In the UK’s ever increasing ‘blame culture’, most industries now face some level of regulation. With so many examples of poor workmanship in our cemeteries and churchyards and the resulting injuries to members of the public, it is little wonder that eyebrows have been raised with regard to memorial masons.

In such circumstances, it is not uncommon for the Government to step in and take charge. This would typically lead to a costly blanket regulation across the whole industry, resulting in huge expense to masons, excessive paperwork and plenty of red tape.

It is to avoid this external Government intervention, that the BRAMM scheme exists. We are here solely to improve and maintain standards to an acceptable level. The BRAMM board is made up of volunteers from within the industry and this, unlike any Government body, is of huge advantage to masons and burial authorities alike. Firstly we understand our own industry and the needs and challenges that exist. Secondly, we encourage opinions and participation from you. With BRAMM regulation, you can help direct the future of your industry.

To maintain this situation, BRAMM needs the support of burial authorities and most importantly a willingness from masons to get involved. Yes, there are some costs, but these are minimal – we’re not trying to profiteer from the scheme. Of course there is some paperwork – but we plan that once the scheme is fully adopted nationwide you’ll actually see less paperwork than having multiple authority contracts. Inevitably there is some red tape – but only as needed to improve standards to an acceptable level.

With your support and the inter-activity made possible through our website we are developing a really effective regulation scheme. Reputable masons have little to worry about and burial authorities gain instant access to up-to-date information. So please support our efforts by participating and getting involved and most importantly, preventing the need for Governmental regulation.
PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS WITH BRAMM
PROMOTE BRAMM WITH YOUR BUSINESS

Many masons are now using their BRAMM accreditation as a marketing tool to promote their business. The association sends a clear message that the mason's company is forward-thinking and responsible – it adds credibility, confidence and helps build trust.

By the same token, accredited masons need to help promote BRAMM to burial authorities if they are to get the most out of the scheme. Many authorities have joined BRAMM, but some are still dragging their heels – failing to see the clear advantages of membership. If, as an accredited mason, authorities in your area are not getting involved, this is clearly detrimental to you. What it means is that the authority is either quite happy to stick to their own regulation scheme, which just creates more paperwork for you, or they're happy to let in 'any old jack' to work in their burial grounds. In addition to our activities to recruit these authorities, it's the accredited masons who probably have the most sway. You've put the effort in to up your game, so why aren’t you being supported by the authority? Why not ask them this question?! If enough reputable companies encourage their authorities and parish councils to sign up, it makes life more difficult for less-reputable masons who get away with under-cutting you (on a white background) or as an Adobe Illustrator (ai) file. It is clear that some masons are now using their BRAMM accreditation as a promotional tool to help market themselves.

MAKE THE MOST OF OUR LOGO

The BRAMM logo forms a major part of our identity, and can be used to promote the businesses of accredited masons. When you promote yourself in press adverts or just on your stationery, remember to incorporate our logo into the design, sending a clear message that the mason's company is forward-thinking and responsible – it adds credibility, confidence and helps build trust.

Do you have the skills to enthuse others?

We need a positive and dynamic character to promote BRAMM and help increase its success. You will need to have a sound understanding of the memorial mason's industry, great organisational and marketing skills and be prepared to travel throughout the UK.

BRAMM'S RELATIONSHIP TO NAMM?

BRAMM is essentially the regulatory body for the memorial mason’s industry that NAMM, amongst many others, have always wanted. As such, NAMM are very supportive of the BRAMM scheme and have helped to facilitate it. It is no secret that NAMM provides administration facilities (staff, premises etc.), to aid BRAMMs operation. For example, when the BRAMM website was first launched it was done so within the NAMM website, the BRAMM email address still clearly demonstrates this.

So, whilst there is a strong connection between these two bodies, it is wrong to consider that BRAMM is ’in the pockets’ of NAMM. We must be clear that BRAMM is independent. It has its own finances and pays for the facilities it uses and the activities it pursues. Most importantly BRAMM has its own board of volunteers from all sectors of the industry (including representation from NAMM and Non-NAMM members). BRAMM, as a body, is therefore able to have its own opinions and directives separate from NAMM.

The BRAMM board

• Jenny Gregson (Chair) – NAMM representative
• Ian Hale (Vice Chair) – representing Non-NAMM member masons
• Mark Boulton – NAMM representative
• Alan Lawrence – NAMM representative
• Tim Morris – ICCM Corporate
• John Rotherham – FBCA
• Alan Fairchild MBE – SLCC
• Chancellor George Pulman QC – Ecclesiastical Judges Assoc.

WELSH SEMINAR (SEPT 2008):

We’ve now held seminars in the SouthWest and Wales, and are now planning future meetings in the NorthEast and the South of the country. We’ll keep you up-to-date with the plans for these events, and urge both masons and burial authorities to come along and join in.

Send us your questions, adverts or information and we’ll endeavour to publish them in the next newsletter.

Email: bramm@namm.org.uk
A BIG WELCOME TO RECENTLY JOINED BURIAL AUTHORITIES

Much Hoole Burial Ground .............. Preston, Lancashire
Barry Town Council ..................... Barry, Wales
Tonyrefail & District Community Council . . . Tonyrefail, Nr Porth, Wales
Nottingham City Council ................ Nottinghamshire
Stafford Borough Council ................ Staffordshire
Ely City Council .......................... Ely, Cambridgeshire
Barnstaple Town Council ............... Barnstaple, Devon
Dartford Borough Council ............... Dartford, Kent
Earley Town Council .................... Reading, Berkshire
Farnham Town Council .................. Farnham, Surrey
Hertford Town Council ................... Hertford, Hertfordshire
Medway Council .......................... Chatham, Kent
Rother District Council ................... Boxhill on Sea, Essex
Sturry Parish Council ................... Canterbury, Kent
Three Rivers District Council .......... Rickmansworth, Herts
Blakesley Parish Council ............... Towcester, Northamptonshire
Bournemouth Borough Council ....... Bournemouth, Dorset

SIGN UP NOW! CALL: 01788 544 963

SIGNING UP TO BRAMM A BURIAL AUTHORITY’S PERSPECTIVE

In Autumn 2005 Sedgemoor District Council embarked on a significant investment project to extend and upgrade our two cemeteries, to provide future burial plots for the next 25–30 years.

It was at this time, during discussions and meetings with other burial authorities and local masons that we became aware of the BRAMM scheme. We incorporated BRAMM into our new rules and regulations ensuring our standards as a Burial Authority are nationally accepted.

We now require all masons working in our cemeteries to be registered with BRAMM. This is easy to regulate with instant access to the BRAMM electronic register (on their website). It is a straight-forward process to check if masons who require permits to work in our cemeteries are registered and have current fixer licences. The BRAMM website also provides lots of useful information, including downloads such as Health and Safety issues and answers to a list of frequently asked questions. There are also links to other relevant organisations such as NAMM and the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authority.

It is clear that as a Burial Authority joining part of a national registration scheme, our actions will eventually lead to safer burial grounds. We now look to BRAMM to provide guidance to help improve safety standards for the fixing of memorials.

It is also very helpful to be able to contact BRAMM for advice, as some Cemetery Officers are quite often isolated being the only one employed by an Authority.

Having completed our project, it was recognised with a National Green Apple award, receiving a Gold award under the Built Environment and Architectural Heritage Category.

Val Colwill, Cemeteries Officer, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset

ARMISTICE DAY SERVICE

“Lest We Forget”

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM, ALREWAS

11 NOVEMBER 2008

Ian Gostling (National Executive Officer) and Lisa Jones (Senior Administration Officer) of NAMM were invited as VIP guests to the 90th Anniversary of the Armistice. The commemorative service was in the presence of HRH Prince Michael of Kent, HRH Princess Michael of Kent and Right Honourable Bob Ainsworth MP Minister of State for the Armed Forces.

A fanfare by The Band of HM Royal Marines (Plymouth) commenced the service at the National Armed Forces Memorial.

There were some poignant hymns and solemn prayers to commemorate those servicemen and women that had lost their lives at war.

The Last Post was played and at 11:00am the sun shone through the gap in the commemorative wall, which lit up the centre plinth (the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month).

Wreath laying by the Royal Party, other organisations and individuals followed.

For the finale a Musical Parade and a spectacular Flypast Triple Tornado took place with a salute by HRH Honorary Rear Admiral Prince Michael of Kent.

The NAMM Centenary Garden is a major component of the National Memorial Arboretum with more than 150 memorials at the site devoted to the concept of remembrance. Please pay a visit. The National Memorial Arboretum website: www.thenma.org.uk

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