities and those working with young people. So, it is a particular pleasure to welcome from the **Sutton's Women's Centre**, Pauline Hennessy, Counselling Manager, and Liz McGarry, the Centre Manager; representing the **Birmingham Women's and**



**Children’s Hospital**, Nicole Hermanns, their Head of Philanthropy and Strategic Projects; from the youth sector and representing **Rock Youth Project**, Sarah Douglass, Project Manager and Hannah Gill, Lead Youth Worker; representing the **Youth Adventure Trust**, Pippa Graham, the Trust’s Fundraising Officer; **Strongbones Children’s Charitable Trust** is represented by April Fitzmaurice, Charity Manager; and **Cornwall Scouts** by Jon Arnold, their Finance Lead.

‘Ladies, gentlemen and Brethren, Robert Hensel said “there is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more”. The representatives of the next four recipient charities certainly stand out in the field of helping those with disabilities to be seen as more than just a disabled person. From **Bee Unique**, Dave and Nadia Parsons, Founders and Trustees; on behalf of **The Bike Experience**, Talan Skeel-Piggins, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, accompanied by Daniel Elliott, Chief Operating Officer. We are also delighted to welcome, representing **Disability Challengers**, Nick Adams, their Partnership Manager; and from **Ospreys Wheelchair Rugby Team** we welcome: Amanda Crowley, Andrew Messer, Nathan Flay, player, Arran Flay, player, and Sara Pardoe, Vice Chair.

‘Since the conflict in the Ukraine began just over a year ago, Brethren in the Province of Cheshire and the District of Romania have been working hard to provide vital support to those displaced by the war. The longer the war continues, the greater the need for relief from agencies working in and outside of the Ukraine and a little later we will hear more about what the Mark Benevolent Fund is doing to support such initiatives. To complete our muster, please give a very warm welcome to the Provincial Grand Master for Cheshire, Right Worshipful Brother Gary Horstman, accompanied by Brother Eddy Sharpe and Brother Paul Stevenson from **Mission Aid**; and from the **City of Goodness Orphanage Appeal**, Worshipful Brother Michael Ross. From the District of Romania, I am delighted to welcome on your behalf, Right Worshipful Brother Derek Thomas, the MBF Special Liaison with the **Ukrainian Refugee Relief Project**. He is accompanied by Diana Constantin-Tiglar, President of the Relief Project and her husband Bogdan, Vice President. Also, Mrs Enid Thomas, Mrs Janet Jones and Worshipful Brother Wynford Jones. They are joined by Worshipful Brother Alin Bitea, District Grand Secretary.

‘Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master and Brethren, we are all familiar with that portion of Craft ritual which reminds us that charity, like its sister mercy, is twice blessed. It blesses him who gives and him who receives. Our stage is now set where we have brought together donors and recipients to acknowledge and celebrate the positive impact that the Mark Benevolent Fund has had in 2022 on so many aspects of the communities in which we live. Not all the charities the MBF supported last year are represented here today and we haven’t time to receive presentations from them all. So we’ve put together a video montage of thank you messages from the secondary emergency services, health care and hospice sectors and those working in community projects. Let’s see what they have to say.’

[First video montage plays featuring the Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team, Greater Manchester Blood Bikes, and North of Tyne Mountain Rescue.]

[Second video montage plays featuring Derian House Children’s Hospice; The Christie Hospital (Blood Tests Closer to Home Service); St Peter & St James Hospice; Birmingham Women’s Hospital; The Millom Network Centre; and Stape Silver Band.]

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

‘Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren, earlier we welcomed representatives of this year’s host Festival Province – West Yorkshire. Festivals play a vital role in raising funds to support the work of the MBF so I am delighted to invite Right Worshipful Brother James Steggles, Provincial Grand Master and this year’s Festival President, to share his experiences of preparing for what is a significant event in the life of any Province.’

**Right Worshipful Brother James Steggles gave the following address:**

'Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren, it's my great pleasure as a Trustee of the Mark Benevolent Fund and President of this year's festival to be involved in this event which today focusses on the good work of the Mark Benevolent Fund and welcomes many of the charities which it made grants to in 2022. They are now with us today so let me give them a very warm welcome to Freemasons' Hall and to this Grand Lodge meeting.

I also take this opportunity to thank the members of my own festival committee for all the hard work and the good work over the last seven years. The fundraising we've done during that time has been very wide and varied, from pulling a barge for forty-one miles across the Province, to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro – well, not me personally, Brethren, although I did manage to pull the barge for a few yards. At the same time, it has created a great deal of fun and enjoyment within the Province and I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in that fundraising or associated with it in any way.

'I would also like to thank the other Provinces and individuals who have given so generously to the 2023 festival. For those who have not yet donated, Brethren, there is still time ... It will be very gratefully received and it all helps the good work of the Mark Benevolent Fund which you are seeing at the moment, so please give generously if you can.

'The West Yorkshire 2023 Festival and banquet will be held at the Harrogate Conference Centre on 1 July. There are still places for that event, ladies and Brethren, so please get booked in if you can. Families and friends are welcome and your attendance would be greatly appreciated. I give you my personal invitation and I look forward to seeing you there.

'It has already been said, Brethren, in the time available it is not possible for all the charities represented here to speak, but we're currently seeing the good work that they do. So could I just invite you to continue to sit back and relax and enjoy yourselves.'

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

'Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren, we've already received thank you messages from several recipient charities and it's now time to hear from the Youth and Disability sectors.

[Third video montage plays featuring the Youth Adventure Trust; Strongbones Children's Charitable Trust; Cornwall Scouts and Kernow Jamboree; Bee Unique Autism; The Bike Experience Charity; Challengers charity for disabled children; and Ospreys Wheelchair Rugby Club.]

'Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren, last November several of the Rulers and I were privileged to travel to Romania with the Grand Master, HRH Prince Michael of Kent, for the constitution of our newest District. While there, we had the opportunity to meet with a group of Ukrainian families being supported by the Mark Benevolent Fund – a truly humbling experience. Providing support to these displaced families has been a significant focus for the Mark Benevolent Fund in the last year. I will shortly invite Right Worshipful Brother Derek Thomas, Past Provincial Grand Master for Monmouthshire and the MBF's liaison with the support project, to tell you more about what's happening.

'After we've heard from Right Worshipful Brother Derek, he will introduce Diana Constantin-Tiglar who has been the mainstay of this project since its inception and works tirelessly with a small team to provide food, clothing, accommodation, schooling and language skills to the 150 families in her care. During her presentation we will run a montage of pictures to share with you some further insight into our work in Romania.'

**Right Worshipful Brother Derek Thomas gave the following address:**

'Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren, I first came across this remarkable lady in May last year when I had the opportunity in my travels to Romania to meet a large group of

Ukrainian refugees. Quite frankly, I was overwhelmed with the work that Diana and her small team were doing on behalf of us in the Mark Benevolent Fund. What was even more remarkable was the love and the devotion that they had in her and I can tell you it made a very lasting impression on me.

'Diana will outline what she does, but perhaps what she won't tell you is that not only does she give so much time to looking after these unfortunate women and children, but that every penny piece that she receives from the Mark Benevolent Fund pays for food and essential toiletries. There are no expenses; in fact the contrary is true. In order to purchase food for what is quite a substantial amount of people, 150 families a week, Diana and her husband have even purchased a van – out of their pockets, not ours – so she can buy food in bulk which she takes home and puts together in various parcels. There are women there with four or five children and they've escaped from Ukraine with no personal possessions of any kind. They've saved their lives and that is it.

'I now introduce to you to someone I call "Saint Diana Constantin-Tiglar".'

### **Mrs Diana Constantin-Tiglar gave the following address:**

'Pro Grand Master and Brethen, it is an honour and a privilege to stand before you today to speak about your support for the provision of essential aid to Ukrainian refugees, mainly woman and children, in our care. But first I need to explain briefly how it all started. It began when I saw the heartbreaking images on television of desperate crying and mothers who had crossed the borders to get to safety holding their children in their arms. I couldn't remain indifferent and without a second thought I put my whole life on hold and went to the train station to see what I could do to help.

'In the beginning I was spending up to twenty hours a day on the station platform, seven days a week. My friends and family prepared sandwiches and flasks of tea. I bought food, bedding, hats and gloves with my own money and I didn't give up until the flow of refugees stopped. The situation of these people was dire. They had escaped the Russian army leaving everything behind. They had no food, no medicine, very few clothes and most of them had no documents. They were accommodated in small halls, student dormitories, or improvised halls by various people who wanted to help. Our small group has found accommodation for approximately 6,000 refugees so far.

'One day I received a phone call from the District Grand Charity Steward of the Mark Masons of Romania, and he asked me if I could help find accommodation for a Ukrainian family. Apparently he was impressed by my promptness and proposed a collaboration with the Mark District of Romania. I explained that I was not part of an association and was just providing help with family and friends. After our conversation, I realised that we needed some form of organisation in order to be able to administer our aid effectively. I subsequently formed the **Priority for Humanity Association** which is made up of family, friends and three refugees. Together we are currently providing help 24 hours a day to approximately 200 Ukrainians, most of them mothers and children.

'With the help of funds received from the Mark Benevolent Fund, our main source of finance, we provide food, hygiene products, online Romanian language lessons, medicines and other things especially needed for babies and children. We also continue to help refugees to enrol their children in schools, identify jobs for those who have the opportunity to go out to work, register with family doctors, find accommodation, obtain residence permits to live in Romania, and provide them with any kind of information they need. We use WhatsApp groups to communicate about all these aspects.

'Currently the situation is very difficult for refugees. From June to December a European Union aid program was in place paying £9 per day per person for rent in private apartments and £3 per day per person for food, but this program has not provided any money since December. Now there is no source of income and some of them were put out into the street by the apartment owners and they started begging on the streets.

Unfortunately, many of my countrymen and women have lost interest in helping them but I know that I must try to be with them. I will not give up trying to wipe the tears from the face of a mother who does not eat for two or three days to keep food for her children, and I will not give up trying to ease the pain of a disoriented, scared and sad child.

‘On behalf of my small team, and those who have benefitted from your kindness, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and offer my sincerest thanks for all that you have done and continue to do. We are eternally grateful to you and really appreciate the effort you make every day for being our ambassadors and sustaining our cause so these women and their children can overcome the hardest period in their lives. The majority have not only lost their homes but every possession as well.

‘Thank you, Mark Master Masons, for your continued dedication to serving others and making a positive impact on our world. You have given us an example which we should strive to copy. I would also like to say a big thank you to my mentor, Mr Derek Thomas, for supporting me and being there whenever I need advice. Pro Grand Master, your leadership and the generosity of the Mark Benevolent Fund inspires us to do our part in creating a better world for all. We will never be able to thank you enough and my Ukrainian flock want you to know that you are their guardian angels.’

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

‘Ladies, gentlemen and Brethren, today’s Grand Parade is clear evidence of the rich tapestry of organisations supported by the MBF fund in 2022 and I think you’ll agree just how impressive a story it tells. But before we conclude this spotlight on our charitable works, I’d like to invite the Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master to say a few words.’

### **The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master gave the following address:**

‘Ladies, gentlemen, guests of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, I welcome you on behalf of His Royal Highness, Prince Michael of Kent, our Grand Master and the Grand President of the Mark Benevolent Fund. I can assure you that our Grand Master takes enormous pride in the work of the Mark Benevolent Fund and is able to support us by sometimes coming out with us and making various awards.

‘You are surrounded today, ladies and gentlemen, by many Brethren wearing colourful regalia who have come from various parts of England and Wales to join this meeting and to listen to your experiences. You will have an opportunity in a little while, at the reception and at dinner, to talk to the Brethren and tell them about how their funds, which they’ve donated to the MBF and the MBF Trustees have distributed to you, have made a difference to those members of society whose good fortune is not necessarily as good as ours. I know that they will go back to their various lodges and tell them about what they have seen and heard today and, I assure you, when they hear your stories and the good work that you do, freely and voluntarily throughout the community and society, they will put their hands in their pockets a little deeper and with luck maybe into their wallets!

‘I look forward to your company in a few moments time. Thank you all for attending today and I wish you a very happy time with us for the rest of the day and a safe journey home and I know many of you have come from far and wide to share your experiences with us today. Thank you.’

The Grand Secretary continued as follows:

‘Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master, ladies, gentlemen and Brethren, every pound donated to the Mark Benevolent Fund goes some way to creating an opportunity and our concluding video will show you just how many opportunities you created last year. May I say on behalf of the Mark Benevolent Fund how been delighted we’ve been

to work closely with each of the organisations represented here today by providing funding for transport, medical equipment, buildings, furniture and many other items to complete or advance projects in a wide range of areas. The support provided by the Mark Benevolent Fund has enabled each of these to achieve their goals more quickly than might otherwise have been the case.

'Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master, ladies, gentlemen and Brethren, just the other day, while travelling on the underground, I saw this message written on a backpack: 'There has never been a better day to be a good day than today'. Brethren, I hope that having witnessed what your contributions to the Mark Benevolent Fund did last year, you will not only agree that today is a good day, but you'll also feel proud of what we have all achieved.'

[The Charity representatives retired from Mark Grand Lodge.]

14. TO CALL ON GRAND LODGE

The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master called on Mark Grand Lodge.

15. ADDRESS BY THE MOST WORSHIPFUL PRO GRAND MASTER

The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master addressed Grand Lodge as follows:

'Brethren, we have now arrived at that part of the meeting where it is the custom that I address you. As always, I will be as brief as possible. My first responsibility is to offer greetings on behalf our Most Worshipful Grand Master, His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, who is unable to be with us here today as he is engaged on official duties elsewhere. He has asked me to express to you all his fraternal greetings and best wishes for a happy meeting.

'I am delighted to see the support given here today by your attendance. It is an important meeting in our Masonic calendar and we have had the great pleasure of re-electing our Grand Master. It is quite clear that we are more than delighted that he has again consented to hold that office and is now in his forty-first year as Mark Grand Master. I know that you wish him good health that he may remain our Grand Master for many years to come.

'You will have noted that our Grand Treasurer has been re-elected today and I would like to thank him for the large amount of time and effort he puts into the prudent management of our funds. I am sure you will be delighted to note that all the various dues payable for the next financial year are to remain at pre pandemic levels.

'Our March Communication has become a celebration of the work of that Jewel in our Crown: the Mark Benevolent Fund. The dedication of the Trustees of the Fund who give freely, in every sense of the word, of their time and expertise to ensure that your continuing generous support is speedily and faithfully applied. It also gives us an opportunity to meet and welcome some of the worthy causes recipients of the Fund who we have been delighted to see and hear from today.

'Brethren, we are only here today because of our indissoluble attachment to that Craft Lodge from whence we commenced our Masonic journey. It cannot be denied that the strength of the companion and complimentary Orders is, without question, dependent on the success of our Craft Lodges in which we must all actively participate if we are to ensure a bright and vibrant future for Freemasonry in its principal and companion Orders; ever bearing in mind that so many of our Orders require us to be Royal Arch Companions.'

The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master then stated that it gave him much pleasure to invite R.W.Bro. Jonathan Spence, *DL*, P.G.S.W., Pro Grand Master of the Craft and Pro First Grand Principal of the Royal Arch, to address Mark Grand Lodge on his plans and hopes for the future.

R.W.Bro. Jonathan Spence began by saying that he believed this was the first time a Pro Grand Master of the Craft had been invited to speak about the aims and objectives of the Craft at a Mark Grand Lodge meeting. The theme of his address was the Craft and Royal Arch Strategy for Freemasonry saying, 'if we get it right in the Craft, we will get it right in the other Orders'. He highlighted the fact that he was initiated into Freemasonry in 1984 and advanced into the Mark the same year, with the clear message being that Brethren need to work consistently and together to help ensure that Freemasonry thrives.

Introducing UGLE's new seven-year plan to build firm foundations for the future of Freemasonry – 'The Strategy for Freemasonry 2022 & Beyond' – R.W.Bro. Spence emphasised that the strategy is a clear and direct plan to address the challenges that Freemasonry faces in the next seven years, while also building on the existing and unique qualities that the organisation possesses. He said that the strategy will focus on the strong foundations of Integrity, Friendship, Respect and Charity, and on developing a thriving membership constantly reinforcing the concept of our unique combination of fun/sociability and serious/timeless core values. It will address the membership challenge at all levels and further enhance the members' understanding of our history and values.

The necessity for communicating clear, concise, and consistent messaging within UGLE and beyond is a necessity, he continued, empowering members to act as ambassadors and become future leaders. And the third pillar of the strategy, he explained, was engagement in our communities, building on recent successes, identifying new areas for engagement, and communicating more openly through charitable donations and volunteering.

R.W.Bro. Spence went on to emphasise the need to urgently address old attitudes towards new ideas by adopting a 'Yes, if' approach at all levels. Change, he said, is not always easy, but the rewards will be fruitful if we can engage fully with this fundamental shift in the way we do things and a key element in that shift is the need to engage with Companion Orders more closely. If we can succeed in recruiting more Craft and Royal Arch Masons then we create greater opportunities for the Companion Orders – that closer co-operation has already begun with the Pro Grand Master and Grand Secretary having a standing invitation to the Craft Pro Grand Master's Business meeting. This will enable them to hear, first hand, the messages from UGLE.

Concluding his Address, R.W.Bro. Spence said how delighted he was that M.W.Bro. Raymond John Smith, Immediate Past Pro Grand Master of the Mark, had been offered and accepted the rank of active Junior Grand Warden in the Craft and would be invested as such at the April Investiture meeting.

The Most Worshipful Pro Grand Master then continued as follows:

'I thank you, R.W.Bro. Jonathan, for taking time out of your busy schedule to be with us today, and I hope you will be able to join us on many occasions in the future.

'Brethren, it is the wish of all at Mark Masons' Hall that you take today's message back to your Mark Provinces and Lodges, and share today's message in your Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters. We have entered a new era of mutual respect and cooperation across the Masonic spectrum which will require us all to show our active participation to ensure growth, continued success and to demonstrate in our communities how worthwhile it is for men to be invited to be Freemasons. Your support is essential if we are to maintain strong and vibrant Companion Orders. Brother Provincial and District Grand Masters, it is essential that you maintain a regular dialogue with your Craft and Royal Arch counterparts as well as the heads of the Companion Orders in your area. I and my fellow Rulers will offer you every assistance in achieving this requirement. I wish you every success in supporting and maintaining these essential aims.

'I will now introduce many of the distinguished Brethren from home and away who have joined us today. I would request that you refrain from spontaneous applause until after I have come to the end of the extensive list:

'From the Mark: M.W.Bro. Raymond Smith, P.Pro G.M., and R.W.Bro. Keith Emmerson, P.Dep.G.M.

'From our Companion Orders:

R.W.Bro. Jonathan Spence, *DL*, P.G.S.W. – M.W. Pro G.M., of the UGLE and Pro 1st Grand Principal of the Supreme Grand Chapter of England;

R.W.Bro. Paul Clement, P.Prov.G.M., South Wales – Most Eminent & Supreme Grand Master of the United Religious Orders of the Temple;

R.W.Bro. Graham Flight, P.G.J.W. – Grand Sovereign of the Grand Imperial Conclave of the Red Cross of Constantine;

R.W.Bro. Kessick Jones, P.G.S.W. – Grand Master of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters;

R.W.Bro. Thomas Firth Jackson, G.S.W. – Grand Master of Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees;

R.W.Bro. Andrew C. Sweeney, P.G.J.W. – Grand Supreme Ruler of the Grand Conclave of the Order of the Secret Monitor;

W.Bro. Dr Paul Mycock, G.J.D. – 1st Grand Master Mason of the Operatives;

V.W.Bro. Christopher Gavin Maiden, G.S.O. – Grand High Priest of the Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests and Order of Holy Wisdom;

W.Bro. Anthony W. Llewellyn – Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia.

'From our Brethren from overseas, I welcome:

From Belgium, R.W.Bro. Jean Verbist, District Grand Master, accompanied by W.Bro. Francis Clarembaux, P.G.S.D., W.Bro. Gilbert Emile August Denys, P.A.G.D.C.; W.Bro. Paul Neefs; and Bro. Ilker Pakten;

From Germany, R.W.Bro. Michael Cooper, District Grand Master, accompanied by V.W.Bro. Mark A. Walton, P.G.J.O; W.Bro. Lt Col. Markus Winter, G.S.D.; and W.Bro. David Pearson;

From Italy, R.W.Bro. Andrea Bonechi, District Grand Master, and W.Bro. Donatello Testerini, P.A.G.D.C.;

From Nigeria, Bro. Adedayo Kazeem Bakare-Olanrewaju;

From Romania, Bro. Iulian Sucala Gorgos, and Bro. Constantin Teodorescu;

From Sri Lanka, W.Bro. David S. Rose, G.J.D.;

And from the Scottish Constitution, Bro. Alan Riley.

'Nothing now remains but to thank the Grand Secretary, R.W.Bro. Ryan Williams, his Deputy, W.Bro. Daniel Heath, the Charities Manager, W.Bro. Darren Coleman-Heald, and all the team on the fourth floor at 86 St James's Street for all their hard work in preparing today's meeting. A special thank you to the Grand Director of Ceremonies, V.W.Bro. Christopher Davies, and his team of Deputies and Assistants for today's ceremonial.

'Today, has been another special and rewarding day in our Mark calendar, and I do hope you will take back to your Lodges, Provinces and Districts a positive message regarding charity well applied and continuing mutual Masonic co-operation. I do not intend to keep you any longer from the refreshment I am sure you so earnestly desire, I thank you for your kind attention.'

## 16. CLOSING

Grand Lodge was closed in Ample Form.

