

The Royal Ark Mariner Degree.

The precise origins of this degree are unknown but its content is based on the Great Flood, now a proven historical fact, and the story in which Noah and his family were saved in the Ark as described in the V.S.L. and enacted in the Mystery Plays of the 17th century.

By the mid 18th century there was a degree of 'Noachites' or 'Prussian Knights' but it was not until the 1780s that the first authentic records of the degree appeared in the minutes of meetings held in Bath and Portsmouth

During its early years the degree experienced many difficulties and it was not until its serious revival when Bro John F. Dorrington became Grand Commander that the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons placed the degree under its protection and formed the Grand Master's Royal Ark Council to regulate its actions.

The only qualification for 'elevation to membership' is that a Brother should already be a Mark Master Mason. In the ceremony of 'elevation' analogies are drawn between the dangers of the flood and the dangers of life.

The subject matter, being taken directly from the V.S.L., is both beautiful and instructive.

The teaching of the degree emphasises the importance of family strengths and the need for each member of society to play his part to the benefit of all. We are taught that out of chaos and catastrophe mankind can survive and that we should face adversity together, helping to look after those less fortunate than ourselves.

Royal Ark Mariner Regalia.



The apron (above) and the breast jewel (overleaf) both exhibit the distinctive 'rainbow' ribbon of the degree. On attaining the chair as a Worshipful Commander the rosettes of the apron are replaced by triangles. Lodge officers wear a 'rainbow' collar together with the appropriate jewel. Those honoured with Provincial or Grand Rank also wear a collarette.

Royal Ark Mariner Lodges.

Each Royal Ark Mariner Lodge is attached, or 'moored', to a Mark Lodge and bears its number and usually its name. The officers of the Lodge are similar to those of a Craft Lodge although the Master is known as the Worshipful Commander, the Secretary as Scribe, the Inner Guard as Guardian and the Tyler as Warder. Interestingly enough both Wardens are placed in the West – as they were in the Craft Lodges of old.

In the Province of Hertfordshire we have 32 Royal Ark Mariner Lodges, the oldest of which is Gladsmuir No. 367 (its warrant is dated 17th October 1894). It was this Lodge that played a great part in the recent re-introduction of the tracing board of the degree which had been out of favour for over 100 years.

Most Lodges meet three times per year, usually on the same evening as their Mark Lodge, although some have a separate meeting day for Installation.

The dates of all meetings, their venues and lists of members' ranks are contained in the Hertfordshire Year Book.

Attention all Mark Master Masons

If you, or any of your Mark colleagues, are not already a member of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners why not consider becoming one?

Any Brother you see in your Mark Lodge wearing the distinctive 'rainbow' breast jewel should be able to supply you with more information. Alternatively you can contact the Provincial Grand Secretary, the Scribe of your associated Royal Ark Mariner Lodge or view the Provincial website on www.hertsmark.org for further details.

Should you wish to read more about Royal Ark Mariner degree the following two books, published by Lewis Masonic, may prove of interest:

'Beyond The Craft' by Keith B. Jackson
(ISBN 0-85318-207-8)

'The Arch and the Rainbow' by the Rev.
Neville Barker Cryer
(ISBN 9780853182115)



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What Can The Story of Noah And The Great Flood Teach You?

Why not find out by
joining us in



*The Ancient and
Honourable Fraternity
Of
Royal Ark Mariners*