

# FORGE NEWS

## Chain Bridge Forge | South Holland Life

### Geoff Dodd

It is with sadness that we mark the passing of Geoff Dodd, the third generation of his family to be the Blacksmith at Chain Bridge Forge.

Geoff was a greatly valued member of the Forge team as he passed on a wealth of experience to the establishment of Chain Bridge Forge as a living museum.

In this special edition the Chairman of the Friends of Chain Bridge Gorge, Geoff Taylor, pays tribute to Geoff and his life and his work at the Forge as well as his part in the history of Spalding through the Flower Parade.



### Geoff Dodd

1929 - 2014

Geoff was a gentle giant of a man who cared for everyone he met and without exception was universal liked which in itself is a fantastic epitaph.

Geoff always said he was a reluctant Blacksmith. His ambition was to go to University and follow a different career but the family needed him and he took over the family business.

I first met Geoff in 2007 when on a Heritage Walk. I was impressed by the time capsule of the Forge but the gentlemen who spoke of its history with such passion made an even greater impression on me.

I then met Geoff again in 2010 when I had just retired and looking for my next challenge in life. We joined forces and started the process to create Chain Bridge Forge as a living museum.

Neither Geoff or I had created a museum before so in the early days of the project we would visit museums or other institutions to understand how they had gone about the process. These journeys were always a complete delight as we talked about community, history and anecdotes about his life.

Geoff in true Blacksmithing tradition was a hoarder whether it was items in the workshop which one day he would need to solve a problem for a customer, or some information which answered our questions as to how, who, when and what something had happened.

We now realise we have lost this link to Geoff and the questions which you wanted to ask next time you saw him is no longer possible. However Geoff was very generous with his knowledge and life which has meant we have captured a lot of it for future generations.

Probably Geoff's greatest tangible legacy is the Spalding Flower Parade Floats which he built for over 40 years. This enabled Geoff to apply his considerable intellect and creative flare. He would take an A3 sketch and then convert it into the metal structure which when dressed delighted the community and visitors a like. His work helped promote Spalding and the Flower Parade and provides a legacy for years to come.

Geoff also took his skills to Egypt and help them to create floats also. However Geoff never sure if the event took place.

When we had started to involve children in the Forge Geoff wasn't quite sure, The initial group who visited the Forge were representatives from five different different junior schools. Geoff was pleased to see them make a coat hook and realised that the tradition of Blacksmithing would live on. They were also delighted to hear his anecdotes. Our Blacksmith has now shared this experience with over 300 children. They will hopefully always keep the coat hook and always remember their visit to Chain Bridge Forge, Blacksmithing and remember that kindly gentlemen who shared his life and passion.

Geoff has always played an active part of the development of the Museum and created the ethos of the guided tour where he would share his passion for the subject. This something we try and emulate.

I and all the Friends of Chain Bridge Forge feel very privileged to help Geoff to create a museum to Blacksmithing but perhaps more importantly to Geoff Dodd and his life.

Having learnt of his passing, I received a letter from the The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths saying they were sad to hear of Geoff's death. They were also full of admiration for Geoff and the creation of Chain Bridge Forge and hope it will be a monument to Geoff's life and Blacksmithing.

We share that view.

