

ISSUE 14 – After the War

The war has thankfully come to an end and the Province is poised to consolidate and grow. Unfortunately, in 1946 the PGM RW Eaton Passed away and a replacement had to be found. At an especial meeting of PGL on Tuesday 24 September 1946 VW Bro Richard Mason Hadley was Installed as the new PGM. The Installing Officer was RW Bro. The Earl of Harwood, PPGM of West Yorkshire who was deputising for the Grand Master who was unable to attend owing to illness.

After the Ceremony, The Installing Officer referred to the passing away of the late RW PGM and reminded the Brethren that there had only been four PGM's during the past sixty years of the Province. He said that the Province was to be congratulated on that fact and in those who had served the Province in that capacity – each of them were ardent and prominent Masons.

Following the Installation Ceremony, the RWPGM announced the appointment of W Bro George Henry Biscoe, PAGDC, as DPGM. He was then Obligated, Invested and Installed into the chair of DPGM. In his address the PGM hoped that in the near future, additional Lodges would be Consecrated, so as to bring the number of Lodges to twelve, which he felt was a reasonable number for the Province to support.

The sixty third annual meeting of PGL was held on Saturday 14 June 1947, presided over by the PGM who in his address congratulated W Bro Vernon Grosvenor on his being honoured with the rank of PAGDC and W Bro Wm S Burton with the rank of PAGStB. During the past years, the Province had, at the annual meetings of PGL, enjoyed the support of the Rulers of the adjacent Provinces with which there were friendly relations, as well as with a number of Provinces further afield, in fact other Provinces had been well supported by the Province when they presided at the Mark Benevolent Festivals. Other bodies had support from the Alms collected at the PGL meetings, among them being the Wolverhampton School and the Royal Albert Orphanage at Worcester.



A photo of a group of former orphans at the Orphanage taken in 1988. The building then became the YMCA and was finally sold in 2017. Some of the former residents above recalled their times at the orphanage.

"Well it made a man/woman out of you, didn't it?" And to be fair everyone survived and took the smooth with the sometimes very rough.

Discipline was severe, corporal punishment frequent and the youngsters were compelled to undertake numerous hard and menial tasks.

In the late 1940s headmaster "Gaffer" Smith wielded his sawn-off billiard cue and delivered blows cross the hands of boys to leave two-inch wide weals. Boys and girls received "six of the best" after being kept waiting trembling for at least an hour in the corridor outside the head's office.

There were plenty of lashes with a stick and former pupil David Wilks well remembered receiving 23 blows and having blood seeping from the wounds for days.

His "crime" was failing to pick up stones in the playground. There was furious scrubbing every morning and evening as the boys and girls got on their hands and knees to wash their allotted section of floor throughout the orphanage.

And they called it the 'Good Old Days'

Anyway, where was I..... Although there had been no Consecrations of new Mark Lodges since the Installation of the PGM, the early months of 1948 saw a strengthening of the RAM Degree in the Province. On Tuesday 25 May the Vernon Lodge of RAM No923 was Consecrated at the Masonic Hall, Stourport on Severn. RW Bro RM Hadley presided assisted by the DPGM. It is of particular interest to note the following Brethren amongst those in the Consecrating team, W Bro FH Griffiths as ADC and W Bro Frank Clifford as Guardian. Bro Rev JE Grosvenor was the first WC. It was resolved at the Consecration that the Lodge become a Keystone Lodge. Though at previous Consecrations it appeared that Consecrating Officers Jewels were presented, at this Consecration is the first record of Honorary Membership being given to the Consecrating Officers, in this case the PGM and his Deputy.

Although 1948 had been a happy year for the Province, Mark Masonry in general was saddened by the announcement of the death of the Grand Master, MW Bro The Earl of Stradbroke, having held the Office for some thirty years.



It was reported in June 1948 that he had passed away in December 1947.

In 1948 it was reported that with nine Mark Lodges there were 405 Mark Masons and with eight RAM Lodges having a membership of 254. This year also saw the death of the PGM in the Craft, RW Bro General Sir Francis Davies who had been a member of Lechmere Mark Lodge No59.

At the sixty fifth meeting of PGL it was reported that the Province would have an increase in the number of Mark Lodges as two were now in the process of being formed. The latter half of 1949 saw the Consecration of The St Egwin Lodge of MMM's No 1135, a Daughter Lodge of Lechmere No59, which took place at Evesham on Saturday 12 November. The Lodge was Consecrated by the RWPGM assisted by the DPGM. The PGM opened a PGL and after being saluted, thanked the Brethren for their support, especially RW Bro RB Mummery PGM for Staffs and Shrops and VW Bro DG Price DPGM for Warwickshire. Following the Consecration, the PGM vacated his seat to VW Bro John Hill who Installed VW Bro George Henry Biscoe as the Lodges first Master. Thus, this new Lodge was privileged to have the DPGM to preside over them for their first year. Two other distinguished Brethren were then appointed and Invested as the two Wardens, W Bro Leonard Walter Parker PPGW and W Bro James Hughes a PPGSwBr in Gloucestershire and over which he eventually became PGM in the Mark in 1982. Several members of the Consecrating team were proposed as Honorary Members, which now seemed to be the custom.

Thirteen days later on 25 November 1949 the Consecration of the Mosaic Lodge of MMM's No 1136 took place at the Masonic Hall in Dudley. The same Consecration team that was at Evesham attended together with 62 other Brethren. Following the Consecration, the Provincial Grand Master handed over the chair to the DPGM who Installed the first Master of the Lodge, W Bro Percy Harold Buckler, the then current Provincial Grand Treasurer. The WM then appointed and Invested his Officers. One of note was the Chaplain, Bro Ben Marsh, who became the Grandfather in Law of our Present PGM, RW Bro Eric Rymer. As has now certainly become the custom, a number of the Consecrating Team were proposed as Honorary Members. As in the case of St Egwin Lodge, it was resolved to become a Keystone Lodge

On Sunday 28 May 1950 the Province suffered the sad loss with the death of the PGM, RW Bro Richard Mason Hadley. He had been a Mark Mason for over 42 years and for the last 22 years of his life had been the Treasurer of the Athlumney Lodge of Mark and RAM Lodges.

The sixty sixth meeting of PGL was held on Saturday 10 June 1950 when the DPGM presided. Tributes were paid on this sad occasion, not only by the DPGM in Charge, but by his Friends and colleagues from neighbouring Provinces.

W Bro Jeff Whiteley PGSD, DPGM