



TRAINING COURSES PROVE A GREAT SUCCESS

Last year's mason training courses were a resounding success. Fully attended, these courses provided the opportunity for fixer masons to gain the necessary training credits to renew their BRAMM Fixer Licence.

A valuable part of the courses is experiencing the wider memorial industry by visiting manufacturers or viewing products not normally encountered.

For those who attended, rest assured your certificates will be forwarded shortly.

MORE COURSES ORGANISED FOR 2010 (SEE INSIDE)

FREE TO BRAMM REGISTERED MASONS

BFL EXTENSION CARDS

Just a quick reminder that, back in the summer we extended the life of existing BFL Licences from 3 years to 5 years due to the complications sorting out training. If your licence has expired you should have received a 2 year extension card. If you haven't, please do contact us immediately on our telephone number (shown below).

POSITIVE COMMUNITY

There was a fabulous response to our request, on behalf of the Morley-Young Partnership, for masons wishing to train as A1 Assessors. We understand that the opportunity was over subscribed. Thank you to all those who applied and if you weren't successful, be sure to keep an eye in future BRAMM newsletters as we will endeavour to promote similar opportunities.



THE CRESCENT, TAUNTON, SOMERSET

THIS WAY UP WE HAVE MOVED ONWARDS & UPWARDS



Happy New Year! Welcome to this, the first BRAMM Newsletter of 2010. Much was achieved in the second half of last year and we mean for this positive progress to continue. Significant developments include the appointment of our Development Officer and the facilitation of free training sessions which have been extremely well received. Our numbers also grew enough to allow a revision and reduction of charges. Now, with the New Year, comes further immediate progress!

We have re-located and set up a new administrative office in Taunton, Somerset. This move is an extremely positive step forward and planned to improve our service and help make us more cost efficient. Another important development is the addition of three new board members all from the masons industry, to represent masons, voted for by accredited mason companies (see inside for details).

We'd like to say a huge 'Thank You & Farewell' to Dave Greenhalgh, who represents A1 Assessors at BRAMM board meetings. Dave's natural term has come to an end and it is now time for us to welcome his replacement, Philip Myatt. Scottish masons have requested representation at BRAMM board meetings. In response we welcome Alex McIntyre, a co-opted mason, to speak on their behalf.

Our new contact details are:

Tel: **01788 544963** (NO CHANGE (NC)) Fax: **01823 253681**

Email: **bramm@bramm-uk.org** (NC) Web: **www.bramm-uk.org** (NC)

Write to: **BRAMM, No.8 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4EA**

Visit us at:



www.bramm-uk.org

ENTER THE TROJAN HORSE

YOU MAY HAVE RECENTLY HEARD OF THE NEW NAMM REGISTRATION SCHEME AND FOUND YOURSELF QUERING JUST WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT DIFFERS TO BRAMM. ARE THEY THE SAME? DO YOU NEED TO SIGN UP TO BOTH?

DESPITE OUR ATTEMPTS TO SIMPLIFY THE MULTIPLE LOCAL REGISTRATION SCHEMES THAT WERE POPPING UP ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH ONE SIMPLE NATIONAL SCHEME, NAMM HAVE DECIDED TO COMPLICATE MATTERS BY CREATING MULTIPLE NATIONAL SCHEMES! FURTHERMORE, THEY HAVEN'T CLEARLY EXPLAINED THE DETAILS OF THEIR NEW SCHEME. WE FEEL IT ESSENTIAL THAT MASONS AND BURIAL AUTHORITIES ARE GIVEN ALL THE NECESSARY INFORMATION TO ALLOW THEM TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.

The Fundamental Purpose of One National Registration Scheme

After the first wave of memorial stability testing about a decade ago, it became apparent that a number of masons were fixing poorly in burial grounds. The burial authorities (who are ultimately liable for any resulting health and safety issues) started to set up their own local, individual registration schemes for memorial masons. Many charged masonry companies to register. Masons who worked with multiple authorities had to register multiple times and so much red-tape proved costly and extremely time consuming for all concerned. In 2004 a joint initiative, BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons), was set up by burial authorities and memorial masons to streamline the registration process and reduce the associated costs. All the organisations concerned believed that the best way forward was to work together on the scheme, with no one side of the industry having dominance. The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA), The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), The National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) and non-NAMM masons were all represented on the BRAMM board and together created one effective scheme to make life for masons and burial authorities easier and more affordable.

Moving from Strength to Strength

After many challenges BRAMM has proved a great success. Burial authorities have one easy national scheme to find, check and admit competent masons quickly and easily. Masons have just one set of paperwork to deal with rather than multiple, different and costly local schemes. BRAMM also encourages a closer sense of community and support in the industry, allowing for better communication between all parties. In the last 5 years we've really moved forward. Our plans to facilitate free training have become a successful reality and our numbers have reached a level that has allowed us to lower our charges, reducing costs to masons.

An Attempted Take-Over

The success of BRAMM recently led to one of the founding organisations, NAMM, to try and increase its representation on the board and effectively take control. Despite BRAMM being located in the NAMM offices, this proved more difficult than they had hoped. Unsupported by their own representatives NAMM dismissed and replaced all of their representation on the BRAMM board. The new board members then insisted on a set of demands that would place NAMM in control of BRAMM's future. This was clearly unacceptable to the rest of the BRAMM board (non-NAMM masons and burial authorities) and having reached a stale-mate and unable to get their own way, NAMM took the decision to withdraw from BRAMM. All of this caused many delays, but the BRAMM wheels remain turning; we are streamlining processes, working together, promoting education and are still keen to create and maintain a sense of community within the industry.

Enter the Trojan Horse

Sadly, it seems that an open, honest community isn't something that NAMM value. Whilst we're not keen to exchange blows with NAMM here in such a public manner, we are concerned by their latest action. Whilst delaying BRAMM's progress, NAMM have devised their own registration scheme and are now promoting it to masons and burial authorities. This has caused much confusion. We're not against healthy competition, but we are conscious that NAMM have failed to properly explain their scheme and under examination it really isn't all it appears. To clarify, we've created the following comparison table to show the major differences between BRAMM and NAMM's new scheme:



ORSE

SO WHAT NOW...? (MASONS)

We appreciate you just want a level playing field and to then get on with earning a living. The less complication and costs in your daily work the better! Ultimately, what is important to you is whether or not you can gain access to your local cemeteries, and how much training and costs are you expected to provide to achieve this? We obviously can't predict which burial authorities will go with which scheme, but we imagine that most would rather be involved with an organisation that values their views. NAMM have opposed and rejected the very people (i.e. the burial authorities) who ultimately control whether you, the mason, has access to burial sites!

We also think it worth highlighting that the NAMM scheme does not recognise all relevant industry qualifications in order to achieve fixer registration. So to join, you may be expected to gain and pay for yet more qualifications, despite already having a BRAMM Fixer Licence.

FIXER LICENCE QUALIFICATIONS

Five years ago if anyone required a qualification in memorial masonry a candidate would consider an NVQ. The National Vocational Qualification requires an assessor to establish if the candidate has reached the required standard or is still working towards the standard. This type of qualification does not produce a pass or fail situation and has proved popular with masons. These awards are still available and are recognised by both BRAMM and NAMM.

When the BRAMM registration scheme was introduced a new test was devised called BFL Accreditation. We created this to offer masons a choice and the opportunity for competent masons to gain a recognised qualification quickly and affordably. The BFL is less expensive and quicker to achieve because it is an exam that provides the candidate with a pass or fail – a significantly different process to the NVQ. The BFL Accreditation covers the same core requirements for practical skills but in addition there is a theory test paper. Arguably some masons consider this a more difficult way to gain a Fixer Licence despite it only requiring a few hours of their time.

With the introduction of the new NAMM registration scheme comes a new way of achieving a Fixer Licence. NAMM are providing an in-house customer award certified by City & Guilds. This could be described as a clone of the existing qualifications, after all there are only so many ways to assess installation skills.

What is concerning is that NAMM will not allow masons who have already obtained a BFL qualification to join their new register, but will offer them the opportunity to take the NAMM qualification at a discount. In another industry this might be considered as 'churning' (creating business). For those masons who have taken a BFL accreditation we say, be proud of what you have achieved. Buying a different piece of paper is both unnecessary and expensive. We are hoping to have the BFL Accreditation certified by BTEC which should resolve this issue.

For those masons without Fixer Licences who choose to take a NAMM qualification, you can be assured that we will be pleased to accept this qualification for a BRAMM Fixer Licence.

QUESTION	BRAMM	NAMM
Do burial authorities have representation on the management board of the scheme?	✓	✗
Is the scheme free to join for burial authorities?	✓	✓
Does the organisation fully support British standards?	✓	✗
Do businesses selling memorials have to be accredited?	✓	✓
Is the scheme policed through an open and transparent complaints referral process?	✓	✗
Is the scheme totally independent and not controlled by a single organisation?	✓	✗
Is comprehensive information available on the scheme?	✓	✗
Is the scheme managed solely by those with a commercial interest?	✗	✓
Is ongoing training and development required for licensed memorial fixers?	✓	✗
Will all relevant industry qualifications be accepted as a route to obtaining fixer registration?	✓	✗

SO WHAT NOW...? (BURIAL AUTHORITIES)

Burial Authorities now have the option to run no registration scheme, to run their own or joint schemes, to join BRAMM AND/OR join the NAMM registration scheme.

The most notable difference with the NAMM scheme is that burial authorities do not have any representation on the management board. To quote the NAMM President: "It was developed by memorial masons, for memorial masons and is administered by memorial masons." *November 2009*. In fact the only reason it exists at all, is because NAMM were unable to dominate the BRAMM board and effectively dictate to burial authorities.

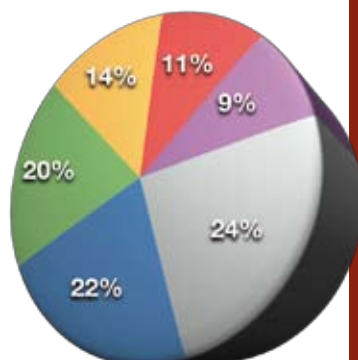
It is also hard to have confidence in the long-term benefits of this new scheme as NAMM are not insisting on any form of on-going training. Furthermore, how will NAMM discipline their members if they break burial authority rules? NAMM is not just a register, but a membership association with a commercial interest. Will they remain impartial?

THREE PRESIDENTS AND A MOVE

When NAMM withdrew from BRAMM it caused two real challenges. Firstly, we rent our office space from within NAMM's head quarters and secondly, it unbalanced the required principle of 'equal representation for burial authorities and memorial masons' on the BRAMM board. Rather than supporting their masons, NAMM has in fact left them under-represented.

To address these problems we have relocated our office (see front cover). We also advertised the empty board seats as an opportunity for interested masons, and an impressive quantity of candidates responded. After short-listing, a ballot was recently held and all BRAMM accredited masonry companies were asked to choose those candidates they wished to represent them. The ballot papers were counted at the last BRAMM board meeting and the vote overseen by an independent adjudicator. The results are as follows:

-  Brian Morgan
-  Jenny Gregson
-  Andrew Hawley
-  David Weatherby
-  John Broom
-  Gordon Newton



We therefore welcome to the Board: Brian Morgan, Jenny Gregson and Andrew Hawley. It is somewhat ironic that all three of these candidates are past presidents of NAMM – we are pleased to gain their skills and experience in order to benefit BRAMM and help us move forward from strength to strength.



BRAMM

BRAMM

2010 MASON TRAINING COURSES

We have arranged five more training courses that are absolutely **FREE** to BRAMM registered masons. These courses can be used to gain credits for extending your BRAMM Fixer Licence. Numbers are limited and some courses are already heavily booked, so please apply early if you are interested in attending.



Installing Memorials Without Cement Joints

Tunbridge Wells – DATE TBC

Included in the day will be a visit to a foundation manufacturer and presentations by two ground anchor manufacturers. *Normal Price = £125*

FREE TO BRAMM REGISTERED MASONS

Installing Memorials to Sloping Ground

South Wales – 3rd March 2010

Presentation by a ground anchor manufacturer. This course is almost fully booked. *Normal Price = £125*

FREE TO BRAMM REGISTERED MASONS

Safety Inspection and Testing of Memorials

Bristol – 6th April 2010
Manchester – 27th May 2010

Material to be covered includes The Ministry of Justice requirements together with matters related to BS8415. We will also be considering the construction of cement free memorials. *Normal Price = £125*

FREE TO BRAMM REGISTERED MASONS

Manufactured Foundations and Their Technical Specifications

Hull – 3rd June 2010

There will be a visit to a manufacturer. We will also be considering the construction of cement free memorials. *Normal Price = £125*

FREE TO BRAMM REGISTERED MASONS

Course information will be kept up-to-date on the website where we will confirm exact venues etc.

TO BOOK, CALL THE BRAMM OFFICE NOW ON:

01788 544963

LOCAL AUTHORITY INTEREST

SAFER CEMETERIES FOR 2010

PROMOTED BY BRAMM

For 2010 BRAMM intends to focus on a development programme promoting Safer Cemeteries by working directly with both local authorities and memorial masons. From January BRAMM will be allocating resources of advice, skills, time and money to the objective of achieving Safer Cemeteries. The project will offer programmes of support to local authorities, cemetery managers, clerks with responsibility for ensuring safe memorial installations and to masons who require a BRAMM Fixer Licence, advice or training. We are now building on the great achievements made over the past five years, with an increasing number of local authorities and masons now registered with and participating in the BRAMM scheme. There are clear benefits of belonging to BRAMM for both of these groups and for the bereaved. These benefits work towards Safer Cemeteries because BRAMM promotes standards of workmanship and accountability.

BENEFITS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The BRAMM scheme will save on clerical time. Time saved can therefore be redirected to other vital tasks. Money saved can be shown as a real benefit for rate payers. The scheme also provides assurance to councillors that best practice is followed. Improved safety and methods of working are often tangible and recognised by all. All information about masons qualifications and the eligibility of masons to install memorials is available online. Fixer Licences, insurance details and risk assessments can also be checked online.

By following the BRAMM scheme, which is national, local authorities can avoid mistakes which have already been addressed by other BRAMM associated authorities in other areas of the country.

BENEFITS FOR MASONS

The one BRAMM registration scheme avoids masons having to register with each and every cemetery before installations can progress. It also avoids paying several cemetery registration fees.

Having a qualification to meet BS8415 has raised standards within the industry.

Requiring a qualification denies incompetent masons access to cemeteries involved in the BRAMM scheme.

BENEFITS FOR THE BEREAVED

The BRAMM scheme also assists the bereaved to select a competent mason for the installation of a memorial thus avoiding unnecessary problems of poor workmanship.

BRAMM OFFERS TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE MEMORIAL INDUSTRY THE OPPORTUNITY FOR WORKING COOPERATIVELY TOGETHER

One of its strengths is that the BRAMM Register and its Board Members now represent all the interests of the memorial industry. There is a wide experience of knowledge and skills on which to draw. This diversity benefits all as we promote the masons valuable skills and the local authorities' role to ensure Safer Cemeteries. Thus we can support the bereaved, for whom the industry exists.

MASONRY SKILLS TO SUPPORT SAFER CEMETERIES

One of the keys to achieving Safer Cemeteries is through enhancing the skills and knowledge of our work force. Many hundreds of masons have taken training to achieve their Fixer Licence. This should be seen as a resounding credit to the masons and to this industry.

Through BRAMM subsidies, professional courses are available for memorial masons to gain their BRAMM Fixer Licences.

Impartial advice is also available to masons selecting appropriate qualification routes, to gain their BRAMM Fixer Licence.

Masons who have held a Fixer Licence for three years are offered free courses to extend their experience of fixing memorials.

An additional article about memorial masonry qualifications for a BRAMM Fixers Licence can be found within this issue (see inside).

COURSES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO SUPPORT SAFER CEMETERIES

Knowledge relating to the installation of memorials is essential for any cemetery operatives. Local Authority Employees cannot contribute to maintaining safe standards if they do not understand the industry requirements.

- 1 BRAMM offers a course specifically based on the fundamentals of understanding the construction and installation of a lawn memorial in accordance with the British Standard 8415. It also covers practical risk assessments and related health and safety issues.
- 2 Cemeteries throughout the country vary in age, size, types of location and condition. BRAMM recognises the many issues cemetery managers encounter. A course on maintaining a Safe Cemetery Environment is available and this also covers understanding the assessment of memorial structures and their materials.
- 3 For administrators with the responsibility of implementing the BRAMM Scheme, there is free advice and assistance.

All trainers are from within the memorial industry with appropriate qualifications and all have been delivering courses to this industry for several years.

Clearly there is much on offer through BRAMM and we hope you will embrace the programme of activities working towards Safer Cemeteries for 2010. If you are interested in any courses, registering your cemetery to operate under the BRAMM scheme or for any aspects of this article please contact the BRAMM office.

BRAMM Development Officer – David Quinn



If you know someone who would benefit from this newsletter, please send us their contact information and we will send a copy directly.