



OLD DUDLEIAN LODGE

No. 6734

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AN EXPLANATION OF THE LODGE BANNER

OF THE

OLD DUDLEIAN LODGE NUMBER 6734

by

W. Bro. A. G. (Tony) Walker P.P.S.G.W.

to

the Lodge Meeting held on

Monday 18th February 1986

HISTORY

The Banner was designed by Wor. Bro. Jack Napier, Founder and First Worshipful Master of the Old Dudleian Lodge. He was an obvious choice for this task because he was a superb calligraphist and his hobby was designing illuminated addresses - a form of appreciation that is now sadly out of fashion.

The actual needlework construction was done by Mrs. Betty Walker. As a young woman she came down from London to apply for the position of Headmistress of the Dudley School of Art and Needlework. She completely won over the Education committee with the exception of the Chairman, Alderman James Dunn, who thought she was too young for the position. However, possibly for the only time in his life, he was overruled by his committee and she was duly elected. However, events have a habit of turning full circle, and two years later she married his Grandson - my Father's elder brother, Wor. Bro. Frank Walker, a Founder of

this Lodge.

Again she was an obvious choice for this work as some 20 years previously she had made the superb Banner for Mosaic Lodge 5028 to the design of Wor. Bro. Harry Cherrington who likewise became a Founder Member of our Lodge.

There was a delay because the Post War years were still difficult and she would not start the Banner until the correct silks could be obtained. Quite rightly she would not give her time and considerable talent to inferior materials, but at last they became available.

Then tragically she had to nurse her husband through a long illness resulting in his death some twelve months later and during that period and for some months afterwards the Banner was put to one side. As one would expect during that traumatic time she was never once approached by the Lodge with a view to its completion.

Eventually it was her one desire to complete the Banner as a memorial to her late husband Wor. Bro. Frank Walker.

Some of us still remember the meeting when, as on the occasion of the presentation of the Mosaic Banner some twenty years before, she entered the Lodge Room accompanied by Mrs. Fay Cherrington and she was placed in the seat to the right of the Worshipful Master. In a brief ceremony she presented the Banner to the Lodge and received the thanks and acclamation of the Brethren. Due to the circumstances I have outlined it was a highly emotional experience for all who were present.

She was extremely proud of the fact that she had been invited into the Lodges of Mosaic and Old Dudlieians. She in fact never knew that in a brief but interesting ceremony the Lodges had been called off and it was really the Lodge Room he had entered and not the Lodge itself as this, of course, is not possible.

EXPLANATION OF THE BANNER

Now Wor. Bro. Harry Cherrington was responsible for both the design and explanation of the Mosaic Banner.

In this case I have to give an explanation of a Banner that had already been designed. No doubt if Wor. Bro. Jack Napier had ever thought to give an explanation of the Banner it would differ considerably from mine. However, one of the beauties of Freemasonry is that we are provided with facts and allegories to which we give our own interpretation, and it may be interesting for you to ponder on the type of explanation you yourself would give.

You will note that the background colour is blue - the colour particularly associated with Craft Masonry - while that of the shield is red - associated with the Holy Royal Arch. This is particularly appropriate as Wor. Bro. Napier was First Principal of Warwickshire Holy Royal Arch.

Blue is the symbol of our Universal Brotherhood because it is the colour of the vault of Heaven which embraces our Globe. It reminds us that the virtues of universal friendship and benevolence should be as equally extensive in every Brother's breast. The Hebrews regarded it as a symbol of

Perfection and amongst the Druids it represented truth. Lastly to the mediaeval Christians it was a symbol of immortality.

You will note that the blue is sub-divided into Dark and Light blue which are associated respectively with the two great seats of learning, Oxford and Cambridge Universities, to which we have been proud to send distinguished boys from the School. Indeed at our Initiation we are taught the value of Education by which means alone we are rendered fit members of regularly organised society.

Surmounting the shield containing the Arms of Dudley Town we have the Lion's Head. The lion is the emblem of the Tribe of Judah and when we refer to the Lion's paw and the Lion's grip we refer to the doctrine of the Resurrection as taught by Him who is known as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. In addition to this, in Ancient Freemasonry the lion was ever the symbol of strength and sovereignty.

In the centre of the shield at the top we have represented the keep of Dudley Castle - a noble structure beloved of all Dudleians. The building was never breached by invaders and remained firm and unshaken. Thus we may liken it to the Order of Freemasonry which has remained firm and unshaken from time immemorial.

From time to time we have been attacked by cowans who are ill informed, envious or regretfully purely malicious. In the past our reply was silence as exemplified in our motto "Veedi, Vidi, Toce". However in recent years our Rulers Supreme have thought it wise to give a well considered and excellent response to these slanderous accusations. Below the

Castle we have a white band containing the anchor, trilobite and Davy miner's lamp.

The anchor refers to our local industry of chain making. Masonically we have obtained this symbol from the first Christians who regarded it as a emblem of hope and it is found inscribed on the tombs in the catacombs of Rome. Formerly the Ark anchor was one of the symbols of our third degree. They are described as emblems of a well guarded hope and a well spent life and are emblematical of that divine arm which safely wafts us over this tempestuous sea of troubles and that anchor which shall safely moor us in a peaceful harbour where the wicked shall cease from troubling and the weary shall find rest.

The Trilobite is a fossil found only in this area and proof that this area was once covered by the sea. We may therefore designate it as an emblem of antiquity.

The Davy Lamp was invented for the benefit of miners to enable them to pursue their hazardous occupation in greater safety with the aid of material light. Light is the first emblem which is presented to the Initiate and it has always been considered as the primordial source of knowledge and goodness - just as darkness is synonymous with ignorance and evil.

Thus light is a source of future happiness without which men could barely exist.

Finally, beneath these three emblems we have the salamander - that mythical animal who lives in blast furnaces which used to be so typical of this area. We will consider it to be synonymous with fire whose purifying power is worshipped in many ancient religions. For

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example God appeared to Moses in a flame of fire. As fire and light are identical, to the Freemason it has ever been considered the symbol of Divine Truth or the Grand Architect.

The Banner is finally completed by the inscription of the Name of the Lodge, its Number and its Date of consecration.

That completes my explanation of the Banner but as a postscript I have taken the School motto - 'Ut seres ita et metes' - and tried to apply it to our Order. As you sew, so may you reap.

There should really only be one Masonic aim and that is by adhering to our Masonic Precepts we are building a Temple and that is the spiritual temple we each have in our heart. If we commit a mean or devious action particularly against a brother, if our ambition to obtain High Office clouds the true purposes of Freemasonry, then we are destroying our own temple. Surely we will not err from the true path if we follow the example of Him from whom all goodness springs and to whom we must give an account of our conduct in this life.