

ISSUE 15 – Ten years of slow growth

Following the sad death of the RWPGM RM Hadley on 28 May 1950 his replacement, W Bro VW Grosvenor took place on 01 November 1950 at Kings Heath. The MW Grand Master presided assisted by the Grand Secretary and in the presence of one hundred and twenty-seven Brethren. The Brethren being assembled and including thirty-five actually from Worcestershire, the Grand Director of Ceremonies called them to order while RW Bro Ben Marsh, PGM in the Craft for Worcestershire was escorted into the Lodge. You may remember from Issue 14 that Ben Marsh became founding Chaplain of Mosaic Lodge on 25 November 1949 and he was also the Grandfather in Law of our present PGM RW Bro Eric Rymer. During the Installation Ceremony the Grand Master reminded the Brethren that Worcestershire is a Keystone Province and one which had increased from nine Lodges to eleven during the course of his rule thus far. Following the Installation, the new PGM announced that he had appointed W Bro William Samuel Burton PGD as DPGM. The Patent relating to this appointment was then read and W Bro Burton was Obligated, Invested and Installed into his chair.

Among the Officers appointed to assist the Grand Master in the Installation was a name of interest to many Worcestershire Masons today, W Bro HE Clive PAGDC who acted as Inner Guard for the Installation. Herbert Clive, most of whose life was spent in and around Birmingham, was an Initiate of the Royds Lodge No1204 meeting at Malvern, being Installed into the chair of that Lodge at the age of just thirty six. Always a genial and witty talker, W Bro Clive used to speak with joyous recall and zest of his early years as a Mason in Malvern and of dinner jackets being worn at every Lodge meeting. He recalled travelling from Snow Hill station in Birmingham to Great Malvern by train, and of changing into his evening wear on the train. He revelled in his recollections of Installations at which champagne was the staple drink and celebrations which went on until midnight. Please take note Malvern Priory, I've put my name down to attend your next Installation.

Those who have visited the Lodge room at Malvern must have noticed that the walls are decorated with photographs giving an unbroken line of Masters of Royds Lodge from its Consecration, I wonder if that is still the case up to the present day? Two pictures of W Bro Clive appear, the first in chronological order in the series and the other shows him wearing his regalia as a WM and shows him as a slim, dark haired, sharp eyed young man, facially not unlike Dudley Moore.



The sixtyseventh annual meeting of PGL held at Kings Heath on 09 June 1951 was notable for the presentation of a cheque to VW Bro GH Biscoe. This represented money collected throughout the Province and expressive of the appreciation felt by all the Brethren for the work he had done as DPGM. VW Bro Biscoe made a suitable expression of his pleasure and thanks and then went on to say: - 'RWPGM, I want to tell you of the use I intend to make of this cheque. As you know I am interested in the Royal Albert Orphanage at Worcester, and with this gift I intend to establish, using also other monies, a small fund to provide for a boy and girl each year so that others may share in the benefit and pleasure of this gift.'

The PGM once again made an appeal for the Brethren to look for opportunities for establishing Mark Lodges in centres where none existed. He reinforced this by appealing to the new Provincial Officers with the words: - 'Do not consider this appointment as the apex of your ambition, but rather as a stepping stone to greater effort.'

Of course, in 1952 at the PGL meeting on 14 June the PGM spoke fleetingly of the loss of the Monarch, King George. He remarked that the Reign had started of a Lady educated to the task, and that she carried the good wishes of all her subjects, particularly those who were Masons. Well, those good wishes certainly worked.

The following year PGL met at Dudley on Saturday 13 June 1953. It is worth noting that commencing with the years of World War II, the custom had become firmly established to hold this meeting in June, and on a Saturday afternoon. The original reason for this had been that during those years 'Double Summer Time' had been established, running from spring to autumn, whilst for the remaining part of those years the normal daylight saving arrangements we are normally used to having during the summer prevailed from the autumn to the spring equinoxes. In introducing this the War Cabinet was attempting to help the population to travel and work as far as possible in daylight, thus minimising the amount of travel in blackout. A Saturday afternoon meeting in June therefore ensured that members could get home well before dark. Now you all know why we have our PGL meeting in June and on a Saturday.

1953 also saw the sad loss of VW Bro GH Biscoe PDPGM and first Master of St Egwins Lodge No.1135.

The next couple of years were rather uneventful but at the seventy first meeting of PGL held at Halesowen on Saturday 09 June 1956, the PGM was able to report on the proceedings of the Centenary meeting which had taken place four days previously on 05 June. Celebrating the fact that the Grand Mark Lodge was one hundred years old was clearly a signal event for Mark Master Masons everywhere and marked by the distribution of a printed pamphlet which the PGM strongly recommended. Does anyone know of a copy of this pamphlet?

At the seventyfourth PGL meeting held at the Public Hall, Evesham on Saturday 07 June 1958, VW Bro WS Burton presided as the PGM was absent due to illness. VW Bro HE Clive officiated as DPGM. Also at the seventyfifth PGL meeting once again we see the same combination of Burton and Clive as acting in their capacities of the previous year although the following year, 1960, the PGM did preside over the PGL meeting held at Kings Heath on 11 June 1960.

On 21 October 1960, a decade of Consecrations was marked by the first of these, that of Eaton Lodge of RAM at Kings Heath. Due to continuing ill health the PGM was unable to attend, and so VW Bro WS Burton, DPGM acted as Consecrating Officer. He also announced that due to his ill health, the PGM had resigned his Office on the 17 October.

At the Consecration some Officers taking part in the Ceremony are worthy of note and may be remembered by Brethren today. VW Bro JE Grosvenor was at the time of this Consecration the Grand Superintendent for Worcestershire in the Royal Arch, he acted as Chaplain. The Warder for the Consecration was Bro EG Davies who was a character and will be well remembered as the resident Tyler at the Masonic Hall in Worcester. The DPGM in Charge, and Consecrating Officer, addressed the Brethren on the motive for the Meeting and read the following: - 'In the year 1940, RW Bro Eaton Consecrated a Mark Lodge and he was held in such high esteem that Grand Lodge, in spite of the ruling that no living Freemason's name could be used, sanctioned the name to be the Eaton Lodge. During the years since there has been a wish among some of its members for a RAM Lodge to be attached to it, and of course, bearing his name.' Prior to the application for the Warrant it was realised that the PGM might not be able to perform the Ceremony, and consequently that duty would fall upon his Deputy. The DPGM had been pressed to accept Office in the new Lodge even though it was contrary to the wishes of Grand Lodge for the Consecrating Officer to be a Founder. This was submitted to Grand Lodge and the Grand Secretary wrote saying that after discussion with the President of the General Board and other Brethren, it was decided that in view of all the circumstances they felt it reasonable for the Deputy to proceed as Consecrating Officer, in spite of his name being on the Warrant as a Petitioner. The first WCN appointed was Bro Geoffrey Edwin Minshaw, the DPGM was Invested as the Chaplain.

This Consecration took the number of RAM Lodges in the Province to nine.

W Bro Jeff Whiteley PGSD, DPGM