

A belated good morning and a very warm welcome to this the fourteenth Provincial Assembly of Royal Ark Mariners of North & East Yorkshire.

Like last year, we are at a new venue the magnificent Bridlington Spa. This has come about by a long standing booking at the Scarborough Spa which could not be changed. Like Noah, who as you know was pre-warned about the deluge that was to engulf the earth, we were pre-warned that another venue would have to be sought. So, we set sail and found a safe refuge to anchor this Assembly, here at the Bridlington Spa. Although not quite as visible as last year we are alongside our spiritual home the North Sea. I hope brethren you have enjoyed the meeting so far and will continue to enjoy the day.

As I said last year changing venue does create a number of challenges but through the hard work and dedication of the secretariat and Director of ceremonies team these challenges have been overcome. Traditionally this Assembly is organised by the Deputy Provincial Grand Secretary and the Deputy Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro's Geoff Nicholson and Les Richings, ably supported by the Assistant Provincial Grand Secretary, Bro Allan Williams who is in charge of the lunch. I wrote this Address at the start of the week, so I was tempting providence and hopefully I won't create too much pressure for the rest of the meeting by saying you have all done a tremendous job and the day has run very smoothly. Well done to you all. I'm sure the Provincial Secretary, W.Bro Bill Glanville and the Provincial Grand Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro Ron Campbell, have been keeping a watchful eye over proceedings and offered help and guidance when called upon.

It has become a tradition at this Assembly to mention the membership figures, today they stand at 345 members with 408 Memberships, that is those brethren who hold membership of more than one lodge. I asked last year if you could redouble your efforts in persuading more of our Mark brothers to join the RAM. By and large you have done what I asked, we have had seventeen elevations during the year. Two lodges have stood out as attracting more new members than most, four joining Allertonshire and five joining Hull. I do thank both those lodges for their efforts and all the lodges for increasing their numbers. However, brethren the good news of having seventeen new members has been nullified by the sad loss of five of our brethren, who the APGM mentioned earlier, and by a number of resignations. This has resulted in a nett gain in members of just one over the year. I have therefore put in place a proactive policy of not accepting resignations until they have been notified to me and my fellow Rulers. We will then investigate the cause of the resignation and where necessary phone the brother and try to persuade him to stay in the Order. Our target of achieving a figure of 50% of our Mark brethren to be members of the RAM is achievable and within target. We are currently standing at a little over 45%, in round figures we need to have a net gain of 34 new members. If we continue to attract new members at the same rate it will take us just two years to achieve our target of 50%, if we can keep resignations to a minimum. It's up to you to ask the question "would you like to join a beautiful, colourful and meaningful order" you never know the answer just may surprise you, but if you don't ask, you will never know. To help you with your endeavour's application forms are on your seats, both for the RAM and Mark, the Craft brethren also need to be asked the same question about the Mark. Please don't leave the form's behind, take them with you and make use of them.

Since our last meeting three of our brethren have been promoted to RAMGR, when I call out your name would you please stand so the brethren can give you the accolade that your rank deserves, hold back brethren until all are stood. W. Bro's John Broughton, David Hodgson and Mike Pegg. Your Grand Rank is very much deserved, you have and still serve this Province to the best of your ability.

In a little over three weeks' time a good few of us will be travelling down to London to witness three more of our brethren receive RAMGR, again brethren please stand when I read out your name and please hold back on your applause until they are all stood. W.Bro's. Roger Booker, Tony Clements and Ernie McGeagh. Congratulations brethren, I look forward to seeing you receive your honour.

To last year recipients of RAMProvGR I and my fellow Rulers thank you for the support you have given us and the Province during your year in office. I hope you have all enjoyed your year and will continue to support your lodge and the Province over the coming years. Your continued support will of course not go un-noticed when deciding on future recipients of RAMGR. A very difficult choice to make brethren. We appoint up to eight brethren a year to RAMProvGR but only receive three RAMGR. I and my honours committee meet once a year to discuss the nominees and we do it year on year slowly working up the list. When deciding who to put forward, we take into account the support you have given your lodge, attendance and offices held, attendance at Provincial meetings both Mark and RAM and attendance at social functions. More often than not a very difficult decision.

To this year's recipients of RAMProvGR, congratulations, we the Rulers hope that you have a very enjoyable year as Provincial Officers of the Year, we look forward to your support and company.

Among other things this year we have witnessed two inter Provincial golf matches between North & East and West Yorkshire. This came about as last year's match had to be rearranged due to the funeral of W.Bro Brain Emmett. Brain a Past Deputy Provincial Grand Master of West Yorkshire and also a member of this Province, was an avid supporter of this meeting and he is very sadly missed. As many of us attended his funeral the annual match was rearranged to be played in April this year. I'm disappointed to say brethren that West Yorkshire were the winners by ten games to nil. Yes, a whitewash. On the return match played in September we did play better and found that bit of magic to regain the trophy by six games to four. I was going to display the trophy this morning but didn't want to upset R.W.Bro Jim on his first visit to this Assembly.

I have already thanked the Secretariat and Grand Director of Ceremonies and his Deputy but my thanks also go to the two Assistant Provincial Grand Director Ceremonies, W.Bro's Jon Smith and Steve Cox for their contribution to today's meeting. My grateful thanks also goes to W.Bro Geoff Eastburn and the brethren of the PWRL for all they have done to make this meeting run smoothly, Geoff and his team do a tremendous amount of work, ably assisted this year by W.Bro's Mike Fila and Steve Helsden. Thank you all for your endeavours it is very much appreciated.

Brethren, since becoming your Provincial Grand Master my message has been the same and will not change, Enjoyment, Enjoyment, Enjoyment. If you enjoy your RAM and Mark masonry and make sure the unconverted hear about the enjoyment, we all share they will want to join.

Every year I have referred to you as my "Elite Team" members of both the Mark and RAM. I have acknowledged you as my specialist team, the committed Mark and RAM masons, please brethren don't let me down, don't let the team down, don't let the RAM or Mark down. Go out into your lodges and work doubly hard to promote the RAM and Mark. Please help me, my fellow Rulers and the executive to move both our orders forward, to convert those that are not members to members, to make sure that the enjoyment that we share as RAM and Mark men is there to be seen by all freemason's in all orders. Enjoy yourselves.

My thanks again to W. Bro Don Marshall for his talk. For those of you not staying for lunch thank you for your attendance this morning and I wish you a safe journey home. For those that are staying I look forward to an enjoyable lunch in your company.

May the Great Overseer of the Universe bless you all and may you all find a safe Harbour in times of difficulty and need in the coming year.

Thank you all Brethren.