

# BRAMM

IMPROVING STANDARDS

# NEWS

AUTUMN UPDATE 2020

BRITISH REGISTER OF ACCREDITED MEMORIAL MASONS

## HAVE YOU PAID YOUR ANNUAL FEES?



ONLY  
**£50**  
INCLUDING UP TO  
5 BRANCHES  
REDUCED FROM  
£125

BRAMM fees are now payable at the special 2020 COVID reduced rate. Please help our administration by paying promptly and let us know if you have any changes to your contact details and your fixers.

BRAMM is supporting masons and burial authorities during these difficult times.

## BRAMM THE FUTURE - IMPROVING STANDARDS -

BRAMM is currently having meetings to discuss future development to assist both masons and cemeteries to IMPROVE STANDARDS. Some of the areas being discussed are a best practice document, an ethical register of materials and future CPD. If you have any suggestions that you feel the BRAMM Board should consider, please don't hesitate to send us an e mail.

BRAMM MASONS have a voice and this voice communicates directly with Burial Authority Associations, ICCM, FBCA and SLCC. Together we are IMPROVING STANDARDS.

# Remembering **BRIAN MORGAN**



Brian Wilson Morgan who had been the BRAMM Chairman for the last 6 years until recently, sadly passed peacefully away on 24th July 2020 aged 83 years. Born in Roath, Cardiff on 2nd July 1937, he came to the Memorial Masonry industry after a varied career in finance and the early days of computer science.

He joined his family's business of MOSSFORDS, Wales' longest established Memorial Masons, in 1972 when his father, Wilson became ill. Wilson was one of the founder members of NAMM and followed his own father, Brian's grandfather, Barrett Wilson Morgan into the trade following the traditional apprenticeship route and was a renowned master craftsman.

Followed into the business by his sons Simon, David and Michael and five years ago by his grandson (Simon's son) Oliver marking the 5th generation of the family and 3 generations working together, the business has continued to expand over the years, incorporating other memorial businesses and diversifying into national award winning commercial stone masonry and various signage divisions with a main holding company (MS-Group Ltd) with over 100 employees.

Whilst less involved in the day-to-day running of the business for several years Brian continued as Chairman of the company and was active and involved in this family business right up to the start of the Covid Lock-down earlier in the year when his health began to fail more and more.

Brian has been highly regarded within the memorial masonry trade having served as National President of NAMM (The National Association of Memorial Masons) in their centenary year of 2007, after serving as the Honorary National Treasurer for 16 years. Brian was also an enthusiastic Rotarian having been the President of his local Club, a former President of the local 41 Club, raising lots of funds and providing support for many local charities. Brian became an active member of "The Convoy of Hope" helping organise collections and helped in the actual convoys of charitable donations to the poor and needy of Belarus & Croatia at the fall of Communism and following the Croatian War.

Brian was also a devoted follower of his beloved Penarth Rugby Club where he once played as the team hooker and later became the club Chairman for a number of years in the early 1990s and of course was never happier than watching Wales and the British & Irish Lions rugby test matches.

He will be sadly missed by his six children, thirteen grandchildren, his wife Barbara, first wife Rae and all his family and his many friends from BRAMM.

1937 - 2020

# YVONNE COLVERSON - SLCC REPRESENTATIVE

After a varied career in retail, hospitality, customer service and administration, I fell into the role of Clerk to a Parish Council in North East Derbyshire. When I say 'fell', I was working for the Parish Council in a different role and when the previous Clerk left without notice, Councillors then asked if I would take over as Clerk - I said I would, just until they found someone permanent to do it, thirteen years on and they are still looking!

After qualifying as a local council clerk, I joined the SLCC Advice Team where we provide procedural and legal advice on many subjects, cemetery management being just one. When Alan Fairchild decided he wanted to step down as the SLCC's Cemetery expert I was asked to take on the job, mainly because I was the only advisor who manages a cemetery in their role as Clerk. But I was very happy to do this - and that is how I became the SLCC's representative on the BRAMM board.

Since joining the board, I have learnt so much about memorial safety, the training BRAMM provides and the support offered to Burial Authorities. I still feel like the newbie and I know I have far more to learn but I am looking forward to my journey with BRAMM and will embrace the challenges along the way.



## CLIFFORD HOLMES

- *Independent Mason*

When I was young, my father was the Sexton of a cemetery and we lived in the Cemetery Lodge. Growing up in that environment sparked an interest in masonry and in 1987 we started Haven Memorials behind my father's garden shed.

In 1988 we got our first business premises and grew the company. In 2010 we explored the opportunity of acquiring masonry retail businesses. Since 2011 we have acquired The Monumental Company in Bognor Regis, CJ Jordan & Son in Acton, and Minster Stone Memorials in Wimborne.

We had a strong desire to open a retail unit in the town where we were born, and in 2015 proudly opened Haven Memorials in Basingstoke. As a family business we are always looking for new opportunities to strengthen the business for future generations.

I served on NAMM General Council as a voting delegate and I chaired South East Regional meetings for a number of years. I am always looking to improve standards and efficiencies within the industry.

## POSITION ON THE BRAMM BOARD

John Cumiskey has resigned leaving an independent mason position available to be filled for just over 2 years. The BRAMM Board meet 4 times a year, but currently 3 times on Zoom. The position is open to any mason on the BRAMM register who feels they can contribute.

Please send in your CV for consideration by the BRAMM Board before the end of October 2020. If you want to find out more information of what is involved please contact Phil Potts at BRAMM.

There are 4 mason representatives on the BRAMM Board each serving a 4 year term, with one position available each year. The BRAMM Board consider the mason candidates at the AGM which usually takes place in June.

# CEMETERY OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2020



Despite the Coronavirus restrictions and in a year which has seen Burial Authorities under a lot of pressure and many Cemetery Managers working from home, the Cemetery of the Year Awards received more entries than ever in this year's competition with a marked improvement in the scores which again confirms that the competition is having a positive effect promoting best practice.

The Parish, Town and Community Council category attracted the largest number of entries and we have received many examples in all categories of how the questions and feedback have prompted positive changes to be made which will benefit everyone involved in the industry and most importantly the bereaved.

Many thanks to everyone who entered the competition and the supporting organisations.

*Memorial Awareness Board (MAB)*  
*Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)*  
*The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA)*  
*The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)*  
*British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM)*



We are very pleased to announce the winners of the Cemetery of the Year 2020

### **Natural Burial Ground**

**Gold - Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground (Surrey)**

Silver - Old Park Meadow Natural Burial Ground (Essex)

Silver - Hay Meadow Burial Ground (Powys)

### **Small/Medium Burial Grounds (up to 10,000 graves)**

**Gold - Tipton Cemetery (West Bromwich)**

Silver - The Cardiff and Glamorgan  
Memorial Park and Crematorium

Silver - Castleside Cemetery (Durham)

### **Large Burial Grounds (above 10,000 graves)**

**Gold - Thornhill Cemetery (Cardiff)**

Silver - Fallings Heath Cemetery  
(West Midlands)

Silver - St Helens Cemetery

### **Parish, Town and Community Council Burial Grounds**

**Gold - Forest Row Cemetery (East Sussex)**

Silver - Chesham Bois Burial Ground (Buckinghamshire)

Silver - Fleet Cemetery

*The Gold Award winners will receive the following –*

*£1000 cash prize for their Cemetery*

*Cemetery of the Year 2020 Gold engraved Plaque*

*Cemetery of the Year 2020 Gold Certificate*

*CYA Press release that can be used to promote their work and achievements*

*The Silver Award winners will receive the following –*

*Cemetery of the Year 2020 Silver Certificate*

*CYA Press release that can be used to promote their work and achievements*



# TECHNICAL QUESTIONS.

*Abbreviated summary of questions - June to August 2020*

An enquiry was received from a Borough Council who were concerned about moving headstones over 1.2m high in a churchyard. Due to the condition of these memorials, BRAMM recommended using the Councils own structural engineer to advise on moving the memorials for the development of a carpark.

A member of the public asked about the correct depth for a plinth as the base appeared to be the same depth, in fact overhanging as the foundation had a 1" chamfer. The memorial appeared to comply with BS 8415 but just looked wrong, hence the disappointment from the customer.

A member of the public was concerned that no guarantee was given after a memorial had been erected, and when asked the mason did not give a reply.

The Parish Council maintains a closed Churchyard where a damaged memorial is located, pictures were forwarded asking for advice on how this should be rectified.

An enquiry from a mason - I have just removed a headstone for a funeral. It measures headstone 54" high x 30" wide x 3" thick sitting on a base 34" x 12" x 3", i.e. overall 57" high x 36" wide x 12" deep. On reading dowel sizes in the BRAMM Blue Book it mentions minimum thickness of inscription plate as being 3" if between 36 and 48" and 4" if over. So to me this stone does not have the correction thickness for its height. The stone appears to date back to 1982/1983.

*BRAMM replied - The granite memorial in question falls outside the scope of BS8415:2018 so we have to use a combination of BS8415 and experience based on common sense. As the material is only 3" thick, great care must be taken when coring the dowel holes for secondary dowelling. I would suggest using 30mmØ holes in the plate and 35mmØ holes in the base. In this case, the secondary dowels should engage to a minimum of 125mm (5") into the plate due to its height of 51" and, if possible, go straight through the 3" base and 2" into the foundation for extra strength and stability. This would mean using two 25mmØ x 10" A2 or A4 grade stainless steel grade dowels. Please allow me to repeat the need for great care and accuracy to be taken when wet coring the 30mmØ dowel holes into the 75mm (3") thick plate as you will only have 22.5mm of 'wall' either side of the plate's dowel holes. It will also be necessary to ensure the ground anchor system you use when re-fixing the memorial is accredited to the size of memorial in question ~ your anchor manufacturer will be able to advise you accordingly.*

A member of the public asks – "Is it acceptable for a newly erected headstone to be leaning to one side? If the stone mason won't correct the tilt what can a complaint to yourselves do to remedy the situation if the stonemason is a member of BRAMM?"

*BRAMM replied - The BRAMM Blue Book says that when a memorial is erected it should be in-line, level and plumb so in order to comment properly we would need further details such as underpinning substantive photographic evidence, the location and grave number of the memorial, etc. together with any other relevant factors which may assist us. When we are in possession of all the facts we will be in a better position to move the matter forward.*

A Parish Council owns and manages its own burial ground enquires about the free BRAMM registration scheme if it can offer advice on health and safety matters.

BRAMM was asked if Level 2 NVQ Diploma Certificate in 'Stonemasonry (Construction) - Stone Fixing (QCF)' is acceptable for the BRAMM register.

*BRAMM replied- The qualification is not specifically in Memorial Masonry therefore I'm afraid BRAMM can't accept it as evidence to automatically award a BRAMM Fixer Licence which is the minimum requirement for a BRAMM Registered Fixer.*

# RESOLVED COMPLAINTS SUMMARY.

Complaint from a Burial Authority over the fact that they tested and broke some memorials and the company who had originally fixed them hadn't been back to fix them. Company concerned said they had used the correct equipment and method but the BA had used too much force. Company subsequently fixed the ones they had originally done out of goodwill.

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Complaint from a grave owner that a memorial had been leaning for some time. Due to lockdown, mason concerned said he wasn't working at time so could not go back and rectify the issue. Once he went back to work part time he still hadn't fixed the issue so BRAMM offered to send an assessor to fix the memorial and charge it to the mason - at which point the mason rectified the memorial.

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Complaint from another grave owner that a memorial had been leaning for some time. We notified the mason concerned and they rectified the issue.

## SUPPORT VISITS.

The BRAMM Board have agreed to roll out Support Visits to all registered companies. These will be compulsory to maintain a company on the register. An assessor will contact each company a day or two before they are due to arrive. Each visit will only last between 30 – 60 minutes. The pilot scheme has been successful, and has highlighted that some companies are not using materials compliant to BS 8415:2018. The assessor may ask for proof of Compliance such as the dowels, ground anchors or the correct manufactured foundations must contain reinforcing bars.

All companies will be encouraged to comply to the British Standard and would have a follow up visit if deemed necessary. However if on a second visit non-compliance of materials was found then the company would have to put all its BRAMM registered fixers through further training and another BFL assessment, at their expense and within 6 months. Failure to comply for a third time would result in the company losing its registration with BRAMM.

BRAMM simply want to Improve Standards by ensuring memorials are erected safely. Companies will be asked if they are having any issues with Burial authorities and whether BRAMM can help.

A free copy of the BRAMM BLUE BOOK will be left as a thank you. The Support Visits will help BRAMM companies IMPROVE STANDARDS.

## ICCM RECOMMENDS BRAMM COMPANIES.

*BRAMM Officer Phil Potts took part in a webinar for ICCM - Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management where many memorial topics were discussed.*



**ICCM**

# BRAMM

IMPROVING STANDARDS

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**CHIPPED BASE**



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