

## The Mark Internet Lodge visits Romania – Jul 2017

As the Mark Provincial season draws to a close most brethren think about gardening, holidays, family visits and a quiet summer of rest and reflection. Not so the Mark Province of Monmouthshire. Since the consecration in June last year of the Mark Internet Lodge 1975, and the advancement of five Romanian Brethren last November, there has been an upsurge of interest in the Mark Degree by Craft brethren in Romania.

This interest led to 62 applications for advancement into The Mark Internet Lodge. It seemed impractical to bring so many people to the UK so a plan was conceived to enable the Romanian brothers to achieve their ambition. First, the PGM, DPGM, Deputy Grand Secretary of the day and the WM of the Mark internet Lodge travelled to Bucharest. This was a fact-finding mission to establish the scale of the task and touch base with key individuals. As a result, a plan was devised consisting of tasks and time scales. In Bucharest, Bro Christian Mihoutu co-ordinated the completion of application forms, and under the guidance of MW Grand Master Radu Balanescu, made arrangements for accommodation, and the prospective venue.

At the UK end, equipment was manufactured for transit to Romania, and two teams were nominated to conduct the ceremonies. It was decided that The Mark internet lodge team would conduct a ceremony of advancement with a cohort of 32 Advancees and on the following day members of the Romanian Craft Grand Lodge numbering 30 including the MW Grand Master would be advanced by a provincial team led by the Provincial Grand Master.

And so it was that in July 2017, Mark Masons from the Mark internet Lodge and the Mon Mark Provincial team, many accompanied by their partners, travelled across Europe to Romania.



They were accommodated magnificently in a large hotel and after a days recuperation set to work.

On Tuesday 11th of July the UK members converged on the meeting place of a Romanian craft lodge and set to work. A Mark lodge was set up and a rehearsal was held. There was a power cut and with the air con failing, the temperature within the meeting room rose to 37 degrees. The PGM decreed shirt sleeve order. Then, in a ceremony led by W.Bro Roy Morris thirty Romanian Brethren were advanced in an historic ceremony.



No air con so too hot for jackets!!







W. Bro Roy Morris – The 1<sup>st</sup> WM of The Mark Internet Lodge



RW Bro Mike Whelan, VW Bro David Powell & RW Bro Derek Thomas

That, however, was only part one. The following day, power restored, the second cohort was advanced in style by a Provincial team led by R.W Brother Derek Thomas, PGM of Monmouthshire. As well as his own officers, he was assisted by RW Bro Mike Whelan, PGM of Dorset and W.Bro Richard Paisley ProvGChSt of Dorset.



Monmouthshire Provincial Team





TMIL Team

Masonically, the week was a momentous occasion, but the story does not end there. Plans are now being made to advance up to one hundred new brethren in Romania, even to consecrating Romanian Lodges. The sky, appears to be the limit at the hour of writing. Time will tell!







And the ladies enjoyed themselves too. Tours were set up, by our Romanian Brethren, of some of the sightseeing highlights of Bucharest.



Not to mention a special dinner dance organised at the hotel with a superb meal, and plenty of wine flowing meant a great evening was enjoyed by all.







RW Bro. Derek Thomas & MW Grand Master Radu Balanescu