

BRAMM

Summer Update 2019

BRITISH REGISTER OF ACCREDITED MEMORIAL MASONS

£150
PER CANDIDATE
discounts for groups
of 6 or more
available

ADVANCED FIXER/MASON COURSE (AFM CERTIFICATE) TAKES FLIGHT

In the firm belief that the best tradesmen in the memorial industry look for ways to increase their practical skills and level of job knowledge, BRAMM is launching a new, more advanced training course for those who already hold a BRAMM Fixer Licence (or NVQ Level 2 ~ Stonemasonry ~ Fixing and Securing Memorials, or comparable memorial trade based qualification). The new AFM (Advanced Fixer/Mason) qualification is designed to be the 'next step up' and is aimed at the more experienced fixer mason.

It is a four hour 'theory only' certificated course intended for a minimum of four candidates. It will be held in a classroom venue as close as possible to the candidate group's work location(s) – making it as accessible and convenient as possible. The courses will be delivered by one of BRAMM's Training & Assessment Team under the umbrella of OCN West Midlands (Open College Network) – as featured in the Spring Edition of BRAMM News.

Much of the information on the course is aimed at those with the responsibilities associated with the role of a 'Fixer Team Leader' and covers the knowledge base required to competently erect more complex memorials including various types of foundations in relation to cemetery ground conditions, the correct fixing of kerb sets, cross and die sets, book sets, mouse traps, enclosures, sunken, flush,

internal and external cover slabs, dealing with modern and older vaults, understanding the requirements of working in confined spaces, team lifting methodology, the Burial Authority documentation required, etc.

In addition, the course also deals with Health & Safety legislation, Risk Assessments, Personal Protective Equipment, COSHH, etc. and is followed by a written test based upon the information given during the session.

One of the main advantages of this course is that it will meet BRAMM's CPD (Continuous Professional Development) requirements so it will be a win/win situation for all successful candidates who will also receive an up-dated BRAMM AFM Fixer Licence and a Certificate of AFM Achievement.

The cost of the AFM Course is £150 per candidate if attended by five candidates or less. However, if the course has six or more candidates, the cost per candidate is reduced to £135.

If you are interested in adding to your skills, job knowledge and qualifications with the Advanced Fixer Mason Course then get in touch with the BRAMM office and we'll provide more information.

Think BRAMM, Think Professional.





MEMORIAL MASONS COMPETITION

Here's a great FREE opportunity for Memorial Masons to showcase their work in a NEW category of the Cemetery of the Year Awards 2019 ...

Design and Innovation of Memorials

The competition is free to enter and if successful both the Cemetery and you, the Memorial Mason, could win a 'Design and Innovation of Memorials' Gold or Silver Certificate, along with a CYA press release that can be used to promote your work/business.

SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE: 31st July 2019

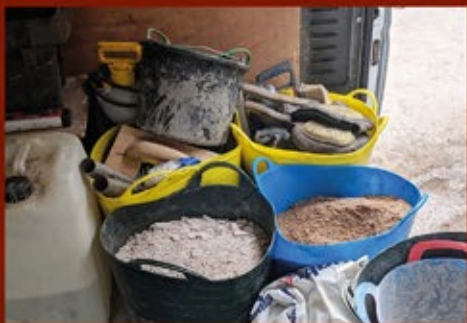
The new Cemetery of the Year Awards - Special Category 'Design and Innovation of Memorials' is open to any memorial fitted in a cemetery within the last 5 years. To apply visit:

www.cemeteryoftheyear.org.uk

Here you can upload (a max of 3) photographs of the memorial (after obtaining permission from the family) along with a short description of why it should be considered for an award.

The entries will be judged on their design and innovation qualities and the winner and runners-up will be presented at the ICCM conference in September. This is an ideal opportunity to promote your Memorial Masonry work and possibly win a Cemetery of the Year Award 2019 for both yourself and your local cemetery.

Cemetery of the Year Award 2019 supported and endorsed by –



LOAD UP THE FIXING VAN

Andrew Hawley – E. Hawley (Masons) Ltd, BRAMM Board Member & British Standards Panel

I've been asked to write about something we all have in common – our trucks, pickups and vans. It's a source of constant fascination to me, the sheer amount of kit that we carry these days!

I'll start at the front and work my way back ... the first thing I find is the crowbar fastened to the bulkhead, six feet long, chisel and pointed ends and can take five tonnes of bending strain, mostly used for prying up fixing flags on removals but also ideal for lifting a traditional memorial on a picture frame landing that needs re-leveling. Above the crowbar is a rack for flower containers, a selection of different sizes and finishes, always a good backup when you have been in a rush and forgotten to bring one for the job you're fixing, and it wouldn't be the first time we've sold one in the cemetery either. Also on the bulkhead are a pair of extension leads – 110 and 240 volts.

Underneath is where the large rollers (ex make-safe poles) live plus assorted woods and skids. Also tucked in here is the maul used to level the fixing flag. To level the ground for the flag there is the pick, I don't know what it's called but it has a double-sided head, one side a flat blade maybe six inches long and three inches wide with a cutting edge (really good for leveling the hole for the fixing flag), at the other side is an axe (very handy for tree roots). Lastly this is the home of the tarmac square, a heavy steel head on a long handle used to firm ground.

Now we are at floor level so that's the generator, 3.5Kva, twin voltage, along with the six speed core drill and a selection of core drills and extension bars for extra depth – this is all regularly used as we work on a lot of concrete strip foundations often twelve or more inches thick. To cool and lubricate this drill we have the hand pressurised water bottle (12 litres). Spirit levels live here too. For water we carry two 45 litre plastic drums – often cemeteries don't have a tap, or when we find it miles from where we're fixing, it doesn't work! Next we have two 45 litre tubs filled with washed sand and MOT 2, the first for leveling the fixing flag hole and the second is used for back filling the original over-deep hole when refixing an additional inscription back in place.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT BS8415?

This is a question that was recently asked of a BRAMM Registered Fixer, by a lady in a cemetery who was visiting her late Mother's grave. The fixer was installing a new lawn memorial a few graves further down the row and explained the importance of fixing memorials correctly and following BS8415.

The question was perfectly understandable given that the lady was a member of the public and probably had no involvement in the memorial masonry trade.

Still, this unassuming example of a perfectly reasonable question served to flag up one of the main reasons why we are so keen to promote BRAMM Registered Memorial Masonry Companies with professionally qualified memorial fixers and entrust them to deal with the general public's memorial masonry requirements.

The photograph (opposite) showing a simple example underpinning the above comment recently dropped into BRAMM's inbox. It shows a lawn memorial's base with its headstone removed (a second inscription was being added). Look at the dowel – it's a slither of wood and not a BS8415 specified stainless steel dowel! As you are aware, the current BRAMM Blue Book* supports BS8415 in all memorial fixing matters with perhaps one of the chief areas being the importance of using A2 or A4 stainless steel dowelling when fixing a lawn memorial's headstone to its base, whether using either the cement or bolting method.

It gets worse! Look at the ground anchor hole in the top right of the photo ... you'll see it's full of cement. Now ask yourself, given the use of a wooden dowel by the original fixer, is there a ground anchor sitting beneath that cement ... alarm bells ring!!

This is a perfect example of the need for Burial Authorities to be fully aware of their 'Duty of Care' responsibilities under the Ministry of Justice guidelines and to ensure that all memorial installation work meets BS8415. Always remember, we live in a 'su'em' society, so just think of the uproar, adverse publicity and litigation costs that could ensue if the headstone fell on someone and caused serious injury, or even worse!

So, to answer the original question "What's so special about BS8415?" This, right here, this is what's so special about BS8415!!

*The BRAMM Blue Book is a free download available on our website: www.bramm-uk.org



LATEST BOARD ROOM UPDATES

We'll expand upon the following headlines in the Autumn edition, but this news just in from the BRAMM board room:

ONLINE CPD

Following the huge success of the online CPD for fixer masons, the BRAMM board have just agreed to change CPD from 5 years to 3 years, with more details how this will be applied to follow.

RANDOM COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENTS

The BRAMM Board have agreed to investigate random compliance assessments with a pilot scheme planned for later this year.

CHANGES ON THE BOARD

Jon Cuminski has been appointed to the BRAMM Board replacing Ian Hale who stands down after his term of office. A HUGE THANK YOU to Ian for all the work he has carried out for BRAMM over more years than he probably cares to remember.



There's the tool bag with the usual collection of hammers, chisels, both large and small, wide and narrow, wooden wedges for getting a memorial off its ground anchor, lots of odds and sods in the tool bag, bits of tape lead for wedges, slate likewise, spare nuts and washers (we bolt plate to base) ratchet spanner, torque wrench and a 12 inch pipe wrench for those ground anchors that won't come out. Probably the most versatile tools are a couple of fish tailed chisels with slightly curved heads. Their edge is very thin, maybe 1 to 1.5mm thick and chisel edged – they have endless uses.

As we fit granite lawn memorials and cremains memorials on granite fixing flags and we have found that cement makes a poor joint, we instead use a trade only adhesive by evostick called "sticks like ****". It has a good temperature range –5 to +40°C and tolerates damp surfaces, but you need to leave a gap otherwise you will never get it apart, we use tile spacers 1.5mm. To break the bond it needs to be stretched 10% – another use for the fish tail chisels. Sometimes we use cement and dowels, so they have to be here with the buckets and sponges along with a window cleaner spray bottle and roll of paper for the final clean down.

When things go wrong, as they will, it usually involves stainless steel, you know, that headstone where somebody "improved" the ground anchor putting cement in the anchor hole, so come removal time you have a headstone with a permanently attached 600mm stainless bar or tube – time for the hacksaw – 15 minutes later, bad tempered, skinned knuckles, job done. Last year we found a cutting disc for a 4" angle grinder that cuts stainless – a 25mm solid bar in two cuts in two minutes, instant best friend!

Finally, the new toy! For many years we have used a variety of sack trucks but recently embraced the technology and now have a battery powered one. We're still learning to use it – two speeds forward, one speed back and can carry 450kg – this needs a little respect otherwise (as initial experience has shown) the results can be hilarious or dire!

So, along with assorted bits of carpet that's the fixing van ... oh yes, and just enough room for a couple of lawn jobs inside to fill it completely. Maybe you think that we don't need so much kit, and you may be right, but then I'm a bit O.C.D. and I like an easy life. I just hate struggling to fix a memorial or remove one – life's too short. I wish you all happy fixing!

DO YOUR GROUND ANCHORS CONFORM TO BS8415?

The BRAMM Board would like to bring the attention of masons to the changes in the new BS8415 affecting ground anchors (last referred to in the BRAMM Summer Newsletter 2018). Please ask your supplier for proof of compliance to the new British Standard and make sure the 'anchor' you have purchased is for the correct overall height of memorial and using the correct minimum size of foundation, especially the depth, as there have been changes from previous specifications. It is the BRAMM Registered Business who is responsible for making sure all memorials are erected safely and fully compliant with the new standard. Consult the BRAMM Blue Book for guidance (available on our website), and if you experience problems gaining proof from manufacturers, please ask our Technical Advisors (email the BRAMM office) who can point you in the right direction.

MORE THAN 35 YEARS OF ROCK-SOLID SERVICE FROM STONEGUARD

StoneGuard memorial insurance has always been recognised by the memorial industry for the breadth of cover and peace of mind it provides. In fact, it leads the way in this specialist field, and has been protecting memorials against risks like accidental damage and vandalism for almost four decades.

In this time, the cover has been constantly improved with upgrades to help it meet the changing demands of both memorial masons and customers, plus cope with new risks identified by StoneGuard's insurance experts. Things like tree sap damage, frost damage cover and council topple test fails.

But what makes it even more reassuring are the levels of customer service that come as standard with every policy. For customers, friendly UK-based advisers and no-quibble claims service minimises upset at an often difficult time, while for memorial masons offering the package, attractive commission, simple admin and comprehensive online resources make the whole process easy and hassle free.

Jason Kidd, Client Services Executive for StoneGuard, explains: "We know that when a loved one's memorial is damaged, the last thing relatives or friends need are difficult questions or slow response. They want their insurer to put things right fast. That's what everyone with a StoneGuard policy deserves, and what we pledge to deliver to each and every customer."

LATEST BRAMM STATISTICS

APPROVED
REGISTERED
BUSINESSES

477
COMPANIES

LICENSED
FIXERS

759

REGISTERED
BURIAL
AUTHORITIES

194

132
BRANCHES



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Stone**GUARD**
Memorial Insurance

The UK's favourite memorial insurance specialist is proud to sponsor the BRAMM newsletter

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