

Warwickshire Mark Masons – Installed Masters' Ladies Festival

In Spring each year members of the Warwickshire Mark Installed Masters Lodge No 1400 celebrate their Ladies' Festival. Traditionally, this is arranged over a long weekend and features an informal get together on Friday night followed by Saturday Gala Black Tie Dinner and Dance at a venue selected annually by the Worshipful Master. This has always been a popular event in the Province's Social Calendar since 1999 and this year has been no exception with an attendance of nearly 150 brethren and their wives and partners.

The Worshipful Master, W Bro Cedric Stiles, well known throughout the Province for his wonderful support of the many social events, decided in his year to return to the ever popular Torquay and well known Toorak Hotel over the weekend of 26th to 28th March. Ably organised by RW Bro Keith Holdsworth the places were soon sold out with a waiting list of Brethren who wished to join the party.



The only sadness was that W Bro Cedric had unfortunately been admitted to hospital and was not able to attend the event. Beneesha, his Principal Lady, was therefore our host for the weekend and did a wonderful job of helping organise the events.

The superb weather was superb with blue skies and warm(ish) temperatures that were enjoyed all weekend which encouraged brethren to travel to the various attractions of the Devon Coast during the free time on Friday and Saturday.

Following dinner on Friday night the weekend got off at a gallop with a Horse Racing Meet which allowed bets to be placed against the results of the screened races. This was good fun and helped raise funds towards the Charitable collection for the weekend.

Saturday morning saw quite a few taking advantage of the pleasant day to go on a Steam Train trip to Kingswear with a sail up the River Dart followed by another Steam Train back!

What a cracking day out!





The Gala Dinner saw everyone in their finery with the Ladies looking extremely glamorous with Past PGM RW Bro Phil Wills accompanying our Principal Lady and W Bro Cliff Bull acting as DC. It really was a most enjoyable dinner with good food and wines.

The speeches were excellent with the first speech to the Principal Lady by W Bro Phil who presented Beneesha with her gift as well as the other ladies with theirs. The response to the Ladies toast was made in splendid fashion by Beneesha as the Principal Lady who charmed the room with her words and received warm applause!

A very special occasion at the dinner was the presentation by the PGM to Mrs Elizabeth Ratcliffe, the widow of the late and well loved VW Bro Barry Ratcliffe, of his Mark Benevolent Fund Gold Patrons' Medal which received warm applause from all present.

The customary raffle was held, with the proceeds this year supporting the Craft Provincial Grand Lodge Appeal for Fisher House. An excellent total of £1200.00 was raised during the weekend for this worthy cause.



With dancing following the dinner or socialising at the Bar everyone could choose how to finish off a wonderful night.

Whilst some stayed on to further explore this beautiful part of England most parted company after breakfast on the Sunday, all with happy memories of the weekend. The 'Magic of the Mark! yet again delivered a wonderful few days in Torquay and all are looking forward to the 2026 event!

Once again, a special thank you to Cedric and Beneesha and all those that assisted in the organisation of the weekend, especially the whole Holdsworth family and to our Brethren and partners who made the weekend a very special one for all.