

THE PATERSON LODGE BANNER
ITS ORIGINS AND HISTORY



by

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Cover photo by Bill Anderson

showing the Banner on exhibition in Paterson Court House Museum.

THE PATERSON BANNER

The Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows (MUIOOF) emanated from a meeting of Oddfellows held in a hotel in Manchester, England, in 1810. 'Oddfellows' were fellows who were odd in not belonging to any organisation already in existence.

The first branch of the Manchester Unity Order in Australia - named the Loyal Strangers Refuge Lodge - was opened in Sydney in March 1840 by nine members, eight of whom had been members of the Order in England.

Loyal Paterson Union Lodge No. 012 was formally opened at Captain Brown's 'Bush Inn' at Paterson on 14 April 1846. It was the twelfth branch of the Order in Australia. Among those who did yeoman service in the early days were Stephen Stanbridge, William Cann, George Lindley, Daniel Cowley and George Massie.

Unfortunately, the Loyal Paterson Union Lodge No. 012 had not met for some time when on 17 August 1996, together with four other Lodges in the Hunter River District, it was amalgamated into the Loyal Hunter River District Lodge No. 903.

The Lodge banner - now conserved - was purchased from the London business house of George Tutill in 1901 by the Paterson Union Lodge. It is thought that it is probably the only surviving Tutill-created Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows banner of this design in Australia. It is also the only known surviving banner of any Order in the Hunter Valley district.

The Board of Directors of the Manchester Unity Friendly Society in NSW was glad to assist the Paterson Historical Society in restoring the banner and on behalf of all the members of the Manchester Unity Order in the Hunter River District, I wish to publicly thank the board members, the Paterson Historical Society, and others, for making the conservation possible.

Brian J. Hartcher

District Secretary
Hunter River District No. 003
Manchester Unity Friendly Society in NSW
19 August 1996

PREFACE

I am delighted to have the opportunity to write a preface to this publication on the Paterson Lodge Banner.

This banner has provided significant intrigue and angst for the Historical Society in recent years. The intrigue has arisen because of our lack of knowledge about the banner and our difficulties in identifying its real significance. The angst has arisen from the custodial responsibility which the organisation has been given by locating the banner with the Society. Both of these issues have been resolved through the Society's investigation and conservation project on the banner. This has run over about ten years, culminating in this publication.

The publication clearly outlines the issues associated with the banner and I am sure readers will understand why we puzzled and agonised over it.

The banner gave the Society a unique opportunity to research a significant movable piece of heritage. It also provided us with a challenge to conserve it for future generations. Through the hard work of Society members and the support of various funding authorities, both of these objectives have been achieved.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved in this achievement and thank them for their support.

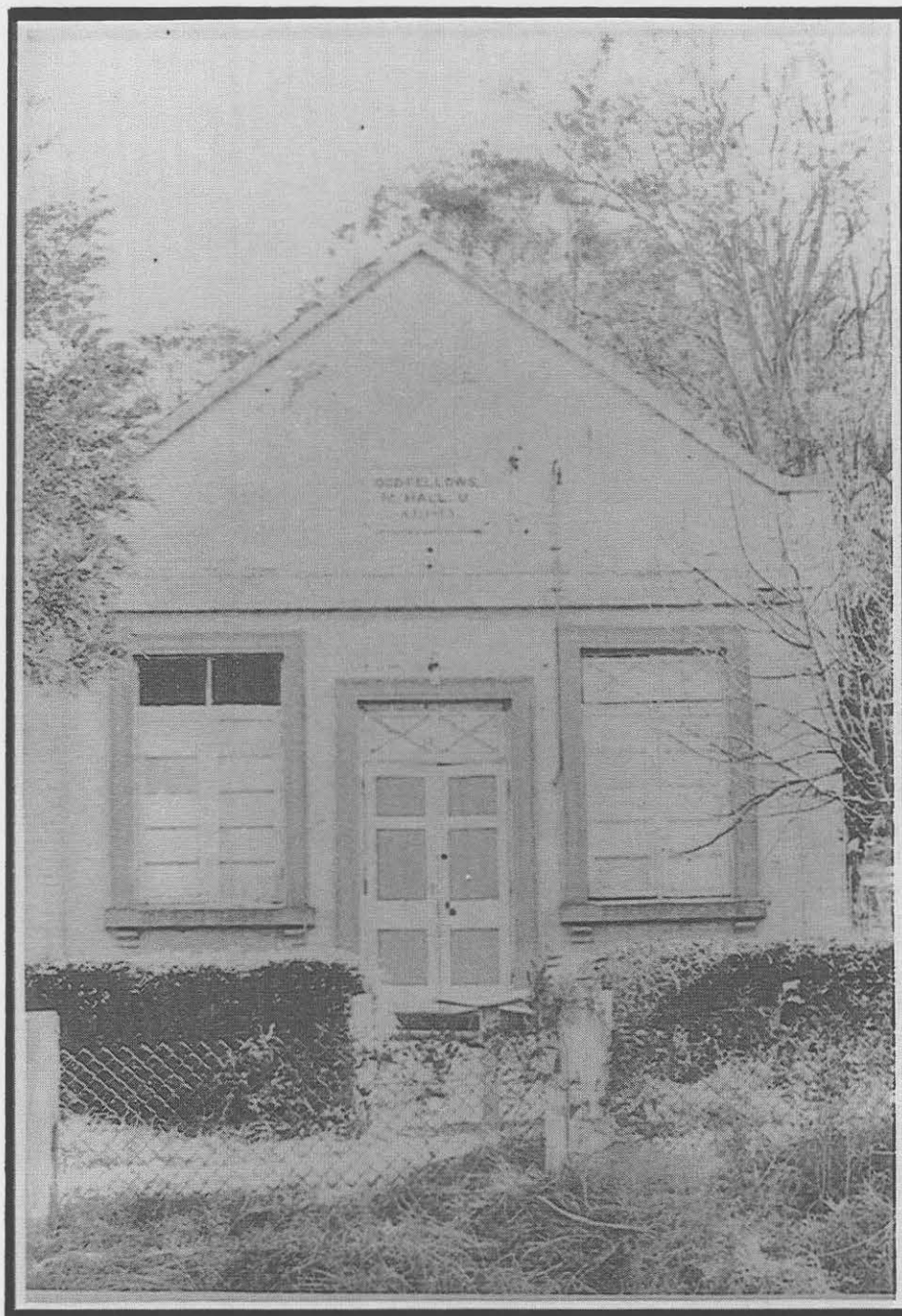
Cameron Archer

President
Paterson Historical Society
March 1997

Manchester Unity Oddfellows Hall

1865

Paterson NSW



The foundation stone for the Manchester Unity Oddfellows Hall was laid on 30 April 1863. The builder was Mr Stephen Stanbridge Senior. The building cost £270.5.0, and the furnishings £10.11.0. Photo: P. H. S. Collection.

THE PATERSON LODGE BANNER

How fitting it is that in this year of 1997 we should be able to display again the banner of the Loyal Paterson Union Lodge No. 4225 M. O. It was in April 1846, just over one hundred and fifty years ago, that the Lodge in Paterson was declared open.

Although not as old as the Lodge itself, the banner emphasises the true spirit of all Lodges - *We Unite to Assist Each Other*. When the beautifully woven and painted banner was first displayed, it must have been an inspiration to all members of the Lodge.

THE HISTORY OF LODGES

Benefit societies, which is what lodges are, have a long and complex history. Their modern form results from the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but they adapted ritual and regalia from earlier times. Manchester Unity is one distinct Order, alongside the Ancient Order of Foresters, Grand United Oddfellows and so on.

The earliest lodges in the colony of New South Wales were military lodges in Freemasonry. The Loyal Paterson Union Lodge was one of the earliest of the Manchester Unity Order in the colony.

In 1993, the Paterson Historical Society commissioned Dr Robert James, a Newcastle historian experienced in the study of Friendly Societies, to research the history of the Lodge at Paterson.

Minutes taken at meetings held throughout the years tell of dues collected and sickness and distress payments made. During the meetings, a 'harmony' session provided entertainment with songs and recitations performed by fellow members.

Provision was also made for the settling of disputations. These were usually arguments on matters which had arisen in everyday life, outside the Lodge rooms.¹

Although lodges filled a very real need in the lives of our early settlers, little of their place in history has been studied. Perhaps this has been brought about by the very nature of the lodges, their strict codes of secrecy and the reluctance of members to break those codes. However, the importance of the lodges in the lives of the average working man cannot be denied.

Generally, lodge meetings were first held at an inn or tavern but the disadvantages of this arose from having to share the facility with less sober customers, and the cost of using the premises of others. Securing an independent hall for both meetings and functions was undertaken by lodge members as soon as possible. The lodge hall became a prominent building in both large and small towns. It became the meeting place of the men of the district. Sometimes items announcing forthcoming functions would be seen in local newspapers but overall little else is recorded of the workings of the lodges.

The greatest achievement of the lodges was the sense of security they gave to the members and their families. In the days before governments provided the social security payments we know today, the lodge gave a man and his family the comforting knowledge that help would be at hand to tide them over troubled times. If the breadwinner should be injured, assistance would be provided. If he were to lose his life, his wife and family could be assured that the funeral expenses would be met and the family helped through their grief and mourning by his lodge brothers. By paying his dues and a small weekly amount, a family man knew that such support was there when it was most urgently needed.

For the happier times, arrangement of social functions by the lodge ensured that the district's residents met together for balls, dinners, dances, sports days and other activities which were normal for those days.

THE LOYAL PATERSON UNION LODGE No. 4225, M. O.

The Minute Books of the Paterson Branch of the MUIOOF still survive, safely held in the Noel Butlin Archives Of Business and Labour, Australian National University, Canberra.

When the lodge was established it was known as Loyal Paterson Union Lodge No. 4225, M. O.. This number was the number allotted in England but as the movement strengthened in New South Wales it became independent of the mother lodge in England. Therefore new numbers were granted and Paterson became Loyal Union Lodge No. 012. However, the earlier number seems to have been retained for some time as it was embroidered on the 1901 banner.

When the lodge was formed, the first meeting was held at the Paterson Hotel where Mr Edwin Brown was the licensee. Meetings continued at this venue for one year. On 14 April 1847, the meeting was held at the Bush Inn, a well known and popular hotel of that time owned and operated by Captain David Brown. Apparently, this remained the meeting venue for many years.

During this first year, one of the members, Mr Stephen Stanbridge, who was a local and well-known carpenter and builder, was asked to supply a regalia box, at the cost of one pound, and a lectern and ballot box, for one pound. After the move to the Bush Inn, Mr Stanbridge received three shillings payment for putting up the lodge dispensation box and making a sliding panel for the lodge room door.²

The building of the hall was contemplated for a long period and members worked diligently towards their objective. The *Maitland Mercury* of 20 December 1862 reported on the success of a bazaar held 'in aid of the erection of the hall' and listed the names of the ladies working for the project.⁶

The laying of the foundation stone was reported upon in the *Maitland Mercury* of 30 April 1863.⁶ Some controversy must have arisen over the price or the plan itself for it was not until the meeting of 12 January 1864 that Stephen Stanbridge's tender was accepted, along with alterations suggested by himself, for the sum of two hundred and seventy pounds and five shillings.²

On 11 July 1865, the first meeting was held in the new hall. New furniture, comprising a table, two seats with back rails, ten forms, and frosting for the windows, had also been supplied by Mr Stanbridge at an additional cost of ten pounds eleven shillings and three pence.²

The hall was built in a commanding position in Church Street, Paterson, and during its life it served other useful purposes in the community.

On 27 May 1875, the *Maitland Mercury* recorded that the hall was being used to accommodate the children when the first public school was begun in Paterson.⁶ The school was eventually built on the opposite side of the road to the hall. Over the years, the hall was used on several occasions to accommodate the children of the school.

The hall remained a community landmark for over one hundred and thirty years. Membership of the lodge fluctuated as population movements were dictated by economic conditions, but always numbers were stable enough to allow the lodge to function. However, by the 1970s, the modern day world, so different from the lodge's beginnings, finally caught up. Membership became too low to be viable and the lodge closed its doors. The few remaining faithful members transferred their membership to the Maitland branch and so closed a chapter in Paterson's history.

When lodge meetings were no longer held there, the building was sold to a private buyer. Although the historic facade of the building remains, much additional brick and timber work has been added to the back and side of the building to make it into a comfortable dwelling.

THE BANNER

When the MUIOOF Lodge ceased functioning in Paterson, its memorabilia were handed to the Paterson Historical Society for safe-keeping.

These treasures included the old gilt-framed photographs recording the honours paid to long-serving and faithful members of the Order. They now adorn the walls of the museum. They tell of the esteem in which both men and women who gave unstinting service to the Lodge were held. Additionally, several pieces of regalia have been presented to the museum by families whose members have passed away.

The society is fortunate to have the original dispensation which recorded the opening of the Lodge in April 1846. Still in readable condition but affected by the passage of years, the document is a fascinating piece of history with the names of the first office bearers recorded on the parchment and written in the copper-plate writing of those days. The names of the original members are inscribed on the door of the wooden cabinet holding the document.

Along with these gilt-framed pictures and other items came the banner, enclosed in a wooden box about eight feet long and a foot square (2.4 m by 30 cms by 30 cms). It was rolled tightly, giving no indication of what was within. The box was stored at the museum until late 1988 when society members began to question what should be done with it.

Upon unrolling the banner, it was clearly seen that here indeed was a treasure but time had taken its toll and serious thought would have to be given to its refurbishment.

Dr James' research on the history of the lodge revealed that in the early days there had been no banner, nor indeed, regalia of any kind. The minute books showed that the regalia, which forms such an important part of lodge procedure, was in many instances, borrowed from the Maitland lodge for the annual anniversary celebrations and other special occasions.

In the minute book of early 1901 it was recorded that the Lodge should have its own banner. Perhaps it was thought that a banner might be an incentive to keep up membership, or perhaps the membership was strong enough to justify acquiring its own banner and regalia. Whatever the reason, the decision was made to have the best banner available.

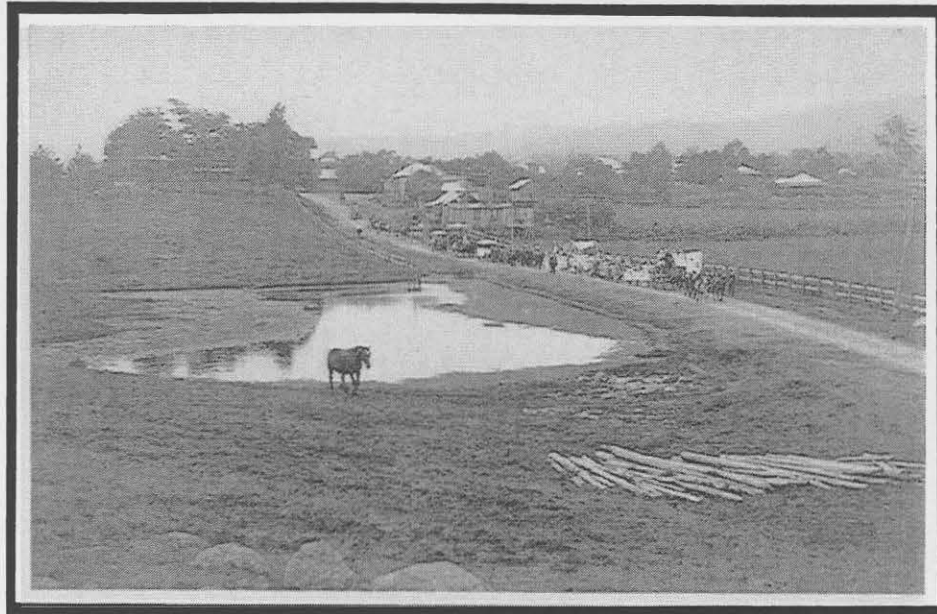
Despite the fact that manufactures were making banners of reasonable quality in New South Wales, an order was sent to George Tuttil of London for supply and dispatch of a banner. Dr. James made inquiry to this firm in London but found that the bombing of London during the World War Two had destroyed all their early records so we can only speculate on what the cost may have been. To meet this cost the Lodge opened a subscription list and organised a program of balls, dances and sports days. Unfortunately the list and other details have not survived.

The banner is double-sided and hand painted. It measures nine feet two inches by five feet nine inches (2800 cms by 1750 cms). The centre panel is of silk, woven on a jacquard loom, creating a reversible fabric. One side is red silk with gold highlights. The other side is gold silk with red highlights. The red silk side shows a small painted plaque bearing the inscription *G. Tuttil, 83 City Road, London.*

In his report to the society, Dr. James wrote:

The slogan *We Unite to Assist Each Other* reminds us that we are speaking of a working people's culture, and that friendly societies are of the same historical line as trade unions. These two forms of organisation, like Freemasonry, are essentially benefit societies for survival in a harsh and demanding world. Thus it's not surprising to have work scenes or depictions of workers in their work situations. However, these male figures appear to be of coal miners, difficult to associate with Paterson of the late nineteenth century. This difficulty does not detract from the banner's significance, rather it opens up the question of the degree of control of the banner's design by Oddfellows who were in New South Wales when the painters were in London. The minutes are silent on this point ...

From the second half of the nineteenth century, banners of friendly or trade societies done by Tuttills seem to have had both sides painted. Where they were done in this way, at least one side was allegorical, that is, it presented a mythical or idealistic illustration such as a scene from the Bible. In the case of trade societies, the other side was normally functional, depicting a work scene or a compilation of scenes relevant to the organisation whose banner it was. In the case of friendly societies, this second side was more likely to be the society's emblem ... or a representation of society members visiting a sick brother or their deceased brother's family. ... This Paterson banner, though for a friendly society, contains workers as they would appear at work, and both sides carry elements of the society emblem rather than a biblical allegory. In other words, it is a mixture of the 'usual' trade and friendly society approach and, as a result, it differs quite markedly from other friendly society banners and from other MUOOF banners. ... In the case of the Paterson banner, both sides feature the Eye of Providence. The Eye, and the female Muses, represent (the giving of) comfort and support to the men in need. These symbolic women are, of course, duplicating the nurturing role of women in actual society and their placement by men on an unrealistic pedestal.



Paterson townspeople carried the Banner in this patriotic march along the road by the Paterson Lagoon, during the World War One years.³

Photo: Stan Fry Collection.

PATERSON DISTRICT NEWS

Maitland Mercury, 18 April 1902.

A great deal of public interest is centred in the forthcoming athletic carnival, which our local Oddfellows are arranging for Wednesday next, 23 instant. A great many entries for the various contests have already been received, and the demonstration promises to be a unique success. There will be a procession of the local and district Oddfellows, in which the handsome new banner purchased from London and all the picturesque regalia of its members will be conspicuously displayed. The enthusiastic and energetic preparations of the secretary and committee men to make the carnival and its attendant ball a grand triumph deserve to be crowned with success. If the weather will be propitious for the event and smile upon it in sunny serenity, the twenty-third will be a red letter day in the annals of Paterson.

Dr James concluded his report by observing that it was Tuttils boast that they never made two identical banners, quite a feat when one considers the number of banners which must have been produced over the years and the small number of emblems and symbols available for use.

To reduce the initial cost of the banner, the Lodge had apparently ordered the banner to be supplied with the painted centrepiece only and it was used as such for the first few appearances. However, in the minutes of the Lodge, dated 30 August 1902, the secretary was directed to send the banner to the Regalia Department of David Jones in Sydney to have it enlarged. By this we presume it was to have the coloured silk borders of blue, red, grey and yellow added, with fringing on the lower edge. Poles and ropes were also ordered at this time. There is no record of this additional cost.



Members of the Paterson Lodge carry the Banner in the procession and march that formed part of the Gresford centenary celebrations held in 1929.⁷

Photo: Hazel Hancock Collection.

When the banner was unrolled in 1988, the centre-piece appeared almost untouched by time and the name of Tuttil, 83 City Road London, was still clearly to be seen but the silken borders had not fared so well. Brittle to the touch and eaten by insects, they presented a sorry sight. As well, over the years the border, perhaps suffering wind-damage after use, had been stitched together in an inept way.

Even in this condition the banner was regarded as a unique piece of history, not only for Paterson, but for the heritage of our nation. It was therefore decided to seek professional help in ascertaining its real value, and then to have it refurbished and put on display in the museum.

CONSERVING THE BANNER

Opinions were sought from the Newcastle Regional Museum in the first instance. This institution referred our questions to the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society. After inspection, this knowledgeable group of people agreed that the banner must be preserved and followed this statement with a generous donation towards the cost of assessment for conservation.

It was now clear that the society's duty lay in having the conservation work carried out as soon as possible and in having the banner displayed in the museum so that all could appreciate its fine workmanship, its history and its significance. Perhaps then the community could begin to understand and appreciate the role that Friendly Societies played in the lives of early settlers, and indeed, right up to the 1930s when governments commenced paying pensions and the other benefits that are taken for granted today.

An estimate of the cost of conservation was obtained from International Conservation Services Pty Ltd, a leading firm in Sydney, and it was plain that monetary help would be needed to carry out the conservation work. The price quoted to have the silken borders and fringing replaced and the whole piece preserved in a clear perspex case, viewable from both sides, would be in the order of \$9700. The cost of hanging the banner in the Court House Museum would be additional to that sum.

This was a tremendous amount for a small society to find and the only solution lay in obtaining grants for the project. To this end, Val Anderson, the honorary curator, and her husband, Bill, the society's project coordinator, began the long and arduous task of putting together the information needed to prepare selected grant applications. One was made to the NSW Ministry for the Arts and the other to the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1995 Heritage Assistance Program. Eventually, the

PATERSON DISTRICT NEWS
Maitland Mercury, 26 April 1902.

The Oddfellows' Athletic Carnival took place yesterday. In the early morning a heavy thunderstorm occurred, during which 160 points of rain was registered and this gave a lugubrious outlook to the sports. The residents were dual in their expression of their sentiments: glad at heart of the vicious thunder showers, but also regretful at the threatening aspect of the day in regard to our worthy local Oddfellows. Fortunately, after emptying their precious burden upon the needy earth, the clouds scattered and the day proved a very pleasant one. Notwithstanding the dampness of the early morning, which doubtless prevented the attendance of a great many who purposed participating in the Oddfellows' Athletic Carnival, there was a fine roll-up at the turf during the day. The attendance was estimated at a thousand. The Oddfellows procession, which paraded the town at 11 am, with the Dungog Band at full blast, was a very attractive scene. With flying flags, the beautiful; pictorial banners, and the bright coloured regalia, they made a brave show, to the evident appreciation and enjoyment of our townspeople. The refreshment stall, side shows, shooting galleries, merry-go-round, and swings were all well patronised during the day, and the racing enthusiastically carried out amid a packed ring of spectators.

The ball at night in the School of Arts was a brilliant success. Over sixty couples assembled to indulge in the 'merry tripping' to the alluring strains of the Dungog Band, whose music throughout the day was greatly appreciated. The finances have not yet been totalled up, but we have reason to believe that in every respect our local Oddfellows' celebration has proved an unequalled success.

wonderful news that these applications had been successful was forthcoming. The Ministry for the Arts had granted \$3000 and the Heritage Assistance Program, \$5000. The MUIOOF generously donated \$2000 to assist with the cost of completing the project. This included a means to protect of the banner from strong light during times when the museum is closed.

The banner is now back in Paterson, exhibited in a conserving environment where it will be displayed for many years to come.

The banner is a reminder to the folk of today that life for a man and his family has always had its problems but the community spirit of caring for ones neighbours has softened the blows dealt by life's circumstances. The banner says this in its own words: *We Unite To Assist Each Other.*



Lodge Banner prior to conservation, Paterson Court House Museum.⁵
From left: Cameron Archer, Val Anderson, Robert James, Cynthia Hunter.

Photo: Val Anderson Collection.

REFERENCES

1. Report on the history of Paterson Lodge prepared by Dr Robert James for Paterson Historical Society.
2. Minute books of the Paterson Lodge copied by Mrs Elizabeth Vincent, Picton, NSW. Mrs Vincent is a great grand daughter of Stephen Stanbridge.
3. Photograph of a parade through Paterson during the First World War, showing local school children, the Lodge Banner carried by members, and other organisations of the town. Photo from the collection of the late Stan Fry, Paterson.
4. Newspaper cuttings from *Maitland Mercury*. Paterson Historical Society collection.
5. Photo: Val Anderson collection.
6. Newspaper cuttings, Harry Boyle collection.
7. Photograph of Banner carried in the 1929 Gresford Parade. Hazel Hancock collection.

The Paterson Lodge Banner
was unveiled by
Brian Hartcher
on
25 May 1997.