

Devolution of the Province of Worcestershire.

The V. E. Provincial Prior, Sir Augustus Frederick Godson died on the 11th. day of October 1906.

On the 26th. October 1906 there was held a Special Meeting of Provincial Priory at which the following letter from the Great Vice Chancellor was read:-

Great Vice Chancellors Office  
Great Queen Street,  
London W.C.  
24th. October 1906.

The E. Bro. Knight Abraham Green.  
Provincial Sub-Prior in charge.

Dear Sir and Bro. Knight,

I have received the command of His Eminence the Grand Master to inform you that he has been pleased to amalgamate the Provincial Priory of Worcestershire with the Provincial Priory of Staffordshire and Warwickshire and that the Preceptories of Richard de Vernon and St Amand are placed under the rule of V. E. Knight Col. G. Walton Walker M.C.T. Provincial Prior.

By command of His Eminence all past rank will be recognised and I should offer my best wishes for the prosperity of the Order under the new rule.

I am yours fraternally,  
C. F. Matier G.V.C.

On the letter being read, a long and animated discussion ensued on the purpose thereof, and at the sudden and unexpected development of events following so closely on the demise of the late and much esteemed Provincial Prior. The same being done without the slightest intimation of any change about to be made.

A strong feeling of disapproval being expressed by the Knights present at the surrender their power as a Province after being in existence for the space of 48 years.

It was resolved on the motion of the E. Bro. Knight D. J. Shedden and seconded by the E. Bro. Knight Cap. J. W. Roberts "That the letter announcing the commands of the Most Eminent Supreme Grand Master be acknowledged and the following resolution thereon be conveyed by the Provincial Registrar to the Great Vice Chancellor".

I should think this meeting on 26 Oct. was out of order as a meeting of Prov. Priory which was dissolved by the Gt. V. Chancellors letter of the 24th.

Chapter House, Dudley.  
October 26th. 1906.

Dear Sir and V. E. Bro. Knight,

At an especial Meeting of the Provincial Priory of Worcestershire, convened and holden at Dudley on Friday the 26th. day of October 1906.

I am desired to convey to you the following resolution emanating from the throne and unanimously adopted by the knights in conclave assembled :-

That with all due respect, they beg to acknowledge your letter of the 24th. inst. to the V. E. Bro. Kt. A. Green the Provincial Sub Prior in charge announcing the commands of the Most Emt. and Supreme Grand Master of the amalgamation of the Province of Worcestershire with that of Staffordshire and Warwickshire under the rule of the V. E. Bro. Knight Col. J. Walton Walker K. C. T.

The intelligence of which has come upon them as a great surprise, and therefore received by them with a manifestation of displeasure, and with a strong element of protestation at what to them seemingly appears a want of regard and consideration in a matter of such supreme importance to them.

They are also of opinion and consider themselves entitled to some little degree of dignity in a matter so vitally important to their future welfare.

And that whilst bending to the will and ruling of the M. E. and supreme Grand Master they desire that his Eminence will be pleased to permit this Province to rank in precedence in the Order as a registered Priory in the books of the Great Priory.

And furthermore they would most respectfully remind the M. E. and Supreme Grand Master of the long and invaluable service rendered to this Province by the V. E. Knight Abraham Green the Provincial Sub Prior whose appointment dates from the 6th. day of June 1888 during which period a happy relationship has existed, and much unanimity of good fellowship so conducive to the well being of the Order has predominated.

They therefore pray that it may please the M. E. and Supreme Grand Master that his services in that capacity may be retained in the United Provinces.

I am Sir and V. E. Bro. Knight,  
Yours faithfully & fraternally,

W. S. Shepley.

C. F. Matier Esq.,  
G. V. C.

Great Vice Chancellors Office.  
London W.C.

31st, October 1906.

E. Knight W. Shepley,  
Dudley.

Sir and Brother Knight,

I am directed by his Eminence the Grand Master to say that he does not see any reason to alter his decision which has been already communicated to the late Sub Prior E. Knight A Green.

The name of the Provincial Priory will include Worcester-shire.

And it is sincerely hoped that from the amalgamation of the two Provinces under the genial rule of Col. G. Walton Walker a large increase and prosperity and numbers may result and which could not possibly be the case with a Provincial Priory of Two Preceptories and Thirty Knights.

The Provincial Prior of course appoints his Provincial Officers as he sees fit.

I am yours fraternally,

G. F. Matier  
G. V. C.

There is no further reference to this matter in the Minutes of Richard de Vernon Preceptory but there are two letters interleaved, copies are below.

The Firs, Birmingham Road,  
West Bromwich.  
Feb. 5th. 1907.

Dear Bro. Knight Shepley,

I am sorry I cannot attend your Preceptory to-morrow. I intended to be present but an important business appointment will prevent me.

Please apologise to the Knights for my absence and say how pleased I should have been to have attended and made my first visit since the Preceptory had come under my rule. I shall be obliged if you will explain to them that, although I thoroughly appreciate the honour of having so distinguished a Preceptory added to those already in the Provincial Priory over which I am the head, I did not apply for this to be done because I feel that Worcestershire would have preferred to be a separate Provincial Priory as heretofore or at any rate would wish to have been consulted before a change was made. The first intimation I had was a letter from the Great Vice Chancellor stating that the Grand Master would not appoint a Provincial Prior to a Province in which there were not at least three Preceptories, and that it had been decided to add Worcestershire to Staffordshire & Warwickshire.

I hope to visit as soon and as often as possible and trust we shall spend many pleasant evenings together.

Yours Fraternally,  
G. Walton Walker. Prov. Prior

E. Knight W. S. Shepley.

King Street,  
Dudley.

2nd. Feby. 1907.

Dear Sir Knight Shepley,

I am duly in receipt of Circular convening meeting of the Richard de Vernon Preceptory. It is not my intention to attend Knight Templary any more, as I object to being forced out of my own Province, more particularly the manner in which it has been done, consequently kindly tender my resignation.

In taking my leave of the members of Richard de Vernon, who have always helped me in every possible way, I wish them every success and prosperity.

With fraternal regards

I am

Yours faithfully

Abraham Green.

W. S. Shepley Esqr.  
Wordsley.

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After the formation of Provincial Priory in 1857 there is very little information in our minutes with regard to it. It is recorded that Prov. Priory was held in the Richard de Vernon Preceptory on the following dates :-

Ist. Oct. 1862.	6th. Oct. 1865.
Ist. June 1883.	5th. Nov. 1884.
Ist. Oct. 1886.	6th. June 1888.
3rd. Oct. 1890.	7th. Oct. 1896.
7th. Nov. 1900.	5th. Oct. 1904.

No other details are given except the following lists of Officers in Oct. 1862 and Oct. 1890.

October 1862.

Prelate	Sir. Kt. Franklin.
Ist Captain	Wood.
2nd -	Howells.
Chancellor	Bristow
Treasurer	Dennison.
Chamberlain	Edwards.
Expert	Lewis.
Almoner	Courth.
Ist. Std. B.	Peacock.
2nd. Std. B.	Howell.
D.C.	Wood.
A. de C.	Griffiths.
Capt of Line	Hayley.

October 1890.

Chancellor	W. H. Westwood.
Marshal	W. B. Williamson.
Treasurer	W. E. Walker.
Registrar	W. Waldron.
Sub Marshal	G. Bagott.
D. of C.	C. E. Bloomer.
Almoner	F. Holcroft.
Ist. Std. B.	G. M. Waring.
2nd. Std. B.	G. F. Thompson.
A. de C.	H. H. Hughes.
Merald	W. S. Shepley.
Equerry	A. Timmins.

In the Worcestershire Masonic Year Book, Page 385, are the names of Prov. Priors and Sub-Priors. According to this list the terms Prior and Sub-Prior were not used until 1924 before which date the terms Principal Commander and Deputy Provincial Commanders were used. I think the "Principal" Commander is a misprint for "Provincial" Commander. According to our minutes the terms Provincial Prior and Sub-Prior came into use between Oct. 1872 and Feb. 1873 and at the same time Eminent Commander became Emt. Preceptor & Encampment became Preceptory.

We have also mention of two other Knights who were designated Sub-Prior viz:- James Crispin Gregg (Solicitor of Ledbury) who became a joining member from St Amand in Oct. 1877. In Oct 1882 "Sir Kt. Gregg's fees were remitted and his name removed from the Muster Roll." The other was Joseph Stokes installed in Richard de Vernon in Oct 1877, E.P. in 1882 and there is a letter from him dated 31st. May 1883 which mentions that he had resigned from the office of Sub-Prior. Neither of these Knights are mentioned in the list in the Year Book referred to above.

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