

WELCOME to the summer newsletter. We hope you've been enjoying the sun! Here's an opportunity to take 5 minutes out of the heat and read the latest from the BRAMM team. We're conscious that it would be beneficial for the industry if ALL fixers were to read this newsletter. So, if you'd like it sent directly to the email accounts of your employees, please provide these addresses and we'll include them on our mailing list. Email: bramm@bramm-uk.org

GET INVOLVED in your industry and help shape the future. If you have anything you'd like brought up at one of the next BRAMM board meetings (in September and November), please get in touch with the office on either our new telephone number **01823 448259** or email us at: bramm@bramm-uk.org

BRAMM STATS

Registered Businesses 597
Licensed Fixers 766
Accredited Burial Authorities..... 154

BE SEEN ONLINE by simply advertising on the BRAMM website. With 836 visits by logged in users, our new website is a key place to be seen in the industry and an excellent opportunity to promote your products and services. For more information contact the BRAMM office on our new telephone number **01823 448259** or email us at: bramm@bramm-uk.org



A1 ASSESSORS are in hot demand. Are you interested in helping others achieve their BRAMM Fixer's Licence? We are looking for new A1 Assessors to play this important role and help us improve standards. For more information contact the BRAMM office on our new telephone number **01823 448259** or email us at: bramm@bramm-uk.org



COMPLIANCE



Nick Thomas
BRAMM Development Officer

It is a strange but a demonstrable fact that despite many years of conformity guarantees a significant minority of masons show every sign of not understanding the implications of this cornerstone of our industry. This is odd because the idea, first introduced by NAMM, was specifically designed to help memorial masons and was widely welcomed at the time as a huge step forward.

In the past, burial authorities would in many cases impose a period based guarantee upon memorial masons wishing to work within their cemetery. The time period varied from authority to authority but could be as long as thirty years.

The industry felt that an extended time period guarantee was unfair and sited perfectly reasonable points – such as the fact that it would be impossible to have such a guarantee issued by a builder in respect of a loft conversion, extension or indeed a new property.

And so conformity or compliance guarantees were brought forward. There was still to be a time period of ten years after which liability for the memorial would cease as long as the memorial was fixed in compliance with the British Standard at the time of fixing. Of course at the time NAMM referred not to **British Standard 8415** but to the **NAMM Code of Working Practice**, which is not the actual standard but rather a guide to the standard, accessible to masons and burial authorities.

I was involved in presenting this new idea to burial authorities and after careful explanation many authorities saw the advantage of this form of guarantee. One by one they altered their regulations and periods of guarantee.

Article continues overleaf...



"Compliance" article continued from page 1...

Now you may see this as a victory for common sense, and indeed it was, but what is often forgotten is that the mason who issues the guarantee must fix the memorial in compliance with British Standard 8415. If this is not the case then the business has a never ending liability for that memorial!

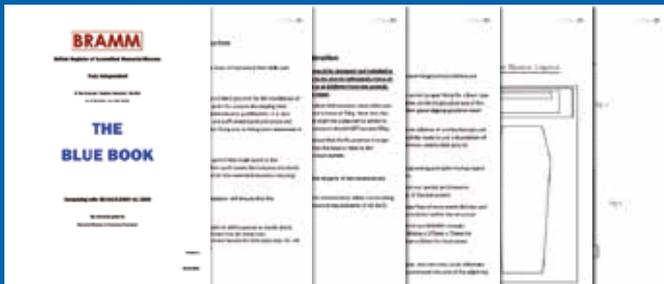
The alarming thing, from my point of view, is that as I travel around the country on behalf of BRAMM talking to masons, burial authorities and sextons it seems as if the implications of this fact have been somehow lost.

Masons are tending to see the conformity guarantee as a ten year guarantee. This seems to me to be the only explanation for the number of masons I come across who do not seem to grasp the significance and consequences of not fixing in compliance with the British Standard.

If you have any worries about conforming to the standard we at BRAMM are only too happy to help. Make sure you download the BRAMM blue fixing guide from the BRAMM website and have it in your vehicle for reference at all times. Talk to your concrete manufacturer and make sure that your foundations are reinforced properly, the correct size and thickness and that any formed holes are the correct size for your chosen ground anchor. Talk to your wholesaler about the importance of correctly drilled dowel holes. And make sure your fixers are empowered to refuse to fix a non-compliant memorial. This is vitally important as it is the fixer who will lose his licence if he does not fix in compliance.

If you have any questions that BRAMM can help you with directly, please don't necessitate to get in touch via the office on our new telephone number **01823 448259** or by email.

THE BLUE BOOK



The Blue Book from BRAMM gives masons a definitive guide to fixing in line with British Standard 8415. It is available free of charge as a PDF download from the *Member's Area* of our website. We strongly recommend all fixers should have a copy and carry it in their van for on site reference.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

All BRAMM registered masons **MUST** provide their customers with a Certificate of Compliance after the installation of a lawn memorial. This certificate can now be downloaded from the 'Member's Area' of the website. We have moved it's location into the secure part of the website to prevent rogue masons accessing it and claiming to be BRAMM registered. Contact the BRAMM office if you need help logging into the member's area to access this document.



HAVE YOU MOVED PREMISES?

If you've moved premises or have new vehicles, do you need new 'BRAMM Accredited Company' stickers. Displaying the BRAMM logo adds to your credibility and professionalism, helps to increase public awareness of the BRAMM scheme and makes more of your investment as a BRAMM Accredited Company. If you require more stickers call the office and we'll send you some. There is a small production/postage charge.



TRAINING DATES



Visit our website for CPD training dates and BRAMM Fixer Licence training and test days at www.bramm-uk.org

If you'd like training facilitated in your area, contact the BRAMM office on **01823 448259**

A CASE OF NON-COMPLIANCE AND PUBLIC FEEDBACK

We are very grateful to a member of the public, Mr David Anthony, who contacted us after an incidence of non-compliance with a BRAMM accredited mason.

"I am most grateful to the BRAMM Board for all that they have done on my behalf and for getting [the mason] to erect my family headstone, which was done in the presence of the BRAMM Assessor and thus I have the security of knowing that it was done correctly to BS8415. Not forgetting of course the valuable contribution of Ms Jackson at the BRAMM Office.

Thank you all.

I wish to submit some suggestions/recommendations, as detailed below and request that they are brought up and considered at the next Board Meeting. It is in no way intended as a criticism of BRAMM, indeed quite the opposite, as I am genuinely most appreciative of everything that BRAMM has done on my behalf, but is intended to be constructive and help provide a remedy to the flaws highlighted when dealing with unscrupulous masons."

The board have discussed the points raised in Mr Anthony's letter and are taking action, as appropriate, to amend our processes where necessary to improve the BRAMM scheme and further reduce such incidents from occurring.

We are thankful that Mr Anthony took so much time to highlight his praise and suggestions, helping us to hear first-hand the experience of a member of the public and how the BRAMM scheme worked in practice on this occasion.

MEMORIAL MASONRY APPRENTICESHIPS

It's still early days, but BRAMM is in negotiations with The Morley-Young Partnership to develop an apprenticeship for memorial masonry that will be designed to help young people (16 – 24 year olds) gain nationally recognised qualifications and essential practical skills while on-the-job.

Not only will the apprenticeships help young people enter the job market and earn a basic wage, whilst getting qualified, but in most cases the employer will be financial supported, with wage grants provided to assist employers in recruiting a young apprentice.

Setting this up is obviously a complex process and may take a little time, but we will keep you up-to-date with developments and would like to plant-the-seed now, to encourage you to consider taking on an apprentice in the near future.

CPD – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Retaining your BRAMM Fixer Licence requires an amount of On-going Training or what's often called CPD (Continuous Personal Development). This is to keep masons/fixers up-to-date with the latest technologies and techniques within our industry. There are many ways of fulfilling this training requirement, one of which are the free training days provided by BRAMM, held in many parts of the country (for a list of up-coming training opportunities please visit our website).

If you're running a sizable business with many masons/fixers, then one convenient and affordable way of achieving CPD for all your employees is to provide in-house training, so everyone can do it together without the need for travel etc.

There's a wide range of options that are appropriate for in-house training including:

- First Aid (Appointed Person)
- Manual Handling
- Health & Safety – A Construction Skills Certification Scheme
- Kerb Fixing
- Plaque Fixing
- Cleaning Lawn Headstone Granite/Stone
- Cleaning Kerbset Granite/Stone
- Re-Fix Lawn Headstone
- Re-Fix Kerbset
- Fix Monolith
- Fix Bookset
- Height Work
- Inspection and Testing of Memorials
- Working below ground and in confined spaces
- CPD Courses

For more information, questions or queries, please contact the BRAMM office.

DON'T FORGET WE'VE CHANGED OUR TELEPHONE NO.



01823 448259

Monday to Friday: Between 9am and 1pm

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

**Alan Jarvis**

Director of Works, Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is responsible for permanently marking and caring for the graves of those serving in Commonwealth forces who lost their lives in the two world wars. We commemorate by name, those whose graves are unknown or cannot be maintained and those who were cremated. It is our duty to treat all casualties equally, irrespective of rank, status, race or religion. As Director of Works I am responsible for the quality and value for money for all construction maintenance worldwide and am head-of-profession for all construction staff.

We are observers on the BRAMM Board because as an organisation we see the qualification and training of staff as key to the success of our operation.

The vast majority of graves in the Commission's care are located in 2400 cemeteries constructed worldwide.

The Commission's primary duty is to ensure that the particulars of war casualties are individually, correctly and permanently recorded. Marker inscriptions show, where possible, the casualty's name, number, rank, decorations, unit, date of death and age, together with any short personal inscription that the next of kin wish to add.

France houses our manufacturing centre for the Commission worldwide producing approximately 19,000 new headstones per year. There are 24 different headstone shapes, forty five stone types, ten types of cross and ten other religious symbols. The combination of these numbers results in a possible 230,000 different headstone combinations possible before a name is added. For all of its headstones, monuments, memorials and cemeteries the Commission has a policy of replacing like with like. That is the same stone as was originally used from the same quarry if possible. We have a computerised drawing archive system with 20,000 original drawings scanned and accessible anywhere in the world.

We currently have 4 state of the art engraving machines and will increase this to five in September this year, moving to work 24 hours a day, 5 days a week. We will become the largest headstone production facility in the world. The machines have a small laser that is used to determine the height and contours of the face of each stone so that the depth of the text varies with the contours of the stone and always meets the Commission standards. The text itself is extremely clever and shows the attention to detail thought out at the conception of the cemeteries. Designed to be read at an angle of 45 degrees the lettering is extremely legible and makes a distinct impression to the viewer from two locations: 1) when walking along a row of headstones and 2) when standing in front of a headstone looking down at a 45 degree angle. This attention to detail is synonymous with the Commission.

We carry out a lot of historical research and cross-referencing for each new headstone request, treating each as if it were the first time the memorial was being erected. All of the original information on the old headstone is checked to ensure that it was correct on its original placement and whether or not we have agreed to make some amendment to the original. There have been instances where two branches of the same family may spell the surname differently (for example: SMITH SMYTH SMYTHE). If challenged, the Commission will refer to its archives which include the original military records of the individual and will use this to decide whether the name is valid.

Whilst our production machines are computer controlled, the quality control process is carried out by our dedicated staff. We manufacture 19,000 individual products per year and have an average of 3-4 errors per year that leave the engraving centre and are delivered. Whilst many manufacturers would deem much higher error rates as acceptable, for us, even this low quantity is considered unacceptable. We are here, as we have said, to correctly commemorate the names of the fallen in perpetuity. For one headstone to stand in place for one minute is unacceptable. We have introduced stringent quality control and checking procedures at every stage of the production process in France and at the time of writing, the error rate on delivered headstones for the current year stands at zero.

We are an organisation that prides itself on the quality of its work and consider ourselves to be the premier maintenance organisation in the World. Our attention to detail and the standards we set are enhanced by our association with BRAMM and we believe that the qualification and re-qualification through testing and training with BRAMM adds value to the operation.

www.bramm-uk.org