

THE NEW

BRAMM

REGISTER

Summer Update 2014

BRITISH REGISTER OF APPROVED MEMORIAL MASONS

SINGLE REGISTRATION SCHEME

Both the NAMM General Council and BRAMM Board have approved the merger of RQMF and BRAMM registers to create a single independent industry register with equal representation from burial authorities and memorial masons.

JOINT STATEMENT

Both BRAMM and NAMM have been negotiating for some time to form one single register from the two current registers and are now ready to move forwards.

These negotiations have now concluded and a new combined register is planned. The enlarged register will keep the BRAMM name, but will be marketed for the next 12 months as the THE NEW BRAMM REGISTER.

BRAMM will be simply a register of qualifications with compliance verifiers acting for the public, burial authorities and masons. BRAMM will not be an Association or act as an Association. It will oversee continuous professional development of masons. NAMM will have representation on the new BRAMM Board.

NAMM will be an Association and provide the training courses and trainers. NAMM will not be a Register or act as a Register or compliance verifier. NAMM will continue to develop the NAMM Code of Working Practice, with inclusive input from all interested parties, to ensure its continued universal acceptance and compliance with BS 8415.

The annual business registration fees for 2015 will remain at £99 + VAT and any other charges will also remain the same as those currently charged by BRAMM. CPD – Continuous Professional Development – will continue to be required, and the costs will be covered by the annual registration fee.

FOR MEMORIAL MASONS

NAMM will be holding Roadshows around the country over the next 12 months, for both masons and burial authorities, and inviting BRAMM to take part.

NAMM is also running a Trade Exhibition next June at the Warwickshire Exhibition Centre and are offering THE NEW BRAMM REGISTER a stand for the two days.

Both NAMM and BRAMM will be mutually supportive, and in continuous communication.

www.bramm-uk.org

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR SOLE-TRADERS

If you're working as a sole-trader but then using other people to help you with the work (even if they provide their service free-of-charge) you still require employers' liability insurance. Whether officially employed or not, and whether paid or not, in the event of an accident the person helping you can still sue you for damages. Protect your business and make sure your insurance is up-to-date and appropriate for your needs.

BRAMM TRAINING DATES

Future Continual Professional Development (CPD) and Fixer Test Dates are being organised. To stay up-to-date, keep an eye on the website for the latest information. www.bramm-uk.org

LATEST BRAMM STATISTICS

Approved Registered Businesses = 609
Registered Fixers = 734
Registered Burial Authorities = 162

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

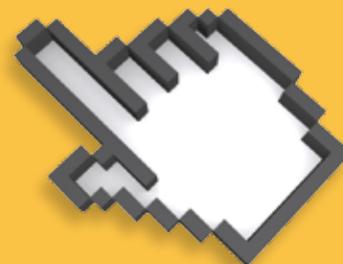
All BRAMM registered masons **MUST** provide their customers with a Certificate of Compliance after the installation of a lawn memorial. This certificate can be downloaded from the 'Member's Area' of the website.



PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS ON THE BRAMM WEBSITE

All registered masons are listed on the BRAMM register, however, you can make much more of this opportunity by having your own **PROMOTIONAL BUSINESS PAGE** within our website.

For a modest charge, your page can tell visitors all about your business, displaying your logo, etc. This will add to your online presence and help gain you new business from members of the public who come to BRAMM, looking for a reputable mason.



YOUR OWN PROMOTIONAL BUSINESS PAGE ON THE BRAMM WEBSITE = £75.00 PLUS VAT

Call **01788 544963** for more information
BRAMM office open Mon - Fri, 9am - 1pm

OPPORTUNITY FOR A MASON TO JOIN THE BRAMM BOARD

Would you like to join the BRAMM board and represent the masons' industry?

There is a seat available for a reputable monumental mason who is able to dedicate their time and energy to contribute to BRAMM. The selected candidate will maintain an equal 50-50 balance between masons and the institutes on the BRAMM Board. It is important that you have good technical knowledge and experience of the industry. The ability to discuss, debate and compromise is essential.

To apply please send a brief paragraph about yourself and how you feel you would benefit BRAMM and the masons that you would represent to bramm@bramm-uk.org

MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

In the last year there have been an increased number of incidents where BRAMM has stepped in to help resolve an issue between a burial authority and monumental mason. Often these are cases where a fixer has failed to comply with British Standards and we have been able to help provide appropriate training to prevent the same mistake reoccurring. Other cases have been queries from local authorities who come to us questioning a mason's workmanship or on-site decision-making. Often we are able to help the local authority gain a better understanding of the challenges facing a mason in specific circumstances and prevent any further action against the mason. Our role is not one of heavy-handed authority, but conflict resolver to try and help all parties as best we can, whilst improving the general standard.

WELCOME TO THE BOARD, CHANCELLOR STEPHEN EYRE

I am glad to have joined the BRAMM Board as the Church of England's representative. The BRAMM constitution ensures that the Church of England has a representative on the Board. The Church chooses its representative from amongst diocesan Chancellors who are the judges of the Church of England's Consistory Courts. I am the chancellor of the dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield. Ruth Arlow who is the chancellor of the Norwich diocese acts as a substitute for me when I am unable to attend Board meetings.

The Church's control of open churchyards means that it is responsible for a considerable number of burial grounds. These churchyards provide the setting for church buildings; they are the resting places of the mortal remains of our departed loved ones; and they are an important part of our national heritage. For these reasons the Church of England takes seriously its responsibility of caring for churchyards and treats this care as an important part of its Christian mission.

This responsibility means that particular attention has to be paid to memorials. The Church sees it as important that memorials are of high quality both in respect of their design and construction but also that they are safely and properly installed. I welcome the opportunity to join with the representatives of memorial masons and with the representatives of other burial authorities in the important work of maintaining high standards in the industry.



WHAT WILL WE DO WHEN LOCAL CEMETERY SPACE RUNS OUT? EVERY

ARTICLE BY **TIM MORRIS, ICCM**

The lack of new burial space will eventually affect memorial masons and funeral directors, as well as local authorities and bereaved people. The memorial industry should unite with organisations representing burial authorities to press for sustainable cemeteries. This is why.....

A little history to begin with:

Back in 2000 the then government convened a Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry into cemeteries following many years of campaigning by the Institute and other individuals. The Committee published its report in early 2001 much to the delight of those campaigners as it confirmed the view that cemeteries are obviously not sustainable. This means that once a cemetery is full the burial authority has to ask itself a few questions:

- Can we afford to build a new cemetery?
- Is land available locally? Certainly not in many urban areas.
- Can we afford the cost of maintaining an additional site?
- Will we have to reduce maintenance in the older site(s) in order to make ends meet?
- Will we be forced to cease to provide a burial service? Three London boroughs have been forced to take this option!

One of the Select Committee's conclusions was "If the public are to continue to have access to affordable, accessible burial in cemeteries fit for the needs of the bereaved, there appears to be no alternative to grave reuse.... For the reasons stated above, and assuming that the necessary safeguards are included, we are ourselves of the opinion that legislation should be introduced allowing burial to take place in reused graves."

A Burial & Cemeteries Advisory Group was established by the Home Office, (passed to the Department for Constitutional Affairs and subsequently the Ministry of Justice) that worked on the various issues raised by the Select Committee. The subject of the reuse of graves received much attention with codes of ethics and practice being drafted and pilot sites identified where the practice could be carried out under close scrutiny. It should be remembered that the proposal to reuse of abandoned graves contained recommendations to select only those graves where the last burial took place at least 100 years ago. A notification procedure was also contained so that any family that came forward could retain its rights. More importantly, the practice of reuse would not be mandatory and would be subject to local consultation. Conservation management plans would also have been a requirement in order to protect heritage.

Prior to the last general election all plans to introduce new burial legislation were shelved, as was the reuse initiative. The government cited 'the current economic climate' as the reason for this. What about those resident of those afore mentioned London boroughs that have ceased to provide a burial service? Their bereaved residents now have to use adjacent cemeteries where double or treble fees are applied to non-resident. The argument regarding the economic climate therefore makes no sense.

Here we are 13 years on from the Select Committee inquiry report with the current government taking no action.

The subject of diminishing new grave space and the ability to build yet more unsustainable cemeteries is believed by some to be a city problem however clear evidence now exists that the problem is also being encountered by Parish Councils in rural areas. One example is that of a Lincolnshire Parish Council that operates a very small cemetery that is immediately adjacent to the closed churchyard and central to the village – a very pleasant and well-maintained location at the heart of the village – in which only one burial takes place every couple of years. Low numbers you might think but don't let this cloud your views as the anxiety being felt by the Parish council and its parishioners is real. The small cemetery is bordered on one side by the main village road, on the second by the closed churchyard and on the third and fourth by village houses therefore there is no land available on which to immediately extend. Some might say that a second site could be identified on which to establish a new cemetery however available land exists albeit at some distance from the village and existing cemetery. It should be pointed out that the parishioners have benefitted from the churchyard for centuries and since closure, the adjacent parish cemetery and hence believe that establishing a new cemetery in another location would divide the community. There will be obvious anxiety at this situation, as some parishioners will suffer at knowing that they might not be buried in the same location as perhaps their mothers, fathers, grandparents or other ancestors. As a consequence of this the Parish council has written to government via its MP to urge those in power to revisit their current position on re-use as this will solve their problems. Consider the enormous financial outlay that the Parish council or in fact any council might incur in building a new cemetery and subsequently having two to maintain on the same income. Think also of the effect on its budget and where cuts might have to be made in this very pleasant village location. It doesn't bear thinking about that the Parish council could be forced to take the option of ceasing to provide a burial service however having met members of this committee and its officers I am sure that they will fight to preserve their service.

This matter is not limited to England and Wales. A similar inquiry was carried out in Scotland during the mid 2000s with virtually the same results as identified by the Select Committee inquiry for England and Wales. Nothing further happened in Scotland however, we were recently informed that the Scottish government wishes to take forward the review of law relating to burial and cremation following the introduction of its new death certification process. Incidentally, the point of 'dividing a community' was also made at the initial Scottish law review meeting back in 2005 and in respect of the numerous small and outlying community cemeteries that exist in Scotland.

On 27th September 2013 the BBC released the results of a major survey that it had conducted into the shortage of burials space in the nations cemeteries. The results were startling and concerning, but no surprise to the Institute and SLCC, and indicated that 44% of cemeteries only had 20 years before space ran out and 25% indicating remaining space that would last for only 10 years. There followed a media frenzy with the matter being broadcast on national news at 6.00pm on the same day as well as a large number of radio stations. The Institute was fortunate, as it had invited the BBC journalist to deliver her results at its annual Learning Convention on 1st October so this was 'hot news'. We were also very pleased to receive a call from the SLCC inviting us to join them in seeking an urgent meeting with the Minister to discuss this important issue that effects both of our memberships and more importantly the bereaved. The Institute is again pleased to be working in close partnership with a like-minded organisation to bring about change for the common good.

For many local authorities, and ICCM and SLCC members, our disappointment has turned to despair as our burial services continue to be treated as a Cinderella at the highest levels.

Memorial masons and funeral directors should note that no cemetery equals no business.

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BRAMM, No. 8 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4EA (Office Hours Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm)
Telephone 01823 448259 Facsimile 01823 253681 Email bramm@bramm-uk.org Web www.bramm-uk.org



In addition to providing relevant information about registered masons to Burial Authorities, the BRAMM website is also designed to help masons. Industry information, training dates and licensing test dates can all be found on the website. It's also designed to bring masons more business, through an association with BRAMM. Masons can easily be found by members of the public who come to us looking for a registered mason. This works using a geographical (X mile radius approach). The public can also search for masons by name. The website continues to prove its worth and we encourage you to regularly visit to familiarise yourself with it.

www.bramm-uk.org

LOCAL AUTHORITY INTEREST

BRAMM is a not for profit organisation covering all main professional bodies that represent burial and cremation authorities, from unitary councils to parish councils who have no commercial interest. All are working in equal partnership with memorial masons.

THE BENEFITS OF BRAMM FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES:

- 50% representation by burial authorities on the management board giving you your say.
- 50% representation on any disciplinary panel making your voice heard.
- No cost to your authority.
- CPD ensuring that memorial masons working in your cemeteries are up to speed.
- Confidence that memorials will be installed in compliance with British Standard 8415.
- BRAMM takes action when instances of non-compliance are reported by you.
- BRAMM has representation on the British Standards committee.
- A FREE guide will be available on the installation of memorials in accordance with British Standard 8415. You can reference use of this document in your regulations.
- Access to all registered mason's independently assessed insurance document and risk assessments via a comprehensive website. No need to gather these yourself.
- Regular newsletters.
- Support from a dedicated local authority liaison officer.
- Working with memorial masons for the benefit of the bereaved.

BOGUS FIXERS IN YOUR CEMETERY

There have been several examples recently where burial authorities have failed to check whether fixers are qualified and licensed. By not checking, they have allowed unqualified fixers to slip in under the radar.

This has inevitably lead to cases of poor workmanship, which only become apparent once the damage is done. The result is additional work for all parties and often further distress for the bereaved.

Clearly it's in everyones interest that this situation is avoided. Luckily it is a very easy and quick check to make. Simple visit the BRAMM website and check the credentials of the fixer in question, immediately reducing the likelihood of any problems.

