



Provincial Grand Lodge of
MARK MASTER MASON'S OF SURREY

ROYAL ARK MARINER

An Introduction to
Royal Ark Masonry by
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The Antient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners

The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners is controlled by a body styled 'The Grand Master's Royal Ark Council', which is under the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons. The Order has two ceremonies: the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner, by which a brother is admitted (or elevated) to the Order, and the ceremony of Installation by which the Commander Elect is installed in the Chair of a Royal Ark Mariner Lodge.

The ceremony of Elevation is a delightful one with many unique features. It is based on the story of Noah and his Ark and teaches that the virtuous and industrious will prosper. The Flood is a story of cleansing and rebirth, where the wicked and impenitent perished in the deluge while the faithful and the good, represented by Noah and his family, were saved to repopulate the earth. The Installation ceremony is equally special and quite different from that of other orders.

In common with other Masonic orders, the origin of the Royal Ark Mariner degree is not certain. There are several references to the Noah and his Ark in early manuscripts, including Anderson's constitutions of 1723. Actual degrees with a Noachite theme emerged later, for example Patriarch Noachite or Prussian Knight in the 1760s, now the 21st Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Rite. However, the earliest authenticated

record of a Royal Ark Mariner Degree being worked in England, in a form that we would recognise, is 1790.

Several attempts at establishing a 'Grand Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners' came to nothing. Eventually, in 1871, the Order was taken under the wing of the Mark Grand Lodge. Prior to this the degree was worked in Craft and Mark Lodges and elsewhere.

Today the Order is thriving. In the Mark Province of Surrey, nearly all the Mark Lodges have a Royal Ark Mariner Lodge attached and most meet on the same day.

Interested brethren will learn more about this splendid Order once they become Mark Master Masons, which is an essential qualification.

Michael F Barnes