



Principality and Cambrensis Mark, and Royal Ark Mariners Lodge's Amalgamation

Two unique meetings were held in the Mark Province of South Wales during the middle of October 2023. On Wednesday, 18 October, Principality Mark Lodge No.1057 and Cambrensis Mark Lodge No.1528 were amalgamated, and on the following Wednesday, 25 October, the associated Royal Ark Mariner Lodges with the same names and numbers were also amalgamated. Prior to this, no Mark or RAM Lodges had been amalgamated in this Province.

Cambrensis Mark Lodge had been struggling for many years. It was reliant upon the Ritual Support Team led by WBro Philip Davies, Deputy Provincial Grand Master, to officer the Lodge. An indication of the Lodge's difficulties was that for several years WBro Paul Kelvin-Smith had been (by formal dispensation from the Provincial Grand Master) both the Treasurer and Secretary – but because of his duties as the Head of another Masonic Order he was able to attend only one of the three annual meetings.

Principality Mark Lodge had also been struggling, but not to the same extent. When it became apparent that following further resignations after the Covid pandemic, Cambrensis could no longer continue. The suggestion was made that the two Lodges should become one, a detailed review of the membership of each Lodge suggested that there would be a good 'fit' of Officers. While it is a truism that two weak Lodges will not together necessarily make a strong Lodge, an amalgamation of Principality and Cambrensis Lodges would work and would create a single Lodge that would not merely survive but thrive.

After informal discussions, an application was therefore made to the Provincial Office. The Provincial Grand Master, RWBro Eirian Jones, approved the amalgamation. Although reluctant to do so, he acknowledged that no more could be done to preserve Cambrensis Lodge, and he recognised the benefits of their Brethren remaining together as a cohort within one Lodge. Approval was given by the Grand Master so that the Ceremony of Amalgamation could take place.



The name of the amalgamated Lodge was agreed to be Principality and Cambrensis Lodge of Mark Master Masons, with the Principality number of 1057. The Amalgamation Ceremony was conducted on 18 October 2023 by the Provincial Grand Master who had extensively adapted the ritual that had been supplied by Mark Grand Lodge.

The Minutes of the last meetings of each of Principality and Cambrensis Mark Lodges were read in full by the Provincial Secretary, WBro Martin Jones, approved by the respective Brethren of each Lodge, and signed by the Senior Member of each Lodge, their signatures being witnessed by the Provincial Grand Master. At a most impressive and moving meeting RWBro Eirian Jones was supported by the entire Provincial Team who were organised by the Provincial Director of Ceremonies, WBro Richard Phillips, in his usual calm and orderly manner.





Principality and Cambrensis Lodges Amalgamation (continued)

After the two Lodges had been joined together, an Installation Ceremony was carried out by the Deputy Provincial Grand Master, WBro Philip Davies, again assisted by the Provincial Team. WBro Martin Pearson of the old Principality Mark Lodge was Installed as the First Master of the new Lodge, while the Officers were spread equally between the two former Lodges.

The amalgamated Lodge has adopted the meeting dates of Principality Mark Lodge which looks forward to welcoming many visitors as it begins its journey as a single Mark Lodge.

A Royal Ark Mariner Lodge must be 'moored' to a Mark Lodge whose number (although not necessarily its name) it will bear. Neither Principality RAM Lodge nor Cambrensis RAM Lodge had experienced the same difficulties as their respective Mark Lodges. However, two or more RAM Lodges cannot be moored to a single Mark Lodge. Thus, either Principality or Cambrensis RAM Lodge had to find another Mark Lodge to which it could be moored. When no suitable Mark Lodge could be found it was proposed that the two RAM Lodges should also amalgamate. Each Lodge agreed the proposal, which was again supported by the Provincial Grand Master and approved by the Grand Master.

It was agreed that the name and number of the amalgamated Lodge should follow that of the amalgamated Mark Lodge – hence the Principality and Cambrensis Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.1057 was born.

There was still time for Cambrensis RAM Lodge to hold a final meeting, which took place on 11 October 2023. Appropriately, a Candidate from each Lodge was elevated – Bro Mark Mulford, a Candidate for Cambrensis RAM Lodge, and Bro Peter Hopkins, who would have been a Candidate in Principality RAM Lodge.

WBro Paul Kelvin-Smith delivered an impeccable Elevation Ceremony supported, again appropriately, by Officers from each RAM Lodge.

The amalgamation meeting for Principality RAM Lodge and Cambrensis RAM Lodge took place on 25 October 2023. It followed the same format as the amalgamation meeting of the Mark Lodges. The ritual was again rewritten and performed by the Provincial Grand Master with the assistance of his Provincial Officers. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master then conducted the Installation Ceremony. Although WBro Mat Prosser had been Installed as Worshipful Commander of Principality RAM Lodge on 3 May 2023, it was necessary for him to be Installed again in the amalgamated Lodge. The Officers whom he appointed and invested were again split between members of each of the two old Lodges.

The agreed meeting dates for the Principality and Cambrensis Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners No.1057 were those of the Cambrensis Lodge – the second Wednesday in February and October. The Installation Meeting is that in February.

In February 2024 Mat Prosser will not have been Commander of a Lodge for a full year and he will not have had an opportunity to conduct an Elevation Ceremony, so he will remain in office. He will have the surely unique distinction of within ten months being Installed twice and then Proclaimed in a Lodge having the same number!

It was an extremely hectic period while the preparations for the two amalgamations were progressing, especially during the final month or so before the meetings after the approvals from Mark Masons Hall were to hand. Particular appreciation and thanks are due to WBro Martin Jones for his support and advice – and especially his endless patience as he co-ordinated the arrangements as well as carrying out his usual duties as the Provincial Secretary.

Acknowledgement also to Paul Kelvin Smith.



Double Event at Principality Mark Lodge

The reason for the Provincial Grand Master, RWBro Eirian Jones attending the meeting of Principality Mark Lodge No.1057 on Wednesday, 20 September 2023 was understood to be to pay tribute to the Lodge at what was its final Meeting prior to its amalgamation with Cambrensis Mark Lodge No.1528. Brethren from Cambrensis Mark Lodge were also in attendance to witness an excellent Ceremony in which Bro Lewis Morgan was Advanced into the Mark Degree. It was indeed a fitting end to the life of Principality Mark Lodge after 77 years as an individual Lodge.

However, on the Second Rising the Provincial Grand Master revealed the real cause for his attendance as he requested the Lodge DC, WBro Terry Hogg, to conduct WBro Tony Howell to him.



RWBro Eirian Jones then paid a wonderful tribute to and thanked Tony for his outstanding service to the Mark Degree which had culminated in his being Invested in Mark Grand Lodge as Past Grand Junior Deacon. The Provincial Grand Master then presented him with a Forty Year Certificate. The photograph shows Tony (for once on the lens side of the camera) and his Certificate with the Provincial Grand Master, together with the Provincial escort and Brethren and Officers of both Principality and Cambrensis Mark Lodges.



Forty Year Celebration

by : Roger Lewis

The Provincial Grand Master RWBro Thomas Richard Eirian Jones was delighted to present his predecessor, RWBro Paul Raymond Clement with his Certificate celebrating forty years in Mark Masonry.

Paul has had a glittering career in Mark Masonry from his Advancement into the Neath Mark Lodge No.1125 in October 1983, to his Appointment as Provincial Grand Master in 2008.

He has been Worshipful Master in De Cymru Mark Grand Officers Lodge, South Wales Lodge of Installed Mark Masters and a number of other Mark Lodges not only in Wales but other Provinces.

Paul was also recognised for his exceptional musical ability being Appointed as Provincial Grand Organist in 1992 and Grand Organist in 2000. This is a position he also held in the Craft for a number of years.

He is currently the Grand Master of the Order of Knights Templar, The Great Priory of the United Religious, Military and Masonic Orders of the Temple of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta of England, Wales and its Provinces Overseas

Photograph shows the Provincial Grand Master, right, presenting Paul with his Certificate flanked on his left by his son WBro Lewis Clement.

Everyone in the Province extends their heartiest congratulations and thanks to Paul for his service and continuing support to the Province over many years.





Talbot Mark Appoint new Overseer

by : Roger Lewis

The recently appointed Overseer in Swansea's Talbot Lodge of Mark Masons is none other than WBro Richard Peltzer. Nothing unusual in that one might say but Richard was born in 1924 so that makes him the oldest Overseer in the Province.

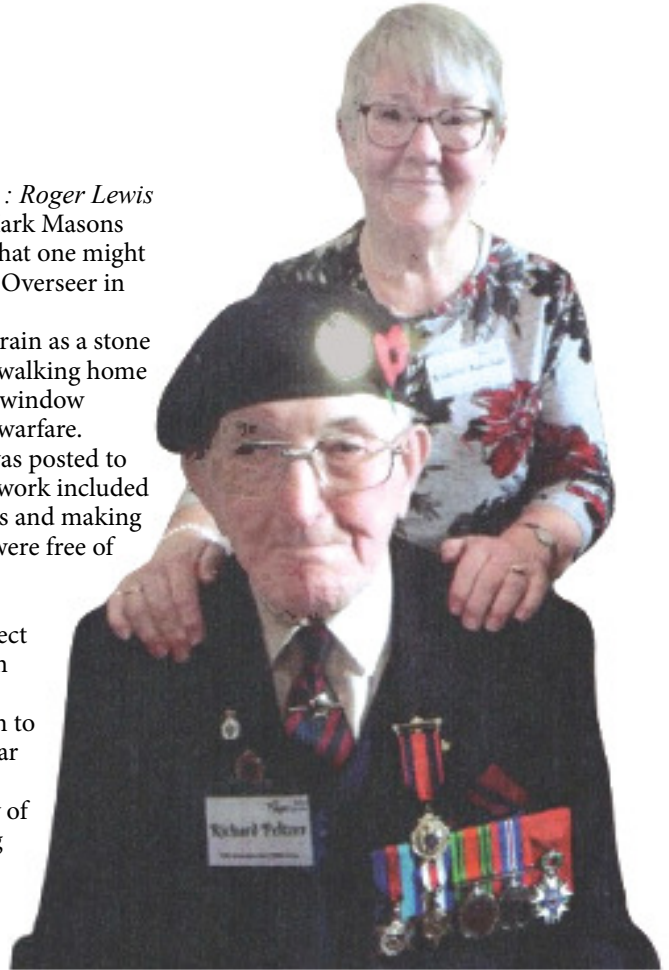
Richard was born in Llansamlet in 1924 leaving school at fourteen to train as a stone mason. He had a narrow escape during the Swansea Blitz of 1941 when walking home from college he decided to shelter against a wall when the barber's shop window above him collapsed. That was the beginning of Richard's experience of warfare.

Aged 19 years Richard joined the Royal Engineers and after training was posted to port maintenance working on underwater demolitions. This dangerous work included removing explosive ordnance devices and making sure ports and especially lock gates were free of German set booby traps.

He was then posted to Scotland to work on the Mulberry Harbour project in preparation for the Allied invasion of Normandy. Landing first on Gold Beach on D Day and then moving on to Juno Beach, Richards task was to clear the beach and then other ports and German military installations. Many of Richard's colleagues were lost during this period. In August 1944 Richard returned to the UK and was notified that he was being posted to Burma. However, upon arrival in India, his unit was told to remain in Kalyan and prepare for the invasion of Singapore code named Operation Bow and Arrow. After the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki this operation was aborted.

From August 1945 to May 1947, Richard was stationed in Singapore and was involved in providing 'proper' funerals for the many POWs who had lost their lives under Japanese captivity.

He remembers that the Japanese Commandant of Changi Prison would not surrender his sword to an Allied officer of a lesser rank. The officer who at the time was a Major was suddenly promoted to Brigadier to accept the sword and surrender of the Japanese Commandant. Post war Richard married Dulcie in 1947 and had a daughter Jeanette.



He continued to work in construction until a fall from a great height in the 1950s left him with very serious career ending injuries. He then worked in a physically lighter occupation with schools where his skills as a photographer, honed by underwater photography during the War, were in constant demand.

In 2016 Richard was awarded the Legion d' Honneur by the French Government. In the photograph below Richard is shown to the left of WBro Alun H Thomas Assistant Provincial Grand Master.



Junior Warden's Christmas Lunch

by : Roger Lewis

Although the weather outside was cold and dismal with a biting wind blowing in from Swansea Bay, the atmosphere inside the Towers Hotel on Jersey Marine could not have been more different. The first Sunday in December is traditionally the date for the Provincial Warden of the year to host the luncheon for Brethren of the Mark Province of South Wales.

The Provincial Warden this year is WBro Peter Taylor and accompanied by his wife Jenny they presided over an excellent afternoon of friendship and hospitality. Not only did Peter preside over the event as Provincial Junior Warden, but he also organised the lunch himself, something he has done for the last number of years.

It was an excellent afternoon enjoyed by over 150 Mark Brethren and their guests. The Provincial Grand Master RWBro T R Eirian Jones addressed those present saying how much he enjoyed these convivial gatherings and how it emphasised once more how friendly the Mark Degree is.

The wife of the current warden and the Provincial Grand Master are always presented with a fine bouquet of flowers, the current Senior Warden, WBro Howard Vaughn making the presentation to Jenny and the Junior Warden presenting them to the Provincial Grand Master's wife, Geraldine.

The meeting was brought to a close with the 150 Club Provincial draw by Provincial Grand Charity Steward WBro Gareth Andrews. The 150 club is organised by the Province to support deserving causes in South Wales whether they are Freemasons or not, and over the years have supported many smaller charities that may have struggled to raise funds in the normal way.



Special Occasion at De Cymru Lodge

by : Roger Lewis, Photographes by Anthony Howell

It was a rather special day at De Cymru Lodge of Mark Master Masons No.1606 and Royal Ark Mariners No.1348, in Caerphilly. In December 2023, these Lodges of Grand Officers hold two meetings every year. In June, at the Port Talbot Masonic Hall, the Mark Installation is held. In December, at the Caerphilly Masonic Hall, Royal Ark Mariner Installation is held.

On this occasion, during the Royal Ark Mariner Installation, WBro Dennis Cotter Installed the Provincial Grand Master RWBro Thomas Richard Eirian Jones into the Commander's Chair. This was particularly poignant as Dennis had been the Worshipful Commander in St Tydfil's Royal Ark Mariner Lodge when the Provincial Grand Master was Elevated into the Order of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners back in 1996. Photographs show the Provincial Grand Master RWBro TR Eirian Jones with WBro Dennis Cotter.

During the Mark meeting the Provincial Grand Master was delighted to present WBro James Bevan with a Patron's Collarette acknowledging his contribution to the Mark Benevolent Fund.

The Provincial Grand Master was equally delighted to present WBro Keith Pearson with his Certificate celebrating forty continuous years as a Mark Mason. Keith was Advanced into the Principality Lodge of Mark Master Masons and in Grand Lodge was appointed as Past Grand Standard Bearer and then Promoted to Past Grand Junior Deacon.



More Success at the 150 Club Bi-Annual Draw

by : Roger Lewis

At the Christmas luncheon held at the Towers Hotel in Swansea last December the following contributors to the 150 Club were delighted when their names were drawn out of the hat by the Provincial Grand Charity Steward WBro Gareth Andrews.

1st prize (£350) – Cynon Dare Mark Lodge No.1590.

2nd prize (£250) – WBro David S Griffiths.

3rd prize (£150) – Bro J Keith Williams.

There is still time to be a Member of the 150 Club and hopefully to have a pleasant surprise when your name is drawn out at the luncheon. Further details are available from the Provincial Grand Secretary:

M A Jones, Bridgend Masonic Hall, Coychurch Road, Bridgend CF31 2AP. Tel: 02920 490555
provincialoffice@southwalesmarkmastermasons.co.uk



Afan RAM serenade the Ladies with a Burns Night Piper

Afan RAM met on 23 January 2024. It has long been a custom of the Lodge to celebrate Burns Night at its January meeting, with ladies dining in. This year was made a little more special with the addition of a Scottish Piper.

With the first course over and done with, WCommander Phil Rice paraded the haggis around the dining room accompanied by Piper, WBro Robert Gray and Sword Bearer WBro Robert Adler.

With the haggis centre stage, Robert Gray gave the traditional address which was then toasted by all in the room with a fine glass of Rabbe Burns whisky.

With traditional Scottish airs playing in the background the meal was completed in a delightful, relaxed atmosphere with everyone agreeing it had been a thoroughly enjoyable evening.



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A Special Event at Barry Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners

by : Roger Lewis

At a recent Installation Meeting of Barry RAM, their Worshipful Commander WBro Shaun Cuddihy had the honour of Installing his cousin Bro Mark Cuddihy into the Chair of King Solomon.

This situation is quite unique as WBro Shaun is currently the Worshipful Master of Stability Mark Lodge No.758 and Mark is the Senior Warden, so this pleasure could be repeated at their next Installation meeting in May 2024.

