

The Mark Degree

The Mark Degree is undoubtedly one of the most supported degrees in Freemasonry; there are nearly 1500 Mark Lodges in the English Constitution with the Province of Hertfordshire consisting of 38 Lodges and over 700 members. The Order is non-denominational and open to all Master Masons in good standing who are members of a Regular Craft Constitution.

There is evidence of a form of Mark Degree in Scotland as early as 1599, however the earliest records of a speculative Mark Degree being worked in England are in September 1769 when, at a newly chartered Royal Arch Chapter known as The Chapter of Friendship held at the George Tavern in Portsmouth, the then Provincial Grand Master, Thomas Dunckerley, wrote:

*Bro't the Warrant of the Chapter and having lately read the Mark he made
the brethren Mark Masons and Mark Masters and each chose their Mark*

The working of the Mark Degree before the middle of the nineteenth century was, at best, chaotic. Many degrees of varying types had been worked in Craft Lodges prior to the Union of the two rival Craft Grand Lodges in 1813 when, under the Articles of Union, the Mark Degree – amongst others – was not recognised as part of “Pure Ancient Masonry”; nonetheless, many Lodges continued to work the Mark Degree.

On 25 August 1851, a group of London Brethren founded a Mark Lodge under a Charter obtained, quite irregularly, from the Bon Accord Royal Arch Chapter N^o 70 of Aberdeen and appointed William Jones as Master; this action resulted in the suspension of the Lodge, along with all the members of the mother Chapter. Despite this, Bon Accord Mark Lodge continued to meet and became very successful; by 1855 it had 120 members growing to about 150 by 1856.

The Grand Mark Lodge was established on 23 June 1856 with Lord Leigh, (Provincial Grand Master for the Craft Province of Warwickshire) as its first Grand Master and, gradually, almost all the bodies conferring the Mark Degree in England and the existent Mark Lodges acceded to, or came under, its authority.

In common with most disputes, time was a healer and in 1883 HRH The Prince of Wales, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, was Advanced, becoming Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons in 1886. He went on to expressly state that he wished to see the Mark remain independent of The Craft and any other body.

More recently there is no doubt that a vast number of brethren who have attained eminence in the Craft have been no less eminent in the Mark, showing the strong bond between the two Orders. If you have found this leaflet of interest and wish to join our wonderful Order, please complete the form overleaf and return it to your proposer or to

The Provincial Grand Secretary of Hertfordshire

W. Bro. Trevor Clarke

35 Appleton Fields, BISHOP'S STORTFORD, CM23 4DP

Are you Worthy to Receive your Mark?

Masons' Marks have been found on stones throughout the Middle East as well as the castles, churches and cathedrals of Europe. Medieval stained glass windows, carvings and manuscripts detail such marks and give us some idea of the methods adopted by the stone masons of the time. Masons carved stones for ordinary building blocks and also for decoration and it became customary for stone masons to place marks upon stones in the quarries to identify the work of a particular mason for the payment of wages and signify that the stone was acceptable for use. Other marks indicated where a particular stone might be placed within the structure.

Ceremonies and Regalia

The Ceremony of Advancement to the Degree of Mark Master Mason centres on the traditional practice of choosing and using a distinguishing mark to identify each craftsman's work so that he may be entitled to receive his wages. The themes of the degree include regularity, diligence and discipline and as the second degree of Craft Freemasonry encourages learning, the Mark Degree instructs how that learning can be most usefully and judiciously employed for our own honour and the benefit of our fellow man.

While motives may sometimes be misinterpreted, attainments under-rated and reputations traduced, the Mark Degree demonstrates the merits of persistence in the face of adversity and the conviction that truth will prevail.

The Mark Degree is one of hope and encouragement, the ritual is built around a single verse from Psalm 118: “The stone which the builders refused is to become the headstone of the corner”. It deals with the building of King Solomon's Temple and the various craftsmen employed but the real message is the contemplation of human strength and weakness.

On occasion a lecture is given using a tracing board which contains symbols from which lessons can be drawn. The tracing board includes the method of decoding the Masonic Cipher, (based upon the lines used in a game of noughts and crosses), which was originally used to preserve the secrecy of minutes and other writings in Freemasonry.

The Mark Degree contains many messages for the discerning mason and it is for each to put his own interpretation on the message which the Degree proclaims but there is a firm statement that no man is beyond redemption and the possibility of distinction is always within our grasp.

In addition to the apron and jewel of the Order, some Mark Lodges also have a special token, known as a 'Mark Penny', to symbolise the payment of wages.



Provincial Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Hertfordshire



*Exploring the legend of the building of the Temple –
teaching that education is the reward of labour*

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

To be Completed by the Candidate for Advancement, Joining or Re-joining.

This form must be completed using typescript or block letters and sent within fourteen days of admission of the candidate via the Provincial/District Grand Secretary to:
The Grand Secretary, Mark Masons' Hall, 86 St. James's Street, London SW1A 1PL

1. LODGE NAME	<input type="text"/>		
2. NUMBER	<input type="text"/>	3. PROVINCE/DISTRICT	<input type="text" value="HERTFORDSHIRE"/>
4. BROTHER	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
	<i>(Initials)</i>	<i>(Surname)</i>	
5. FORENAMES IN FULL	<input type="text"/>		
6. DECORATIONS AND HONOURS	<input type="text"/>	7. STYLE OR TITLE	<input type="text"/>
		<i>(e.g. Mr, Sir, Brigadier)</i>	
8. ADDRESS	(i) <input type="text"/>		
	(ii) <input type="text"/>		
	(iii) <input type="text"/>		
	(iv) <input type="text"/>		
	(v) <input type="text"/>		
9. DATE OF BIRTH	<input type="text"/>	(vi) POSTCODE	<input type="text"/>
10. TELEPHONE	HOME <input type="text"/>	WORK	<input type="text"/>
	MOBILE <input type="text"/>	FAX	<input type="text"/>
	E-MAIL <input type="text"/>		
11. SUBSCRIBING MEMBER OF CRAFT LODGE No.	<input type="text"/>	ON	<input type="text"/>
		CONSTITUTION	<input type="text"/>
		<i>(if not English)</i>	
JOINING / RE-JOINING MEMBERS			
	12. MMH MEMBERSHIP NUMBER	<input type="text"/>	
		<i>(if known)</i>	
13. MOTHER MARK LODGE	No. <input type="text"/>	NAME <input type="text"/>	
	CONSTITUTION <i>(if not English)</i>	<input type="text"/>	
	<i>(please complete details overleaf)</i>		
DATE OF ADVANCEMENT	<input type="text"/>	DATE OF LEAVING	<input type="text"/>
		<i>(if applicable)</i>	
		REASON FOR LEAVING	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Resigned, Honorary Member, Tyler, Ceased, Excluded, Warrant forfeited	
14. MASTER OF MARK LODGE	No. <input type="text"/>	DATE OF INSTALLATION	<input type="text"/>
15. PRESENT PROVINCIAL/ DISTRICT GRAND RANK	<input type="text"/>	DATE	<input type="text"/>
16. PRESENT GRAND RANK	<input type="text"/>	DATE	<input type="text"/>
PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ALL THE MARK LODGES OF WHICH YOU ARE OR HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OVERLEAF			
17. SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE	<input type="text"/>		
18. SIGNATURE OF PROPOSER	<input type="text"/>	19. SIGNATURE OF SECONDER	<input type="text"/>
20. THE CANDIDATE WAS ADVANCED	ON <input type="text"/>		
I hereby certify that the above is a correct record and the Candidate's Mark has been en-grossed overleaf.			
21. NAME OF SECRETARY <i>(Initials & Surname)</i>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
22. SIGNATURE OF SECRETARY	<input type="text"/>		DATED <input type="text"/>
23. Enclosed is the Registration Fee of £ <input type="text"/>	REGF01 + VAT of £ <input type="text"/>	VATOUTPUT	A Total Fee of £ <input type="text"/>
			GF DAR

Data Protection Act 1998: I, the above signed, hereby consent to the processing of personal data and information supplied on this form by the LODGE, PROVINCE and the GLMMM