

## ***Grand Master's Address, Annual Communication, 17 June 2009***

Brethren all,

Welcome to this annual Communication, I thank you all for attending.

My first duty is to reaffirm the loyalty of this Grand Lodge to H M Queen Elizabeth II, and to the Commonwealth of Australia.

All Mark Master Masons join me in congratulating MW Bro Ray Clark on his Installation as our Grand Master. We look forward to continuing a constructive dialogue addressing our common problems.

The past year has been for me a huge learning experience. Mark Masonry is a human organisation staffed in the main by volunteers and I am constantly aware that I depend on the goodwill so freely expressed to carry out my duties. My ex Army friends tell me that in a difficult situation what frightens them most is an officer with a map, and that's me, brethren. RW Bro Andrew Gardner continues to demonstrate patient support for my efforts. I make special mention of the two retiring Grand Wardens RW Bros Paynter and Nagle. It has been a delight to see these brethren rise to the challenges of leadership. RW Bro Lindsay Wills has completed his term as Installing Commander with distinction, and on behalf of the whole Order I express my personal thanks. Indeed, all Grand Mark officers and the Mariner Installing team have demonstrated strong support to the Lodges.

Later this year at the annual conference of the Craft, RW Bro Greg Goding from Queensland has been invited to be the platform speaker. His theme will be much more than membership issues and I strongly urge each one of you to register and to attend this important event. RW Bro Goding is a fine speaker and carries a powerful message for us all.

While I am generally pleased with the recruitment of members for the Mark, I cannot be unaffected by the loss of long serving and committed members of this degree. They are hard to replace but we must all do what we can to ensure the viability of our Lodges by encouraging the newer members to share the same commitment to our ritual.

In January this year Adelaide Mark Lodge celebrated 150 years of existence by a ceremony of re-enactment of consecration. The ceremony was attended by brethren from the UK, NSW and Victoria as well as many from SA and NT. The UK brethren brought a message from the Provincial Grand Master of London and they presented a book on English Mark Masonry which has been placed in the library.

Also in January, as a Grand Mark we made our annual visit to the Duke of Leinster Mark Lodge. This is always an enjoyable evening and I encourage all Mark Master Masons of this jurisdiction to witness an Irish advancement ceremony. It is quite different and gives a different slant on the Mark story. We also paid a visit earlier this year to Kilwinning Mark Lodge to witness the Scottish version and again were impressed with the different way of telling our story. Please pay them a visit, you will be made most welcome.

In early March I travelled to Palmerston North on New Zealand's North Island to attend the Installation of M Ex Comp Graeme Pengelly as Grand Superintendent and it was again a delight to be in the company of M Ex Comp John Carter and the leaders of the other Australian delegations. The leaders attended a conference addressed by MW Bro Stan Barker the Grand Master of the Craft in New Zealand. Membership issues dominated discussion but there was a feeling of optimism present which is contagious.

In April I visited Melbourne again with M Ex Comp Carter for the Installation of the new First Grand Principal, M Ex Comp Laurie Patterson. We are pleased to be part of the deepening friendship and co-operation between the Mark and Royal Arch Chapter Degrees and I hope this will be further cemented in the future both in this jurisdiction and interstate. I am sure that MW Bro Clark and M Ex Comp Carter are in accord with this view.

By definition all Mark Master Masons are members of the Craft, but I hope that each one of you will seek to complete his basic knowledge of Freemasonry by also being an active Royal Arch Mason.

I referred earlier to the deaths of several Mark brethren since our last Communication. Freemasonry attracts ordinary men who sometimes do extraordinary things. In RW Bro. Cedric Isaachsen PDGM we had a truly extraordinary man and I am proud to be a small part of an organisation which can attract and retain men of this calibre. Would you please rise for a moment and remember in silence RW Bro. Isaachsen and all members of the Mark who have been lost to the Order over recent months. Thank you brethren.

At the last Communication I spoke to you about my ambition to provide a high quality recording of ceremonial music for use in the ceremonies of both Advancement and Elevation. My first attempt was unsuccessful and so the Grand Organist and I are trying again, and I hope to be able to report better news as the year progresses.

In September I will be making the official triennial visit to the Mark and Mariner Lodges in the Northern Territory. We will be conducting Installations in all Lodges and I hope to involve the local brethren as much as possible. There will be a few days set apart for both sightseeing and meeting the brethren informally.

Following this, we shall be travelling to Sydney to attend the Installation of R Em Comp. Ted Keenahan, 1<sup>st</sup> Grand Principal elect, who will take over the position vacated by M Ex Comp Greg Mason who has been a truly outstanding leader. Many of you will remember the wonderful gesture of M Ex Comp Mason wearing Mark Grand Master's regalia a year ago at the Grand Installation. In NSW the Mark degree is under the control of the Royal Arch Chapter, but in recent years there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of the Mark degree. Following the Grand Chapter Installation, MW Bro Kerry Grills, the Grand Master of Victoria and I have been invited to install the new 1<sup>st</sup> Grand Principal as Grand Master of the Mark. This ceremony will take place in the Egyptian Room of the Grand Lodge building in Castlereagh Street. While this ceremony is not unique, it will be very unusual and is a wonderful demonstration of the developing role of Mark Masonry in NSW and the ACT.

Bro. Acting Grand Secretary, it is normal to express my thanks to our absent Grand Secretary and his staff who administer our affairs so efficiently, but it is none the less sincere. I am sure all the brethren will join me in wishing the Grand Secretary a speedy return to active duty. Earlier in the year, three members of the office staff were limping around and they all have delayed medical treatment for the good of our respective orders. On behalf of all the leaders I express our appreciation of their devotion to their duties. Bro. Acting Grand Secretary, would you please record this in your minutes as well as our thanks to you for stepping into the office so willingly.

Alan L Pearson  
Grand Master of Mark Master Masons of South Australia and Northern Territory