

*RIGHT WORSHIPFUL BROTHER
EDWARD R. GARTY*

*PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER
FOR THE MARK PROVINCE
OF MIDDLESEX*

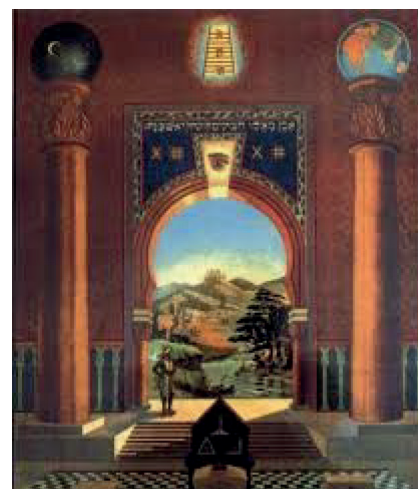


THE MARK DEGREE IN MIDDLESEX

The Mark Province of Middlesex is one of the largest in the country. The Provincial Grand Master is R.W.Bro Edward R. Garty.

There is a Provincial Deputy Grand Master and two Provincial Assistant Grand Masters and the Order is administered by a Provincial Grand Secretary.

*There is a list of the Officers and also a list of the Lodges and their meeting places and times on the website
www.middlesexmark.co.uk*



*For more information about the Mark Degree and for past and forthcoming events, please visit the Mark Provincial website.
www.middlesexmark.co.uk*



*Provincial Grand Lodge
of Mark Master Masons
of Middlesex*

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MARK DEGREE

*Some thoughts on the
History and allegory of the
Mark Degree*

YOUR NEXT STEP IN FREEMASONRY: THE MARK DEGREE

The Fourth Regular Step

A Master Mason may join the Mark Degree immediately after he has completed his Third Degree. Chronologically the Degree follows that of the Fellow Craft. It is one of the oldest and most interesting grades in Freemasonry. It is often referred to as “The Friendly Degree”.

The Craft & The Mark Degree

The Union of 1813, saw the bringing together of the two English Craft Grand Lodges, the Premier or ‘Moderns’ founded in 1717 and the rival ‘Ancients’ founded in 1751.

The second article of union between the two Grand Lodges declared that ‘Pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more namely the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch’.

At the Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge in 1856, it was declared that ‘The Degree of Mark Mason is not at variance with Craft Masonry and that it be added thereto under proper regulations’ but shortly afterwards, this motion was rejected and a subsequent amended motion was carried which stated that the Mark would form a graceful addition to the Fellow Craft Degree.

In 1856, the Mark Grand Lodge was formed as a result of the brief, but profound, change in the attitude of the Craft Grand Lodge.

In Scotland, Ireland and the United States of America, the Mark Degree forms an integral and important part of the Masonic sequence of Degrees. The Mark must be taken before a candidate in the Craft can progress to the next Degree. In the Royal Arch a candidate cannot progress through the various Offices, unless he has joined the Mark Degree.

The Mark Degree deals with the building of King Solomon’s Temple and the Degree was performed in Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters, as early as 1769.

Although the ritual deals with an incident during the building of the Temple, the resolution of which leads to the Royal Arch Degree, it shows the link between the Craft, the Royal Arch and the Mark in the colours used in the Degree.

Blue for the Craft and red for the Holy Royal Arch, forming an even greater and obvious link.

The Mark is central to Freemasonry, because it is an extension to the Second Degree in the Craft. But this simple assertion belies the fact that the ceremony of Advancement is longer in content than that of the Third Degree and the present ceremony is derived from an earlier practice of conferring the Degree of Mark Man on Fellow Crafts and the Degree of Mark Master on Master Masons.



Member of a Lodge

Every candidate to be Advanced to the Degree of Mark Master Mason, must be a Master Mason of a regular and recognised Craft Lodge, while a candidate for the Office of Worshipful Master, must nominally have served as Worshipful Master of a Craft Lodge, although a dispensation is commonly obtainable which obviates this prior condition.

Lodges generally meet three times a year and the fees are usually less than that of the Craft.

The Mark Degree Ritual

The Degree of admission is called ‘Advancement’ and chronologically follows that of Fellow Craft.

It is one of the oldest and most interesting grades in Freemasonry and today incorporates two Degrees; the Candidate is first ‘Acknowledged’ as a Mark Man and subsequently ‘Advanced’ as a Mark Master Mason in the same ceremony.

It appears that the Degree grew out of an ancient ceremony in which each craftsman selected for himself a private mark with which he might designate his particular work and this mark was duly registered with the constituted authority.

The legend of the Degree is singularly instructive and well founded on statements of Holy Writ relating to a period in the building of the Temple prior to the death of Hiram Abiff; it teaches the lesson that education is the reward of labour and contains a dramatic message that fraud can never succeed.

The symbol of the Degree is a keystone on which is engraved certain mystic letters, the meaning of which is revealed during the ceremony.

Regalia

Members of the Degree are required to wear aprons of white kid having a triangular flap, all bordered with a two inch ribbon of light blue with crimson edges; the apron has three rosettes of similar colouring.

Masters and Past Masters have rosettes replaced by silver levels, similar to those worn in the Craft.

The jewel of the Degree is a keystone of ivory or other approved material having a silver Lewis, this is suspended from a silver bar by a one inch ribbon in the colours of the Order.

Each face of the keystone bears certain characters or letters which have a particular meaning to the wearer.