**PROVINCE OF WEST LANCASHIRE**

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**60TH ANNIVERSARY**

**OF**

**W.BRO.** **GEOFFREY JAMES MORROW**

**VALE LODGE NO. 5256,**

**AT THE MASONIC HALL, ROWLEY COURT, LANCASTER**

**ON 9TH DECEMBER 2019**

**60th ANNIVERSARY OF W.BRO. GEOFFREY JAMES MORROW**

Brethren we are here this evening to celebrate 60 years as a Freemason with W.Bro Geoffrey James Morrow, Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon of the Province of West Lancashire and Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer of the Province of the Isle of Man and both he and I are very grateful for your attendance and your support this morning. You know, brethren, to be a member of any organisation for 60 years is a remarkable achievement and something that many of us, myself included, are very unlikely to achieve. It is, therefore, very appropriate for Geoffrey’s friends and collegues to celebrate this special occasion with him and I know he will be delighted that you are all here today.

In order to fully appreciate such length of service it might be helpful to remember some of the things that were happening throughout the world in 1959 when W. Bro. Geoffrey James Morrow took his first steps in freemasonry:

* Here in the North West, the average cost of a house was £2077, the average annual salary was £535, the price of an average car was £780. The price of a loaf of bread was £0.07 and the price of a pint of milk was £0.13p.
* In November 1959 music fans in the UK were listening avidly to Travellin Light by Cliff Richard & the Shadows and in America it was Mack the Knife sung by Bobby Darin.
* 1959 saw the sale of the first Barbie Doll, the launch of the **first weather satellite**, the first showing of **The Twilight Zone**, and the first coloured picture of Earth as seen from outer space. In addition, the **inventors** of the world gave us our first look at both the **pacemaker and the microchip**.
* A huge step was taken towards world peace in 1959 when Russia’s President, **Nikita Khruschev agreed to reopen diplomatic relationships with the United States**. He toured the country and met with President Eisenhower at Camp David.
* And most importantly, as far as this meeting is concerned, on the 25th November 1959, at the Masonic Hall, Church St. Lancaster, Mr. Geoffrey James Morrow was initiated as a Freemason and took his first steps in Vale Lodge No. 5256.

**Bro Prov Dep Grand DC would you please place our Celebrant before me so that I might address him.**

Geoff, I am sure you will not mind if we now lower the formalities a little and address each other by our christian names.

You were born in Bolton Le Sands on the 3rd November 1932 and in due time you attended Morecambe Grammar School. You later attended Lancaster and Morecambe Technical College, where you obtained a School Certificate, mainly in Science subjects and Institute of Chemistry qualifications.

In your younger days you were a very keen sportsman and very active in football. In your final year at Morecambe Grammar School you and another pupil were invited by Leeds United to attend a week’s course run by Football Association staff coaches for their junior section. This involved sprinting, heading tennis, (playing tennis with a football), dribbling, pressure shooting etc. After which you were invited by Leeds United for further assessment. This you declined on the advice of your father and that continuation of your education was more important. You ended your football career playing in the Lancashire Amateur League for Morecambe Grammar School Old Boys. Your sporting achievements did not end there, however, as you also played cricket for Bolton-Le-Sands in the Westmorland League and Table Tennis for the College of Further Education and you were the singles champion at RAF Weeton in 1959.

You served in HM Forces between June 1958 and June 1960, where you held the rank of Senior Aircraftsman and you served at RAF Bridgnorth, Hereford and Weeton. Your senior officer was in the Craft, which you told me made requests for Leave of Absence much easier.

In your business life you were employed by Storeys of Lancaster until their closure in February 1983 and you finished as aPrinting and Colour Development Manager. During that time, you were involved with the chief engineer and a company director in the setting up of a printing plant in the USA, your main task being to visit American companies with a view to ensuring supplies, such as paper, chemicals and dyestuffs. Also, to provide a chemist from your staff to move to the USA, to take over the role as works chemist. During the following years you made several trips to the factory to monitor progress and you were appointed a Corporate Member of the Society of Dyers and Colourists. When Storeys closed in 1983 you were offered the position of Technical Manager at a printing company in the Isle of Man.

In your personal life you married your dear wife Betty in February 1958. Sadly Betty passed away in June 2017 but you have very happy memories and are extremely grateful for all the support she gave you in all your sporting activities, being only too willing to make refreshments whilst you sat in the cricket pavilion waiting for the rain to cease, sitting in an unheated room during table tennis matches, standing shivering on the touchline during football matches and even accompanying you to Scotland and Ireland for fishing trips for salmon. You were able to return this support in a small way when she, at the age of 40 expressed a wish to qualify as a nurse and successfully did so. This meant you had to do much more in looking after your family when she had to work odd hours at Lancaster Infirmary. Following your move to the Isle of Man she enjoyed working at Hospice in the IOM for several years.

As a lifelong fisherman myself and Chairman of the Masonic Fishing Charity, I was particularly interested to hear that you had several successful seasons of salmon fishing in England, Scotland and Southern Ireland, with a notable week on the famous River Moy in Eire, when you had eight spring salmon averaging just over 11 pounds each. I also fully understand how much time is required to fish successfully and your need to cease that activity in 2009 in order to care for your wife.

Your marriage was blessed with two children, Katherine & Stephen and two grandchildren, Samantha and Aimee and I also realise from personal experience how much joy they will bring you.

In your leisure time you were Secretary and Treasurer of Bolton-Le-Sands Angling Club for 29 years before becoming President, a position you still hold and you are a member and past President of Probus Club of Rushen in the Isle of Man. You ran Bolton-Le-Sands Youth Club in conjunction with the vicar for several years in the 1950’s. You enjoyed crosswords and things and won several prizes including the New Masonic Samaritan Fund, “Deliberate Mistake” on 3 occasions.

Your Masonic journey began on 25th November 1959 when, poor and penniless, you were initiated into Vale Lodge No. 5256, meeting at the Masonic Hall, Church Street, Lancaster.

**I would now like to ask our Bro Secretary to read an extract from the minutes** **of your Initiation.**

I am sure those names mentioned bring back many happy memories and thus began your long and distinguished journey in Freemasonry.

You were installed into the chair by W.Bro. George Hornby in a double initiation ceremony with Mr. George Webb, which was not unusual in those days due to the number of gentlemen joining Freemasonry. You passed through the various offices of the Lodge until in 1972 you were installed as WM. You served as Assistant Director of Ceremonies for 2 years prior to you moving to the Isle of Man in 1983. In 2009 Vale Lodge elected you an honorary member and I am sure that in 2018 you were delighted to be given the opportunity to install your son in law Paul Taylor into this very chair.

On the 29th May 1984 you became a joining member of the Lodge of Mona No. 2358 in the Province of the Isle of Man, where you were the Treasurer for 8 years. In September 1998 you became a joining member of the Isle of Man Lodge of Installed Masters No. 9598. You served as the Charity Steward in 2000, Junior Warden in 2001, Senior Warden in 2002 and you were installed as WM in 2003.

In the Provincial Grand Lodge of West Lancashire you were appointed to the rank of PPrSGD on the 11th May 1982 and in the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Isle of Man you were appointed to the rank of Past Provincial Grand Sword Bearer on the 31st October 2003.

In the Royal Arch you were exalted into Vale Chapter No. 5256, on 6th March 1973, also at the Masonic Hall, Church Street, Lancaster. You were installed as First Principal in November 1977. After moving to the Isle of Man, you became a joining member of Mona Chapter No. 2358 in May 1984 and shortly afterwards you resigned from Vale Chapter. Years later due to caring for your wife during her long illness you understandably found it necessary to resign from Mona Chapter.

In the Provincial Grand Chapter of West Lancashire you were appointed to the rank of Past Provincial Assistant Grand Sojourner on the 19th May 1982.

**Geoff, having served as a Freemason for 60 years our PGM,**

**RW Bro James Anthony Harrison, wishes me to convey to you, his heartiest congratulations on this outstanding milestone in your masonic journey.**

**As the head of this great Province of West Lancashire, he has issued a Certificate to commemorate this very special day, and I would now ask our Group Chairman,Neil McGill to read this Certificate to you and all the Brethren present.**

**Geoff, it gives me the greatest pleasure to present you with this 60 year Certificate to commemorate this milestone in Freemasonry. Your story is one of considerable commitment to Freemasonry and it has been a great pleasure for me to be able to share it with all the brethren present.**

**On their behalf, I thank you for the last 60 years and wish you good health and continued happiness in all you do in the future.**

**Geoff I extend to you our heartiest congratulations.**