

Royal Ark Mariners

The Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners, more commonly known as RAM or Mariners, has been under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons since 1871 and governed by the Grand Masters Royal Ark Council. Lodges are attached to Mark Lodges assuming their Number in Roll and to be a member you have to have been advanced as a Mark Master Mason. There the similarity ends. In chronological terms it precedes the Mark by hundreds of years because it relates to the building and voyage of Noah's Ark and the Great Flood and has none of the other characters we meet in freemasonry.

It is thought that it was a degree for carpenters and woodworkers as in the past those trades were more closely associated with stonemasons than is the case today.

Its early history is obscure. Statues refer to Grand Lodge being reconstituted in 1772.

The ceremony in which a brother is elevated is taken from the VSL and symbolises wisdom, strength and beauty, which are relevant not only in the construction of the ark but also for their moral significations to the candidate as an individual. The tracing board of the degree is unusual in that it contains symbols of many of the other orders in Masonry.

The regalia comprises an apron, which is bordered by a rainbow ribbon with similar rosettes.

The breast jewel is of a dove bearing an olive branch suspended from a rainbow attached to a rainbow coloured ribbon.

Commanders and Past Commanders (who are the equivalent of Masters and Past Masters in the Craft) exchange the rosettes on the aprons for silver triangles and wear a breast jewel of a triangle surmounted by the letter N for Noah. Provincial Officers wear a collaret from which is suspended a silver ark. Grand Officers exchange the silver detail for gold. There are no individual ranks within either Province or Grand Lodge. Brethren holding those ranks suffix their name with Royal Ark Mariner Provincial Grand Rank or Royal Ark Mariner Grand Rank. The Provincial Grand Master of the Mark, is ipso facto, the Provincial Grand Master of the Degree of Royal Ark Mariners.