

W.Bro Harry Rudge's address to WM

Worshipful Master

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of Mrs. Sheila Smirthwaite I present this banner to the lodge.

Geoff Smirthwaite and I were very good friends and about two months after Geoff died my wife and I were having coffee with Sheila when she handed me a cheque for a very substantial sum of money payable to Benevolent Lodge, saying that it was a gift to the lodge in appreciation of the many happy hours that Geoff had spent in the lodge

When I presented the cheque to the G.P. Committee it was decided to use it to open a banner fund. There had been previous discussion on the need to replace the old banner. I was given the task of finding someone who could make a banner and the likely cost.

My first approach was to the Embroidery Department at Great Queen Street. The basic price, without seeing the design, was prohibitive.

I then went onto the internet and found Heather Everitt in North Molton, who was displaying several banners on her website. I took photographs and measurements of our banner up to her and she gave me a price which, although being in excess of our fund, was reasonable.

Our task now was to raise the necessary funds to allow us to place an order.

A little while after, Sheila asked me what progress had been made on the banner. When I told her that we had started a banner fund but still had to raise more money she said that she would pay for it outright.

On the strength of that I told Heather Everitt to proceed with the work. The banner was six months in the making and I have had it since last December awaiting the time when we could fit this ceremony into our programme.

That time has now arrived and it is with great pleasure that I hand this banner over to you.