

Lodges in Province of Berkshire

Lodge	Venue	Meeting Dates	Contact Name	Telephone Number	Email Address
027 Porchester	Newbury	1st Wed Feb & Nov, 2nd Wed Apr	Steve Berkshire	01635 30405	steve.berkshire@sky.com
235 Leopold	Wokingham	Last Mon Feb, 3rd Mon May & 2nd Mon Oct	Tony Hardiman	0118 933 2845	mtuun1@aol.com
257 Jersey	Windsor	1st Wed Jun, 2nd Wed Nov	Hugh Ranscombe	0118 934 2571	hranscombe@tiscali.co.uk
519 Windsor Castle	Windsor	3rd Wed May & Oct	Alan Fone	01784 473404	alanfone@tiscali.co.uk
1162 Wallingford	Wallingford	Last Fri Mar & 1st Fri Sep	David Keene	07889 758754	scribe1162@keene.ne.uk
1330 Berks & Oxon Inst. Commanders	Wallingford	1st Tues Jun & 1st Wed Dec	Frank Haines	01865 858393	frank.haines@btinternet.com
1398 Old Rectory	Caversham	2nd Thur Oct & 4th Thur May	John A Rowe	0118 947 1802	johnr8@btinternet.com
1555 Friendship & Care	Sindlesham	3rd Fri Feb & Oct	Paul Digby	01628 412712	pauldsm@aol.com
1568 Linden Acre	Wokingham	4th Tues Jan & May	David Medley	01932 874111	RAMscribe@LindenAcre.org.uk

PROVINCIAL CONTACTS

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Provincial Grand Lodge of

Royal Ark Mariners

of

Berkshire



The Royal Ark Mariner Degree

THE ANCIENT & HONOURABLE FRATERNITY OF ROYAL ARK MARINERS

THE DEGREE EXPLAINED

This degree, although worked under the aegis of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons, and requiring every candidate to be a Mark Master Mason, has no historical connection whatsoever with that degree. Mark Grand Lodge's rule over the 'Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners' is simply a quirk of fate and a very interesting story in itself (but one that must be left until after you have joined our ranks!).

It stands entirely alone and totally unrelated to any other degree in freemasonry.

As its name suggests, it has a nautical flavour and takes, for its scenario, the circumstances leading up to the Great Flood as recorded in the Book of Genesis and the steps taken by Noah to build the Ark by which mankind was preserved from perishing in the "Universal Deluge".

Like the Mark Master Mason's Degree, which is based on an established fact (i.e. the construction of the Temple at Jerusalem), so the degree of Royal Ark Mariner is also based on an actual happening, (i.e. the Great Flood), as recorded in the Bible and as established in the year 1929 by the archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley, who not only found clear

evidence of the flood, and established that it had occurred some 6000 years previously, but also proved that it had covered an area of some 4000 square miles of what was then Mesopotamia, now Iraq. To the people of that part of the world, who probably never travelled beyond the perimeter of their own villages, it must have seemed that the whole world was under water.

Quite recently, there have been developments in that part of the world inasmuch as an expedition, looking for evidence of the Ark on the Turkish-Iranian border and using aerial photographs and radar imagery, believe they have found the remains of the Ark, 75 feet below ground level on the upper slopes of Mount Al Judi, at an altitude of some 7000 feet. The image appears to be about 515 feet in length (comparing favourably with the 300 cubits specified in Genesis). It is worth reflecting that one translation of the Bible says that the Ark came to rest in the mountains of Ararat rather than Mount Ararat and also that the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, has its own 'Noah' character and that, in the Qur'an account of the flood, the Ark comes to rest on Mount Al Judi, which is part of the Ararat mountain range and a mere 20 miles from Mount Ararat! There's certainly food for thought there and, who knows, we may be on the threshold of a most remarkable discovery.

Getting back to the Masonic side, the senior officers of a Royal Ark Mariner

Lodge represent Noah and two of his three sons, Japheth and Shem. The form of the Lodge is quite different from other degrees

Like the Mark Master Mason's Degree, there is only one ceremony to complete, i.e. the ceremony of Elevation, and this is relatively short (about 45 minutes).

During the ceremony, analogies are drawn between the dangers of the flood and the dangers of life and how we should strive to reach the 'Ark', the haven of rest, just as Noah's family and the other occupants of his ark did, according to the account in the Bible.

Once again, in this degree there are some really beautiful portions of ritual which are guaranteed to make a lasting impression on every candidate. The ceremony used to install a new Commander is unusual and very memorable.

