



## Magic of the Mark - Transcript

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The Mark is a very old degree the third largest order in Freemasonry and traces its Origins to the same period of history as the development of The Craft and holy Royal Arch the working of the degree can be traced back to the 1700s when the ceremony was included in craft ritual which even today in Scotland and Ireland includes Royal Arch and Mark masonry in completing the credentials of Freemasons.

Devonshire is acknowledged as the oldest province in the order being the first to obtain its warrant from Mark Grand Lodge in 1857. The first provincial Grand Master appointed by Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons on the 11th of December 1857 was the Reverend John heisch M.A who was at that time the deputy provincial Grandmaster for The Craft.

Since its Inception the order has continued to grow and today there are more than 1500 Mark lodges and over 32000 Mark Master Masons in the English Constitution alone.

Today the mark degree is ruled by the Grand Master his Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent who is supported by the programmed Master the deputy Grandmaster and the assistant Grand Master along with the full support of his brother his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.

It benefits from a magnificent headquarters Mark Mason's Hall 86 Saint James's Street London is the administrative headquarters of 10 orders in Freemasonry. Each order offers a different Masonic experience to members however they all have something in common they all provide an excellent opportunity for Freemasons wishing to extend their Masonic knowledge find new challenges and enhance existing friendships.

It is said by many to be their favourite order ask any Mark Master Mason to describe the marked degree, and they will invariably smile first and then tell you that it is the friendliest of masonic orders.

Brotherly Love is the Keystone of Mark masonry and friendliness of the degree is clearly seen and experienced in our Lodge rooms in the genuine warmth of welcome that is universally extended among all Mark Masons.

indeed, whilst our message is key there is no doubt that among Mark Master Masons you will ever find friends.

New Mark Master Masons often say that they wish they had joined the mark years before. Mark masonry is an inclusive degree, and admittance is open to all Master Masons irrespective of faith and cultural background. The ceremony of advancement allows full entry to all Master Masons a four or more weeks standing with access to the ladder leading to the chair of their Lodge.

Mark masonry has its own registered charity the mark benevolent fund or mbf which does outstanding work in providing Speedy support to members their families and non-masonic worthy causes.

The mark benevolent fund came into existence in 1868 on the suggestion of the Reverend George Raymond portal Grand Master of the mark degree at that time.

his views on charity were far more radical and Progressive than the general thinking of the time. He felt that for charity to be effective it had to be dispersed quickly and without the bureaucratic formalities of other Masonic charities. To him it was wrong for there to be any delay in providing assistance to those in need his own Latin tag bistat Ki Sito dat for he gives twice who gives promptly became and still is the principal guideline of the mbf.

It creates a sense of belonging to the mark family which has an aim of promoting Harmony friendliness and enjoyment. The following is taken from the ceremony of advancement into the marked degree among Mark Master Masons you will ever find friends who will administer relief to your distress and comfort in your affliction simply ask any Mark Master Mason and they will confirm this. The craft book of constitutions tells us that ancient masonry consists of three degrees including the holy Royal Arch.

This is a somewhat strange statement bearing in mind that prior to the union of the two grand lodges in 1813 a form of the marked degree was extensively worked both in London and the provinces. Indeed, there exists a document in the craft provincial Grand Lodge of Durham the last page of which is dated 1756 and reads: they're being met part of the body of the lodge they taking in their serious consideration that no member of the said Lodge shall be made a Mark Mason without paying the fee of Juan Scott's mark.

During the ceremony of advancement into the order of Mark Master Masons the candidate is shown how to take the fourth regular step in Freemasonry.

Each Mark Mason has his own personal and unique Mark which provides a direct link to operative stone masons who have used Marx to identify their work for centuries.

Marks have been found on stones used in ancient Egypt and elsewhere including castles churches and in the cathedrals of Europe built from 1100 onwards.

Stained glass windows carvings and manuscripts give us some idea of the methods of the medieval stonemasons. Mason's carved stones for ordinary building blocks and for decoration. Everyone who takes the degree of Mark Master Mason will be asked to create his own Mark as a type of unique signature or identifying badge.

The mark degree focusing on the Keystone of the Sacred Arch provides a comprehensive understanding of the interconnections between the Solomonic degrees craft Mark holy Royal Arch Royal and select Masters and other orders.

At least four other orders require you to be a mark Master Mason before you can discover their symbolism and further age your Masonic knowledge and journey. One of the consequences of the 1813 Union of the two grand lodges in England was the specific recognition of the three craft degrees only including the holy Royal Arch, thus excluding the mark degree. As a result of this a craft Mason who joins other orders before the mark degree may be confused by their symbolism. Our degree aids your understanding by adding essential background to the history of the construction of the temple the importance of the Keystone and the work of the overseers.

Interestingly in other recognized constitutions the mark degree can be conferred in either craft lodges or Royal Arch chapters and indeed is an essential prerequisite before exaltation into a chapter can take place.

Mark masonry is probably the only tangible link with our operative predecessors, that of each Mason receiving and using a distinctive mark. Secondly the language and symbolism of The Craft revolves around building in general and the construction of King Solomon's Temple in particular.

The beautifully written ritual teaches lessons of Hope and encouragement having confidence in the quality of One's Own work and the advantages of perseverance. The ritual is built around a single verse from psalm 118. Stone which the builders refused is 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.

The mark degree contains many messages for the Discerning man and the dramatic but yet friendly ceremony illustrates that the wisest of men can be mistaken that the experts are often wrong that the weakest can display greater perseverance than the strongest that the insignificant has the potential for distinction and that we all have a part to play in the building of life.

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. The candidate is not merely LED around the lodge room but increasingly takes an active Central role.

To many craft Masons who do not know much about the order advancement as a mark Master Mason can seem like a fun even humorous ceremony. Those who are Advanced soon realize that it is a different and more inclusive ceremony as they act as the main builder of the ceremony.

In the Mark we take our rituals seriously, but it is performed in a more relaxed atmosphere than you may be accustomed to as a craft Mason.

For many it first moved Beyond The Craft and can offer a different group of people to meet and from whom to learn thereby widening a Brother's Masonic knowledge and circle of friends.

The ceremony of the degree is a simple story of operative Masons working on the construction of King Solomon's Temple and is a dramatic piece which never fails to impress candidates who are Advanced into the order.

Most rightly consider it to be an advancement of knowledge obtained during the fellow craft degree.

Mark Masons are enthusiastic Freemasons and extremely welcoming. There are shorter lines of communication with friendly and approachable executives amongst Mark Master Masons you will always find friends which is why it is known as the friendly degree.

Within the mark you will see that the Grand and provincial rulers are active visitors and are happy to talk and have a chat with all.

Social media is where you can also find them which is a refreshing change to craft and so to many younger Masons is more inviting.

If a mark Master Mason had to give up all orders except one the majority would probably choose to keep the mark.

Mark masonry offers progression and growth for a greater proportion of Freemasons with a very real opportunity to showcase their qualities and enhance their enjoyment of masonry as a whole. there are more offices in the progression than in craft masonry but with only one ceremony to learn and that being of a less onerous nature than those of other degrees. Brethren find the efforts more pleasant and the results more readily achievable.

This may be why the basis of the degree has always been considered a happy one.

Candidates never fail to say how agreeable they found the experience. Having completed the year as Master provincial ground rank is usually awarded after a further three years with grand rank available to the industrious.

For more information on our wonderful order, then please get in touch in one of the many ways that are available, and we will be happy to help you further.

Thanks for watching

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## The End