



Mark My Words

-- The Newsletter for the Mark Master Mason

The following eulogy was delivered by W. Bro Fred Fox at W. Bro. Keith's funeral, and is here reproduced with the kind permission of his widow, Victoria.

In 1991 I asked Keith to propose my toast. Now, thirteen years later, he's getting his own back!

I am most grateful to Keith and Victoria for allowing me, from among all of their distinguished family, friends and colleagues, to say a few words of tribute on this very sad occasion.

When Keith asked me to do this, a couple of weeks ago, he told me that he'd written what he wanted me to say. The forty words which he wrote were hardly enough to encompass the achievements of his 77 years of life.

Keith Tod Browning was born in 1927, the year in which Isadora Duncan tragically died in a car accident, Al Jolson starred in the first "Talkie" and Charles Lindbergh was the first to make a solo flight across the Atlantic.

Keith had quite a comfortable upbringing in Stallcourt Avenue, not too far from the Harlequins ground, off Newport Road. His father, an ex-pupil of Howard Gardens High School, significantly chose Cardiff High School as a first choice for his son, who started there in 1938. With the advent of the Second World War, Howard Gardens School was bombed in a night raid, and several classrooms at Cardiff High School were allocated to house the Howard Gardens boys.

There is however, no truth in the rumour that the Cardiff High School boys, learning of the bombing, considered that perhaps Hitler was not such a bad guy after all.

On leaving school Keith was conscripted into the Fleet Air Arm spending most of his service in Scotland. This must have been quite traumatic for a young man, straight out of school, for there, he tells us, he "learned a lot of words", which were to be very useful in his later career as a Buildings Engineer, particularly during On Site work.

Another legacy of his service with the Fleet Air Arm was a debt of £11.14s in demob cash, which with typical tenacity he has now charged his son John with recovering.

On his release from the Navy he attended Cardiff Technical Colleges Building Department under the tutelage of the large Civil Engineering firm of John Lang. He obtained a Higher National Diploma in Building in 1950. Most of his work was carried out on roads and sewers, where he was pleased to announce that he could "bury his mistakes". He spent some time in Bedfordshire on a Ministry of Works contract, building aircraft runways.

In 1956, at the age of 29, and being the only family member of his generation, he was persuaded that he had an obligation to continue the association with the family firm of Browning Jones and Morris, which had been founded in 1912.

He became a member of the Worshipful Company of Builders Merchants, and through this a Freeman of the City of London, which may have permitted him to march through the City with a shouldered theodolite. His involvement with the business lasted until his illness became prohibitive.

In 1958, his father, who had become the 20th member of Howardian Lodge, introduced Keith, aged 31, into Freemasonry, and that was the start of a lifetime of interest and dedication.

His initiation into the Howardian Lodge, followed some years later by his joining the Harlequins Lodge of Cardiff High School Old Boys, must have imbued in him a sense of split personality, although it was never evident.

Two years later, in 1960, he married his lifelong love, friend and companion Victoria. They were a matched pair, spiritually and physically, and during their many social appearances together their complementary senses of humour were always a source of fun. He claimed that the 7/6d Marriage Licence fee was the best investment that he ever made.

They raised two boys - raised being the operative word - John standing at 6 foot 4 inches, and Tom a little more. Tom married Tina and gave Keith and Victoria their first Grandchild, Myles, who is now 14. John married Suzie, who added Sophie, now 12, and Alexa, now 16 months, to the family list.

With encouragement from Victoria, Keith's Masonic career never stood still. Master of the Howardian Lodge in 1971, he rose to Grand Lodge rank. In Royal Arch, he was First Principal of Howardian Chapter in 1982, and rose to Grand Chapter rank.

In the Mark degree, he was a Founder of the Ysgolion Lodge and its second Master in 1978, Master of the Cambria Lodge in 1980, a Founder-member of the Cowbridge Mark Lodge in 1981, Master of the S Wales Installed Mark Masters Lodge in 1996, and Master of the De Cymru Lodge of Mark Grand Officers in 2003.

He was at first Assistant, then Deputy Provincial Grand Master between 1989 and 1996, and rose to Mark Grand rank, as a V W Brother.

In the Ancient and Honourable Degree of Royal Ark Mariners he was a member of the Duraven Lodge, Commander of the Cambria Lodge in 1984, and of The S Wales Installed Commanders Lodge in 2003. He rose to Royal Ark Mariner Grand rank.

In June I was present at Port Talbot when, having handed over two Masters' Chairs, he announced publicly his withdrawal from any further Masonic meetings. This statement was greeted with a stunned silence, as although the effects of his illness were becoming more obvious, the prospect of Freemasonry without him was inconceivable.

The silence gave way to a great applause as his courage was recognised. He later told me that he did not want to be wheeled into a meeting and stood in the corner. He had to be fully involved or nothing. In theatrical terms, "there was not a dry eye in the house".

His notes to me, regarding this plethora of service, he wrote only: "Sometime Freemason".

(Continued on page 3)



Photo :
Anthony Howell

W. Bro. Keith Tod Browning
Past Grand Junior Overseer
Past Deputy Prov. Grand Master
1927 - 2004

Mark My Words

-- The Newsletter for the Mark Master Mason



Page 3.



Photo :
Anthony Howell

R.W. Bro. Desmond Barnett, J.P.
Provincial Grand Master, South Wales

THE MARK BENEVOLENT FUND 2004 FESTIVAL

A remarkable total of just under £500,000.00 was raised at the 2004 Festival and since the festival on 3rd. June 2004 the total has risen to over the £500,000.00.

Listed following are the figures as were printed in the programme, which was distributed during the Gala Festival Dinner and which has been sent to each lodge. My grateful thanks to all the Brethren who worked so hard to achieve the totals in both the Mark and R.A.M. Lodges. The Lodges and individual Brethren supported the Festival in so many ways by organising dances, social evenings, dinners, race nights and concerts. The weekend in Fishguard proved a great success and the Festival benefited by the proceeds of the raffle. The Provincial Officers Mess was also generous in their support. Not to be outdone, W. Bro. John Pring, now living in Spain organised a sponsored cycle ride in aid of the Festival. We are extremely grateful to all who supported the Mark Benevolent Fund Festival; it was indeed the "Festival to remember".

One thousand and forty three people attended the Festival at the Cardiff International Arena with every South Wales Lodge well represented. There were thirty five other Mark Provinces present, and well represented. Every other Masonic Order in the South Wales area was represented. Very many comments have been received all congratulating the South Wales Province on the excellent quality of the Festival at the Cardiff International Arena, the magnificent sum raised for the Mark Benevolent Fund, and the enjoyment experienced during the whole weekend in Cardiff.

Again many thanks for your support. I can say with certainty that we have all "Marked Well".

Desmond Barnett, J.P., Provincial Grand Master, South Wales.

(Continued from page 2)

So, how will we remember Keith Tod Browning? For me, as one of Nature's Gentlemen, a dignified and courageous man; a man of honesty and integrity; a man of humour. When I last saw him he was listening to a Test Match, and I asked him, as I thought that he had never been an active sportsman, if he'd played cricket. He told me that he'd umpired the game - that it had taught him two things. To respect authority and to give orders, two qualities which he said had enabled him "never to work again."

His notes say that from an early age he had never worked - but always told others how to do it, something at which he considered himself quite successful. You must be the judges of that.

All of us who met Keith will have been influenced for the better in some way, and his passing will leave the world in general and Freemasonry in particular a more empty and uninviting place. He was truly a man who lived respected, and who has died regretted.

In our sorrow we remember Victoria and all of her family and our hearts go out to them in their distress.

Fred Fox, P.G. Std.B.

MARK LODGES			R.A.M. LODGES		
		£			£
1. Arthur Lewis	No. 585	22,455.23	1. Barry	No.1043	2,025.00
2. St. Illtyd	No. 784	19,122.12	2. Porthcawl	No. 1377	1,200.00
3. Stability	No. 758	16,138.75	3. Caerffili	No.1348	1,027.00
4. Cambria	No. 823	15,449.62	4. Brychan	No.1725	1,000.00
5. Cynon Dare	No. 1590	12,834.52	5. St. Illtyd	No.784	930.00
6. St.Tydfil	No. 639	12,660.59	6. Dunraven	No.950	800.00
7. Porthcawl	No. 1377	11,843.88	7. St.Tydfil	No. 639	603.00
8. Langley	No. 28	10,871.97	8. De Cymru	No.1606	560.00
9. Afan	No. 1088	10,511.58	9. Arthur Lewis	No. 585	475.00
10. Caerffili	No. 1348	10,469.93	10. Cambrensis	No.1528	450.00
11. Barry	No. 1043	10,105.19	11. Cambria	No.823	400.00
12. Rhaeadr Gwy	No. 1318	9,520.54	12. Cynon Dare	No.1590	350.00
13. Sketty Hall	No. 1685	8,960.49	13. Principality	No.1057	350.00
14. Brychan	No. 1725	8,760.22	14. St. John's	No. 28	350.00
15. Cowbridge	No. 1573	8,578.82	15. S.W.I..C.	No.1606	325.00
16. Neath	No. 1125	8,443.29	16. Afan	No.1088	200.00
17. Dunraven	No. 950	8,241.40	17. Llynfi Valley	No 1592	200.00
18. Ysgolion	No. 1487	7,977.30	18. Neath	No.1125	100.00
19. Talbot	No. 179	7,568.52	19. Sir F. Alban	No.1455	25.00
20. Cambrensis	No. 1528	7,370.37	20. Talbot	No. 179	
21. Sir F. Alban	No. 1455	7,319.91	21. Sketty Hall	No. 1685	
22. S.W.I.M.M.	No. 1201	7,167.90			
23. Llynfi Valley	No. 1592	6,435.15	TOTAL		£111,370.00
24. Principality	No. 1057	5,924.78			
25. Lodge of Prog.	No. 1670	1,782.93	Final Analysis:		
26. Cwm Rhondda	No. 1812	1,700.48	My List as Chairman	£115,053.65	
27. De Cymru	No. 1606	1,152.64	South Wales Mark Lodges	£269,990.42	
28. S.W.M.P.S.	No. 1829	478.20	South Wales RAM Lodges	£111,370.00	
29. Trinity	No. 1845	144.10	From outside South Wales	£70,403.00	
Miscellaneous		10,000.00			
TOTAL:		£ 269,990.42	GRAND TOTAL		£ 466,817.07

THE WORK OF THE MARK BENEVOLENT FUND IN SUPPORTING THE TREATMENT OF PROSTATE CANCER.

Just after our festival in June this year it was announced by Grand Lodge that a sum of £2,000,000 be made available from the Mark Fund of Benevolence for the treatment of prostate cancer. Among the hospitals within our Province to benefit from grants, the Heath Hospital Cardiff received £135,000.00. Morrison Hospital, Swansea received £56,500.00. We have also supported Velindre Hospital in Cardiff with a grant of £3,975.00. These new grants are part of our continued commitment in supporting worthy causes and do not include petitions which were relieved and emergency grants received.

Mark My Words

-- The Newsletter for the Mark Master Mason

Page 1



December 2004

Freemasonry in general, and the Mark Province of South Wales in particular has suffered a grievous loss since the publication of our last issue. Two prominent and well respected Freemasons who achieved high rank in the Mark Degree have been called to the Grand Lodge above. We dedicate the following to their memory.



Photo :
Anthony Howell

W.Bro. Malcolm Hayes Thompson
Past Deputy Grand Sword Bearer
Past Provincial Grand Master
1923 - 2004

A Giant Among Freemasons

R.W.Bro. Malcolm Hayes Thompson the Past Provincial Grand Master in and over the Mark Province of South Wales died on Sunday 7th. November 2004 aged 81 years. The Funeral Service and Cremation was held at Coychurch Crematorium, Bridgend on Friday 12th. November 2004. His distinguished Masonic career, his wisdom and generous nature will be known and experienced by many. He served as the Assistant Provincial Grand Secretary in the Craft prior to becoming the Provincial Grand Secretary in 1967 an office he held until his retirement in 1990.

In the Holy Royal Arch degree he became the Provincial Grand Scribe in 1981, again a position he held until his retirement in 1990.

In the Mark degree he was advanced into the Cambria Mark Lodge in 1973 and became a Founder of Cambrensis Mark Lodge. In 1991 he was installed as the Provincial Grand Master for the Province of South Wales. He retired from that office in 1996. During his years as our Provincial Grand Master his determination to visit all of his lodges both in the Mark and Royal Ark Mariner degrees and to

encourage Mark Masons to become members of the Ark Mariner degree was legendary and he was rewarded by a steady increase in membership.

In 1993 he instigated the formation of the Provincial Office at Llandow and worked tirelessly to ensure that the office was equipped with everything required for its smooth running. His vast experience as Provincial Grand Secretary and Provincial Grand Scribe was invaluable and his legacy will live for many years to come.

R.W.Bro Malcolm Thompson took the Royal Ark Mariner degree as his own; perhaps it was because he served in the Merchant Navy as a wireless operator. His research into the origins of the degree was well known and he presented many lectures on the subject, which were much appreciated by those fortunate enough to be present.

The brethren whom he appointed to Provincial Grand Rank and those who supported him in the Province will remember his words of wisdom and encouragement, the warmth of his friendship, and will certainly not forget his dry humour and wit.

Much more could be said, but his testimony and achievements in Freemasonry are so well known to us all.

It is said "that cometh the hour cometh the man", and R.W.Bro. Malcolm Hayes Thompson was the Man, -

A Giant Among Freemasons.