

Ben Marsh

(1950 to 1954.)

(died 1<sup>st</sup> April 1958.)

(See notes on Rev. Sir F. J. Davis from 83 to 91.)

1. The General died on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1948 & on the same day Ben Marsh, (as Dep-P.G.M.) consecrated Sabrina L. no. 6595  
(? Funeral of the General - ? details?)
2. Consecration of L. of Stability no. 6455 by B.M. on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1948.
3. Memorial Service at Worcester Cathedral 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 1948. for the General (see local press accounts.)
4. Consecration - L. of Fellowship no. 6707 on 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 1948
5. ~~by B.M.~~ consecration of O. Dudley L. no. 6734 on 13 Nov. 1948
6. Dedication of Masonic Hall, Cussham (Oxon. Co.) on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1948.
7. Consecration of L. of Franchises St. James L. no. 6788 on 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan. 1949.  
see 4 by B.M.
8. Alfred Allen (Past Dep. P.G.M.) died 28<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1949.
9. Centenary of Vernon L. no. 558 on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1949.
10. Consecration of Weston Kings L. no. 6879 by B.M. on 27<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1949.
11. Centenary of L. of Stability no. 564 on 8<sup>th</sup> Oct 1949.
12. Consecration of W. res. installed Masters L. no. 6889. by R.W. G. Sidney White, M.V.O., P.G.W., G. Secy. at Town Hall, Dudley on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 1949.
13. Consecration of Walsham Hills L. no. 6896 by B.M. (PGM delegate) on 10<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1949.
14. B.M. installed P.G.M. by H.W. Br. Duke of Devonshire K.G. G.M. at Town Hall, Dudley, 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 1950.  
& L. of Bunting installed as Dep. P.G.M.  
& Sidney Dunn too as Asst. P.G.M.
15. Consecration of Wiltton L. no. 6904 on 4<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1950. by B.M. (his first as P.G.M.)
16. Centenary - L. of Perseverance No 543 on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1950.
17. Consecration - L. of Holy Wells no. 6975 on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1950 by B.M.
18. Consecration - Almsconter L. no. 7023 by B.M. on 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 1950.
19. Sidney D. Toon died 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1951.
20. Consecration - Shenstone L. no. 7034 by B.M. on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1951.
21. W. Br. H.C. Selwin, O.B.E., P.A. G.S.B. installed Asst. P.G.M. on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1951 (where & by B.M.?)
22. Consecration - O. Haleson L. no. 7104 on 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1951
23. " - L. of Credence no 7155 on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1952
24. " - Weatherall L. no. 7214 on 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 1952  
all 3 by B.M.

Ben Marsh (contd.)

25. Conservation of Warner L. No. 7294 on 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1953  
by W. E. Bunting P.G.D., Dep. P.G.M.

26. B.M. resigned - Oct. 1954 (?)

(Ask those who knew him well if they  
think he died still believing he  
was P.G.M.)

Copyright Worcestershire Masonic  
Library and Museum Trust

## PROVINCES

### WORCESTERSHIRE.

#### Installation of

W.Bro. BEN MARSH, P.G.D.,

AS R.W. PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

BY

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G.,  
M.W. The Grand Master.

**G**REAT expectations towards renewed endeavours found their fulfilment for the Province of Worcestershire in the momentous turning point in its long history, and practically on the eve of the celebration of its bi-centenary now but three years ahead, of the advent as its new ruler of W.Bro. Ben Marsh, P.G.D., for close upon two years, Deputy Prov. Grand Master (in charge), whose Installation took place in most auspicious circumstances at the hands of the M.W. the Grand Master, His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, K.G., on 11th January, before a large gathering of the Province, in the fine and modern Town Hall, of the ancient Borough of Dudley, an enclave in the County of Worcester, at the northernmost extremity of the Province, and at the triple boundary made with its neighbours of Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

By a coincidence, the date almost synchronised with the anniversary of the new ruler's first administrative appointment in the Province, as Assistant Prov. Gd. Master, on 13th January, 1947, by his beloved and revered predecessor, the late General Sir Francis J. Davies, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., for 11 years Deputy Gd. Master of England, and who down to the time of his lamented death, on 18th March, 1948, had been almost to the day, for 20 years the ruler of the Province. The same significant omen of a further coincidence of dates also existed for the new ruler, for it was on 14th January, 1948, that the late General Sir Francis Davies, but two months before his death, had promoted him to the responsibilities of Deputy of the Province, a recognition of merit not only shown in the past but since made manifest in the drive and devotion he has applied to the constant furthering of the best interests of the Province and the advancement of the cause of Masonry.

Not only was there in the ceremony of his Installation being personally conducted by the M.W. the Grand Master himself, a signal honour found for the new ruler, but also in the selection made for its venue of his native town of Dudley, with the public life of which he has prominently identified himself, and his family and business interests long been associated. Historically important as was made for the town such an event, and the gathering it brought of so many Masonic notabilities in support of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, as ruler of the Craft, it was not the first time that within memory it had been honoured, nor its Town Hall by the visit of a Grand Master, for still in the recollection of all, was that made, in September, 1943, by the late Earl of Harewood, K.G., as Grand Master, in the self-same setting, in tribute to his Deputy, the late General Sir Francis Davies, when in celebration of the latter's Jubilee as ruler of the Province and, on its behalf, he presented him with his portrait,

painted in oils by Harold Knight, R.A., and which had hung on the line at the Royal Academy Exhibition that same year.

Included in the wide representation of United Grand Lodge attending, were the R.W. the Assistant Grand Master, Brigadier General W. H. V. Darell, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. (present as the ruler of the neighbouring Province of Warwickshire); R.W.Bros. the Hon. Sir Claude James, P.G.W., M.W. Past Gd. Master G.L. Tasmania; Sydney A. White, M.V.O., P.G.W., Grand Secretary; V.W.Bros. Lt.-Col. Philip C. Bull, D.S.O., T.D., Gd. Dir. Ceremonies; Edgar J. Rutter, O.S.M., P.G.D., Deputy Prov.G.M., South Wales (E.D.); W.Bros. Frank W. R. Douglas and Comdr. R. H. Barrett, R.N., Deputy G.Ds.C.; Philip Henry, L.R.A.M., P.A.G.D., P.Dep. Organist; Major J. E. Peel, Grand Tyler. The representation from other Provinces, in addition to those already named, included, from Warwickshire: W.Bros. C. F. Monk, P.G.D., Deputy, P. H. Jackson, P.G.D., Asst. Prov. G.M., and Samuel Guise, P.G.D., Prov. Gd. Secretary from Staffordshire: W.Bros. R. B. Mummery, P.G.D., Asst. Prov. G.M., and J. E. Mitchell, P.A.G.D.C. Prov. Gd. Secretary from Shropshire: W.Bro. W. J. v. M. Pendlebury, P.G.D., Deputy Prov.G.M.; from Gloucestershire: W.Bro. Capt. the Hon. W. R. S. Bathurst, T.D., P.G.D., Dep. Prov.G.M., and from South Wales, (E.D.), W.Bro. H. F. Stockwell, P.A.G.D.C., Prov. Gd. Secretary. Among Grand Officers who are members of the Province, was notably present the M.E. Grand Superintendent in the R.A. Province, V.W.Bro. S. Seth Somers, P.Gd. Treas.; also W.Bro. Erskine Simes, K.C., P.A.G.Regr., who had travelled especially from London, and many others, of whom space does not permit individual mention.



By courtesy of 'The Dudley Herald'

R.W.BRO. BEN MARSH,

PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER FOR WORCESTERSHIRE.

to capacity with eager Brethren, and he made his way to the Chair, and it was renewed when after he had appointed to act as his Wardens, R.W.Bro. the Hon. Sir Claude James, and V.W.Bro. Edgar J. Rutter, he was saluted in ancient form.

Addressing the gathering, His Grace suggested there was no need to stress the cause for the meeting, all present being only too well aware of the vacancy created in the leadership of the Province by the death of the late General Sir Francis Davies, who for so long a period of years, as its ruler, had won the deep affection and esteem of all. The Province of Worcestershire had a long and interesting Masonic history, its first ruler, Sir Robert de Cornwall, Bt. having been appointed in 1753, and simultaneously for the Counties of Gloucester, Shropshire, Monmouthshire and Hereford. He had been ruler until 1792, when the late John Dent, M.P., was appointed exclusively; and the new ruler to be appointed that day was only the eighth in the and who had died as he had lived, in the service of his Brethren long succession, which had included at least three eminent Masons in their days. With great affection was remembered the late Sir Francis Davies, for 11 years Deputy Gd. Master of England,

and in whom for close on 30 years had been centred the Masonic endeavours of Worcestershire.

It was a source of much pleasure to him, continued His Grace, to have come now to install his successor, for on the shoulders of the Prov. Gd. Master-designate, during the closing years of the rule of his predecessor, had rested the burden of responsibility for the Province, and it was fitting that he should now be called to succeed. His interest and enthusiasm for Freemasonry were well known to all, and the great concourse of Brethren assembled to witness his installation was evidence of the regard in which he was held.

The arrival of the Prov. Gd. Master-designate having been announced and his Patent of appointment formally produced, as requested, being found in order, on the instructions of the M.W. the Grand Master, a delegation of seven Masters or P.Ms. of Lodges of the Province was formed under the lead of the Gd. Director of Ceremonies and his two Deputies, the following Lodges being selected for the privilege, as the senior on its roll (the date of their foundation being shown in brackets): Harmonic, No. 252 (1784), Dudley; Worcester, No. 280 (1790), Worcester; Lodge of Hope and Charity, No. 377 (1824), Kidderminster; Royal Standard, No. 498 (1844), Dudley (of which the new ruler is an initiate and P.M.); Semper Fidelis, No. 529 (1846), Worcester; Vernon, No. 560 (1849), Stourport-on-Severn; and Stability, No. 564 (1849), Stourbridge.

On the entry of the Prov. Grand Master-designate, with his escort, and after the Patent of appointment had been read to the gathering by the Grand Secretary, in solemn words W.Bro. Ben Marsh was addressed by the M.W. the Grand Master, who reminded him that the duties he had heard enumerated were but the bare bones of the many responsibilities he was expected to undertake. The Masonic record of the ruler-designate, continued His Grace, justified his complete confidence that he could comply with the terms laid down, but much more was involved to ensure the welfare of the Province. Just as the spirit of a military unit depended mainly on the personality of its leader, likewise would the Province respond to the influence he could exert for its well-being and enthusiasm. His past record and the able manner he had shouldered the responsibilities already placed upon him showed him fully competent for his new task, and added His Grace, made himself confident of his abilities and that he possessed the right personality for the task. The great concourse assembled of the Masons of Worcestershire, and others, was ample proof that he had his Province solidly behind him, as also that he had the goodwill of the neighbouring Provinces, and that under his guidance Masonry in Worcestershire would continue to progress.

The Province was an important one with its roll now of 81 Lodges, the oldest being appropriately a Dudley Lodge, whilst the newest, no less aptly, was its recently formed Lodge of Installed Masters, of which the Prov. Gd. Master-designate was the first Master. In regard to his Masonic career, he had entered the Craft, in 1922, in the Royal Standard Lodge, No. 498, Dudley, becoming its Master in 1929, in the same year occupying the Chair of Policy Lodge No. 5245, of which he was a Founder, four years earlier; and was Preceptor of the Lodges of Instruction on both. He served in 1944, as Senior Gd. Warden of the Province, and in 1947 was appointed Asst. Prov.G.M., receiving in the same year, in Grand Lodge, the rank of Asst. Gd. Standard Bearer, from which he was promoted the following year Past Grand Deacon, and appointed some months earlier Deputy Prov. Grand Master. It was a long and honourable record, concluded His Grace, making almost unnecessary the usual question that he was bound to put to him, whether he could conscientiously undertake the discharge of the duties to which he was called.

Assent having been given by the ruler-designate, and after a Prayer had been offered by W.Bro. Major the Rev. J. E. Grosvenor, M.B.E., T.D., P.Dep.G.D.C. (a few months ago appointed Inspector General, 33<sup>rd</sup>, of the newly created A. & A. Rite District of Worcestershire), who acted as Chaplain, W.Bro. Ben Marsh was led to the pedestal where, in a firm voice, he took the obligation, and was afterwards invested and installed by the M.W. the Grand Master, who, in placing him in the Chair, said he felt sure he was voicing the feelings of every member of the Province and of all present in wishing him every success and prosperity in his important office. The great and much prolonged applause which greeted those words must have left no doubt for the newly-installed ruler, who was obviously

of the Peace for the Borough of Dudley, and there was renewed applause as he afterwards acknowledged the salutation which followed.

In a spirited address, voicing his thanks, he said that he would not be human if, at that great moment, he did not feel deeply moved and stirred with emotion by the great reception he had been given. Yet he had to confess that he would have felt some disappointment had they not done so, having already shown him and in no small measure, as they had on many occasions, that he enjoyed their affection and esteem.

On such a great day, they had the right to ask what his policy was to be for the future of the Province, and the answer could be given in a few words. It was to be the same as when three years ago, he had first been appointed Asst. Prov. Gd. Master. To keep alive the dignity and high prestige of Freemasonry in the Lodges, for he was one who firmly believed that once the dignity and the sense of high prestige departed from our great Country and Empire the glory of a priceless heritage would begin to decline, and the same fate befall our great Order. He wanted to see every Lodge in the Province happy, every Lodge making its own individual contribution and each playing worthily its part, for it was the only way whereby could be built-up and maintained a great and virile Province. Let them see that every young Mason was given a full opportunity to expand in a Masonic way of life, for none should forget that the young Mason of to-day may well one day be called to guide and rule the Province, and even in the wider sphere of Freemasonry, the Grand Lodge of England. He would urge them, therefore, to choose with even greater care than ever in the past, those who were to be admitted into the Order, for though he had stressed that need before on many occasions, he felt there was yet room for improvement. Let them remember that our great Order could never hope to build on numbers but only on the quality of those in its ranks. He would also plead that there should never be allowed a discordant note to intrude in any Lodge, for no Lodge where there was discord could hope to be a contributory force. They should ever remember that we were pledged as Masons to tolerance, Brotherly Love and truth, among all men, whatever race or creed.

If it was their desire, he continued, to commemorate fitly the historic day in which they had taken part, let each one, in pledge of his allegiance, ask himself whether he was doing all he could by his Lodge, and in helping and serving its Master; whether he was proving himself fully worthy of the privilege of being a member of the greatest human institution the world had ever known. And, if the answer was in the affirmative, then, however fierce may prove the storms the future had in store, or any economic tempest which may assail them, they would pull through. Let them have faith that Right made Might, and in that firm belief and to the end, dare to do their duty as they understood it as Masons! And may God grant, he concluded, that to that end also, he may retain their esteem and affection, for it was what he valued as a priceless jewel above all things.

Great applause marked the conclusion of these words, after which the R.W.Provincial Grand Master proceeded to the appointment as his Deputy of W.Bro. Dr. E. L. Bunting, P.G.D. and P.Prov.G.W., hitherto Asst. Prov. Grand Master since 1947, and addressing him spoke of the judicious choice it had proved for the welfare of the Province, as proved the affection he had earned on all sides, and the deep and abiding friendships he had made. The duties which would devolve upon his office were already well known to him, and his past services so faithfully rendered inspired confidence that he would discharge them with the same ability that he had already shown. He was, then, obligated, invested and installed, being afterwards proclaimed and saluted.

To fill the vacancy created in the position of Assistant Prov. Gd. Master, the announcement was afterwards made by the R.W.Prov. Grand Master, of the appointment of W.Bro. Sydney Dunn Toon, P.Prov.G.W., and a Founder and P.M. of Bon Accord Lodge, No. 4935, Stechford. Addressing him before his being Obligated, R.W.Bro. Ben Marsh said that the choice had not been an easy one to decide upon, but it had fallen upon him after the assurance gained of his fitness for the position from the most capable manner he had discharged his duties as Senior Gd. Warden of the Province and previously as Prov.G.D.C. The task he was now called to undertake was not to prove easy, and he would have to learn to practice wisdom in maintaining the high traditions of the

exert his best endeavours for the welfare of the Province. The new Assistant Prov. Gd. Master was then duly obligated, invested and installed, his proclamation afterwards as such, being received with cordial applause which he very briefly acknowledged.

Following the confirmation given of the election of the Prov. Gd. Treasurer and the appointment made, in September last, of the Prov. Grand Officers, approval being also given of the By-laws of the Province, R.W. Bro. Ben Marsh rose to express on behalf of the Province to the M.W. the Grand Master, His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, the deep sense of its gratitude for the honour he had conferred by his visit to the Province and the ancient Borough of Dudley, by which history had been made that day. May they take the opportunity offered personally to pledge to him their unswerving devotion and voice the fervent hope that he may long reign over the destinies of the Craft, the prestige of which his devotion to its welfare had yet further enhanced.

A great ovation was given to His Grace as he rose to make acknowledgment, and he professed himself deeply touched and impressed by the loyal demonstration of which he had been the object. He already knew when he came to Worcestershire that the Province was in safe hands but it had been doubly confirmed to him by the reception that he, and those accompanying him, had received. He felt convinced that the Province would redouble its efforts to maintain the virtues and principles that taught the Craft, and above all the moral and spiritual values to which the Province had shown so fully alive. He and those accompanying him had much enjoyed the hospitality they had received, and he was glad to have witnessed how great was the Masonic enthusiasm of the Province.

Provincial Grand Lodge being afterwards closed in due form, the proceedings concluding with the singing of the National Anthem.

The M.W. the Grand Master and other distinguished Brethren and visitors from other Provinces, before starting on their homeward journey, were graciously entertained to tea in the Council House by the Mayor of Dudley, Alderman J. H. Molyneux, not himself a Mason, and who already upon the arrival in the forenoon, of His Grace and his escort, had given them a civil reception.

A luncheon held at the Masonic Hall, prior to the afternoon ceremony was attended by many guests of the Province, the Provincial Gd. Master-designate presiding as host, supported by the M.W. the Grand Master, and many distinguished Grand Officers. The occasion being of a semi-formal nature, speeches

were few and of an intimate character, but the Prov. Grand Master-designate, in proposing the health of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, spoke of the pride with which was cherished the opportunity offered of proposing for the first time in the Province, such a toast in the presence of the Grand Master himself. It was not the first time, however, that a Duke of Devonshire had visited Dudley, said the speaker and he went on to recall amidst laughter some amusing anecdote of the past, relating to a political meeting, which he remembered attending as a youth. His Grace, as Grand Master, followed in a long line of distinguished predecessors, and the Craft rejoiced in the judicious choice which had been made of him, for he was proving himself a great leader. One felt certain that when the history of his era in Grand Lodge came to be written, it would show to have been an outstanding one of progress for the Craft. The occasion was one which should not be allowed to pass, for the members of the Province to pledge anew their loyalty to him and their full co-operation, and he asked all to join in a sentiment honouring of the toast.

The M.W. the Grand Master, who confessed himself as almost overwhelmed by the words spoken, wished to assure the Province and its ruler-designate of the great pleasure he had found in coming, apart from the fact that it was always to him a source of gratification to visit a Province in order to install its ruler. It was a particular pleasure in the present instance because he was well aware that during the closing years of the late General Sir Francis Davies, almost all the heavy burden of the leadership of the Province had fallen upon the Brother who was now to be his successor, and it was but right and proper that such a recognition of his great services to the Province and to the cause of Freemasonry should now be given to him. The Prov. Grand Master-designate had pledged to him the loyalty of his Province but the latter would surely also pledge itself unreservedly to its new ruler, who had already so well served its best interests. In conclusion, His Grace asked all present to join in a toast, in wishing the new ruler every happiness and success in the new task he was undertaking.

In his acknowledgment of the toast, the Prov. Gd. Master-designate who first thanked His Grace for his generous words towards him, said that he must rely for success upon the loyal co-operation of all, and he felt happy in the confident thought that it would be vouchsafed to him to the full. He was thus embarking on his task filled with hope and in the conviction that he would continue to enjoy the same warm comradeship he had found so happily in evidence in the Province. Without it and unless each played worthily his part, it would be vain to hope for success.