

Provincial Grand Lodge of Essex



ORATION
Delivered at the
BANNER DEDICATION CEREMONY
of the

West Essex Meridian Lodge No. 9821

on

Saturday, 11th February 2017

by

W.Bro. The Reverend W. Desmond Payne-Jeremiah, *ProvDepGChap, SLGR.*

First, let me say how delighted we are and I feel sure I speak on behalf of my colleagues of the Dedicating Team, to join with you here today in your unique celebration and to say how deeply conscious I am of the honour to have been invited to take part in the Dedication your beautiful new Lodge Banner. Hence, I suppose it would be reasonable to say that today is the beginning of a further era in this Lodge, in which you go forth under your new banner.

The origin of banners goes back to remote antiquity, and from that time immemorial, men have marched and gathered under Banners which depicted an emblem or motif proclaiming their allegiance to a particular idea, faith, country, organisation or leader. A Banner has always been seen as an emblem of loyalty and homage to a feudal superior. In battle it was the rallying point, which symbolised Loyalty, Fidelity and Unity. A Banner should therefore remind us of our duty and fidelity to God and act as a rallying point for those great teachings on which our Order is founded.

In both Grand Lodge and indeed Provincial Grand Lodges in the Craft, the Inner Guard is asked **"What is your duty?"** to which he, in turn replies, **"To give a due report of all brethren and to see that they are properly clothed and ranged under their respective Banners"**. Although the brethren so assembled have no visible banners with them, symbolically it means that Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodges are composed of units or Lodges, each with its own characteristic, often depicted on its individual banner, each contributing to the beauty, love and harmony which blends into the whole. In like manner, this Lodge Banner too can be similarly likened.

There is, of course a distinct difference between military and civil banners. Military banners, Standards or pennants usually hang from one side and are essentially square or oblong but sometimes triangular or pennants. Civil banners, in contrast, hang from one or two vertical poles or a horizontal bar at the top, as do most of our Masonic Banners. The bottom of a banner need not necessarily be straight, or pointed as is this one, or even scalloped. So brethren what we have here is a civil banner, adorned with emblems which either wittingly or unwittingly have deep symbolic meaning which convey a

number of important messages. First, they show what we belong to, and secondly they show who we are and what we stand for.

This banner is no exception, and as we look at it, it is clear as to what you belong to in general, – that being the Craft, and in particular to this Lodge. The banner carries a number of different emblems, so what do the particular emblematic devices of this banner represent, remind or indeed teach us?

The dominant feature of the banner is the colour blue as mentioned that being the colour of the Craft, on which the whole design is placed which is said to reduce stress, creating a sense of calmness, relaxation and order; unwittingly no doubt, depicting the celestial canopy. In “The Banner Song”, J.W. Day says of the banner **“Her hue derives from the blue vault of heaven”**. Universally, the colour blue denotes immortality, eternity, chastity and fidelity and pale blue in particular it is said, represents prudence and goodness and is said to enhance the wisdom of intellect. In Masonry, particularly the Craft, blue is the emblematic colour of universal brotherhood and friendship and “Instructs us, that in the mind of a mason, those virtues should be as extensive as the blue vault of heaven itself”.

The next colour on the Banner to catch the eye is the yellow, encircling the centre motif bearing the name, number and date of consecration of the Lodge, in a darker shade of blue, The darker the shade of blue, the more authority it has, and finally this colour too exhibits an inner security and confidence. Of the name we note the geographic siting of the Lodge in the West of the Province, the Name of the Province and the time of meeting, Meridian denoting the highest part or point of the day when your Lodge meets.

Further to the centre we see an excellent representation of the spinning Halo of the sun, encircling the centre motif. Yellow is the most luminous of all the colours of the spectrum. It's the colour that captures our attention more than any other colour. Yellow is the colour of happiness, and optimism, of enlightenment and creativity, essentially it invariably depicts the bright rays of sunshine.

The centre of the Banner is very aptly coloured red to represent the core of the sun, which is said to be the hottest part of the sun. The colour red and is a very powerful colour, on which is embossed a depiction of the Three Seax knives, although looking like scimitars, forcibly representing the County of Essex where this Lodge is based.

Below the main motif of the Banner, we see the Latin motto of the Lodge, SOLE MAXIME FULGENTE, translated “The sun shines brilliantly” or as my former Professor of Classics said on Monday last “The sun shines in its brilliance”, which I gather does not absolutely represent that which the Brethren would have preferred, but one foisted upon them. Finally at the foot of the Banner, we see emblazoned the names of the doyens who together sowed the seeds of the foundation of this most successful Lodge and whose names will now be honoured in perpetuity each time the Lodge meets and this banner is unfurled along with the date it was first unfurled, and should always remind you of today's transactions.

You the brethren of West Essex Meridian Lodge No. 9821, having done great credit to your Founders thus far and now as you enter this further era under your new banner, may it always remind you of the dignity and high importance of Craft and then perhaps pause, pledge yourselves never to bring into disrepute our Order nor indeed your Lodge or Lodge Banner. Brethren, please re-dedicate yourselves to those great principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth on which our Order is Founded and in which we all believe. May the Great Architect of the Universe pour down upon you his many blessings in great abundance as you endeavour faithfully to follow those principles, and may you march boldly to the future with hope under this Banner - and may it ever remind you of your unity with one another in and through this, West Essex Meridian Lodge No. 9821, until time with us shall be no more.

Worshipful Master, Assistant Provincial Grand Master, and Brethren all.

