

Issue 8 – The Growth of the Province.

Even though the Brethren of the Province recommended VW Bro Abraham Green to be the next PGM following the death of RW Bro A Godson, Grand Lodge decided that Lord Athlumney should be the next in line. There must have been many Brethren in the Province who would have mixed feelings on his appointment as Supreme Ruler over the Mark Master Masons of Worcestershire, on the grounds that he was a Brother who was little known to the members in this part of the country.

James Herbert Gustavus Meredyth Somerville Athlumney Baron Athlumney of Ireland and Baron Meredyth of the United Kingdom was born on 23 March 1865 and educated at Harrow. He pursued a military career, being commissioned in the Coldstream Guards and later serving with distinction in the Sudan and in the Dongola Expedition of 1896.

His Masonic career began with his Initiation into Drury Lane Lodge No.2127 after which he became a founder member of Athlumney Lodge No.3245, becoming its WM in 1907. In the same year he became Grand Junior Warden in the United Grand Lodge of England. He also became a Founder of the Athlumney Chapter and in 1909 appointed Grand Scribe N in the Supreme Grand Chapter of England. His Mark career was also as spectacular as his Craft and RA. He was Advanced into Dramatic Mark Lodge No.487 and appointed to Grand Junior Warden before he had become WM of his Lodge.

His Installation as PGM took place on Friday 19 April 1907 at the Masonic Hall in Worcester. The Provincial Grand Lodge was opened by VW Bro Abraham Green, DPGM in Charge. He then welcomed the MW Pro Grand Master, the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Euston who conducted the ceremony of Installation of the new PGM. The new PGM then appointed and Installed VW Bro Abraham Green as his DPGM.

Within a month of being Installed as PGM, the long awaited third Lodge in the Province was Consecrated on the 24 May 1907, it was called the Athlumney Mark Lodge No.590. There were 27 Founder Members of this Lodge and as a result there was quite an improvement in the membership of the Province which was reported at 90.

A memorial fund was set up in the name of the late PGM Sir AF Godson, the proceeds were to go for the purpose of putting a stained-glass window in the Priory church Malvern in memory of him. If anyone has a photograph of this window, I would like a copy.

In 1909 there was still further but slight increase in the number of Brethren in the Mark Degree and the attendances of PGL were improving. Although the PGM lived in London he attended the Installations of each Lodge in the Province.

At the PGL meeting held in Dudley on 30 November 1910, the PGM referred to the loss Masonry had sustained in the lamented death of King Edward VII of blessed memory and directed that the sympathy and regret of PGL be recorded in the minutes.

In 1911 the PGL met at Worcester. The PGM informed the Brethren that since their last meeting VW Bro Abraham Green had resigned as DPGM, an Office he had held from 1891-1902 and again from 1905-1910. During that period, he had worked assiduously to promote the best interests of

the degree. VW Bro William Thomas Page was duly Obligated Invested and Installed as the new DPGM.

At the next PGL meeting held at Oldbury on 8 November 1912 that a further Royal Ark Mariners Lodge had been Consecrated on the 12 September and named the Athlumney Royal Ark Mariners Lodge No.590. The first Worshipful Commander being, the PGM RW Bro Lord Athlumney.

In 1913 the state of the Province reported there were 81 members in the Mark Degree and of these 63 were Royal Ark Mariners. Of course in 1914 the outbreak of the first world war meant that the next four years were to be a difficult time for the Masonic Fraternity, a little like the situation we find ourselves in at this time. At the PGL meeting held in Worcester on 19 November 1914 W Bro WT Page presided and reported that the PGM was absent due to being on active service. He did not preside at a PGL again until 4 November 1917.

In the minutes of PGL for 1916-1917, we find that the Province took an important step forward that year when on the 10 September 1917 the Moseley Lodge No.667 with 37 Founders was Consecrated in the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute making four Lodges in the Province. A choice had to be made between four different names suggested. These included 'Masefield', 'Arter' and East Worcestershire Lodge was voted upon but defeated. In the end the more territorial name of Moseley was chosen.

At a meeting of sixteen Brethren at the Imperial Hotel, Birmingham on 16 July 1917 it was disclosed that the Hertford Military Lodge of MMM No.408 had offered the facilities of their Lodge to Advance Candidates so they could become founders of the new proposed Lodge. This Lodge met on 23 July and fourteen Candidates were balloted, elected and Advanced. All Of these with the exception of one are named as among the 37 Founders. Their meeting in November was well supported with 28 members, 11 visitors present. A ballot was taken for five Candidates for Advancement. The following fees had been adopted:- Inclusive of advancement fee; 2 guineas, Joining fee; 1 guinea, Annual subscription; 1 ½ guineas, dining fee; 7s6d at Installations and 5s at ordinary meetings.

At this period the Moseley Masonic Hall Company was in the course of formation and the Lodge approved a resolution to invest £5 from Lodge funds in the company.

In this year the DPGM moved a resolution that the RW Bro Lord Athlumney be reappointed as PGM for a further three years. This was seconded by the Provincial GSW and carried unanimously. His reappointment was not to last long, for in November 1918, the Provincial Grand Secretary was to receive a letter dated 16 November 1918 which informed the Brethren that circumstances had arisen which would entail the PGM having to spend a large proportion of his time in the future in Ireland and it was not his wish to be a figure head. His letter did not mention anything about him getting married, but later minutes show he was presented with a 'fine Worcester China Coffee Service' being presented to him from the Province on his marriage. Following this we learn that VW Bro WT Page had received a letter offering him the position of PGM which he had been pleased to accept.

W Bro Jeff Whiteley DPGM