

Good evening, brethren.

I have had the enjoyment of attending many celebrations over the last sixteen years as a member of a Group Executive, but it is certainly one of the special privileges of an Assistant Provincial Grand Master to be invited to take part in the celebration of a brother's special anniversary.

Brethren it is said that the greatest happiness a man can have is to you know that he is loved, and the very fact that there are so many brethren here this evening who have made the journey to take part in this evening's celebration only serves to reinforce that statement and shows the high regard in which the celebrant is held.

But to do that I must first tell you (as if you didn't already know!) who that person is.....

Brother lodge director of ceremonies can you please place Ronald Samuel Everard PPSGW, on the floor of the lodge before me and ensure that he is seated comfortably.

In 1936 there were some very notable events which took place in the world:

- King Edward VIII abdicated the throne to marry his lover Mrs Wallis Simpson the American Divorcee
- Jesse Owens wins 4 gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Berlin
- The British Broadcasting Corporation made its first public television broadcasts
- The Rural Electrification Act became law, bringing electricity to the more remote parts of the country.
- The German airship "The Hindenburg" had its first public flight
- The Spanish Civil War began, and Francisco Franco is named the Head of State.
- The Crystal Palace in London, England was destroyed in a huge fire
- The book 'Gone with the Wind' is published
- Killer Tornadoes strike Tupelo, Mississippi and Gainesville, Georgia.
- Billboard Magazine published the first pop music chart
- Billy Butlin opens his first Butlins holiday camp, Butlins Skegness in Skegness (Ingoldmells), Lincolnshire.
- The RMS Queen Mary leaves Southampton on her maiden voyage to New York.

There were also some very famous people born in 1936, in the persons of Pope Francis the leader of the catholic Church, Buddy Holly the singer, Burt Reynolds the actor, Roy Orbison the singer, Mart Tyler Moore the actress, Engelbart Humperdinck the singer, John McCain the war hero and politician and of course maybe the most famous of them all Ronald Samuel Everard in January 1936 at the Liverpool Maternity Hospital.

Ron's father was Samuel Everard a Merchant Seaman, who unfortunately contracted malaria whilst at sea so had to move ashore some year later and became a manager in a department store in Birkenhead, and his mother Edith Everard who worked as an office supervisor with Littlewoods. Ron's mother Edith passed away in 1988 and his father Samuel passed away in 1994, both having lived long and happy lives.

Ron's early years was spent living with his parents living at the family home located at Harrowby Street just off Granby Street, Toxteth before the family moved to Hunts Cross in 1939 just before World War II commenced. Ron tells me that in 1940 his parents and he had been to see friends in the Toxteth and during the tram journey home the German bombers started an air raid on the docks in Garston and Liverpool. The tram stopped on Smithdown Road near to the hospital so that all the passengers could go into the air raid shelter situated at that location. After a short period, the tram driver said that they should resume their journey and after being dropped off at the stop in Woolton, the family walked home to Hunts Cross. When they were on Stewart Road, off Macketts's Lane, the German bombers decided to make it in Ron's words "a dodgy walk" as the shrapnel from the bombs was flying everywhere.

Ron's education started at Kingsthorpe Road Primary School and later he moved to Abbeyholme High School where he would stay until he completed his school certificate and 'O' levels.

Ron tells me that at the end of the World War II, when at the age of eleven he and two friends decided to go on an expedition to New Brighton to spend the pocket money they had been saving. However, they did not tell their parents. Ron said that they had a thoroughly enjoyable day on the fairground and enjoying the other attractions that they forgot not only the time but when they arrived at the ferry terminus to get the 'Ferry across the Mersey' they had spent all their money. A group of American servicemen who overheard their plight gave them enough money to get the ferry and the tram home to Woolton. Upon arriving back home the group of three intrepid adventurers thought they had got away with their day out, but unfortunately Ron's father who was the station

commander at the fire station in those days had already alerted the police, home guard and the fire brigade who were all out looking for them. I can only imagine the consequences in those days brethren!

It was in 1950 that Ron joined the British Red Cross as a cadet, he rose through the ranks to become a Divisional Officer. Ron tells me that when he joined the British Red Cross, he made friends with another young gentleman called John Lee, and they have remained lifelong friends to this day. One of the best parts of the role Ron tells me was to go on the annual Army Cadet Force two-week Camp to act as the medic team.

The British Red Cross Headquarters in those days was based in the grounds of Broadgreen Hospital, and Ron's officer in those days was very friendly with the matron and Medical Officer so also arranged for Ron to volunteer in the Accident & Emergency Department. Ron started his volunteering as the Librarian pushing the trolley of books around for the patients to loan a book to read during their stay in Hospital. Ron's volunteering progressed to two evenings a week from 7.00 pm to about 3.00 am doing anything the medical staff required from porter, assistant nurse to being present during patient operations.

It was in 1952 that Ron started his working career at Elders & Fyffes, in Garston as a clerk in cash office and then the Engineer's Department. The offices were located either side of a long corridor and in this corridor, there was a collection of model boats mounted on the walls in glass boxes. One day when Ron was in the corridor a group of ladies ran out of the cloakroom, which Ron tells me was very plush including chairs and couches. Ron asked what the problem was, and the ladies told him that there was a ginormous spider in the cloakroom. Ron bravely entered to discover a two-inch spider on the floor, so he showed it the sole of his shoe and dispatched it from this earth.

In 1954 Ron was called up for National Service and joined the Royal Air Force; he was trained as a medic given his medical background and spent his national service attached to what was 617 Squadron. Some of you will be aware that 617 Squadron was made famous during World War II when it got the nickname of the 'Dam Busters', due to its actions in 'Operation Chastise'. On the 16th/17th May 1943 Wing Commander Guy Gibson led the squadron on the audacious bombing raid to destroy three dams in the Ruhr Valley, the industrial heartland of Germany using the famous 'Bouncing Bomb' designed by famous scientist Barnes Wallace. The raid became famous after the epic British War Film called the 'Dam Busters' was released in 1955, starring Richard Todd and Michael Redgrave.

Ron told me of several humorous incidents that occurred during his time with 617 Squadron including one call they received about an aircraft that has crashed, they quickly manned the crash ambulance and set off across the airfield, only to be contacted by control to state that they were driving across a live firing range, they quickly had to reverse and find another route to the crash scene.

Another story Ron told me was when he and a Warrant Officer were dispatched to escort a wounded airman from Newcastle train station to King's Cross train station in London. Upon arrival at Newcastle train station Ron discovered that the airman was in plaster from his chest down his arms to his hands and his legs to his feet, he in fact looked like a star shape. After many goes, they were unable to get the airman into the train as he was too large to fit through the carriage doors. However, he was a Londoner and did not want to stay in hospital in Newcastle, so they placed him in the guard's carriage and covered him with various items to hide him. Ron recalls the rather loud and abrupt telling off they received upon arrival at King's Cross station, but the airman himself was very happy.

In 1956 when Ron was de-mobbed, he returned to Elders & Fyffes and continued to work as a clerk until 1958, when he decided he needed a change of career. Ron tells me that the most memorable part of working for Elders & Fyffes was meeting a young lady called Pauline who would go on to play a huge and important part in his life.

Ron commenced working for Lawtons of Liverpool who had a shop in Whitechapel, they sold stationery, typewriters, and various other items of office equipment. At their Vauxhall Road site they also sold binding machines which put a band around boxes and parcels. Ron would remain with the company for three years until he decided to change careers again.

In 1961 Ron went to work for the Co-operative Insurance Company as a door-to-door insurance salesman, brethren I certainly remember the Co-op insurance man calling at my parents' home of an evening on a weekly basis to collect his premiums.

Ron's by now fiancé Pauline was working at the Cotton Exchange in Liverpool in the laboratory examining samples of cotton that had been brought into Liverpool Docks before they could be auctioned. Pauline would pull the cotton apart and grade its quality, Ron remembers that Pauline always commented on how Egyptian cotton was by far the best.

It was whilst working for the Co-operative Insurance Company that Ron and Pauline got married at St. Matthews Church in Mossley Hill, Liverpool on 18 May 1963, followed by a honeymoon in Newquay, Cornwall. Ron and Pauline would go on to have two children Mark in 1969 and Ruth in 1971. We will return to Ron's family life a little later.

In 1965 Ron finally found his calling and joined Liverpool City Police, which during his service would become Liverpool and Bootle Borough Police and then in 1974 Merseyside Police. At the start of his career following basic training at Bruce in Warrington, Ron was posted to Lark Lane Police Station in Toxteth as a uniformed police constable.

In the early years of his career Ron remembers that as he had been in the Royal Air Force, his experienced colleagues would call on him if anybody had to climb any ladders as they told him that he had received Atomic Warfare Training. Ron was also called upon to deliver death messages as his more experienced colleagues also informed him that he had the medical training to deal with the relatives should they collapse or faint.

Perhaps the most amusing story Ron shared was the time that he had to try and catch some escaped monkeys, he told me that he managed to catch one in the streets by the Mersey River known as the 'Bread Streets' made famous by the TV series Bread. However, he could not catch the one at Garston Police Station.

During his career as a police officer Ron had a variety of different roles and having passed his sergeants examination, he was promoted to the substantive rank of sergeant on 1 January 1975. Ron worked for many years following his promotion at Knowlsey Hall the beautiful family stately home and estate of Lord Derby, in the Communications Department and was involved in the training of the communications staff for the force area.

Ron finished his police career at Force Headquarters in Liverpool as part of the Communications Technical Department, who looked after the telecommunications hardware for the force's communications. This involved looking after the various transmitters and ariels located throughout Merseyside. One such transmitter was on the top of the Anglican Cathedral and when there was a power cut, someone had to attend the Cathedral and take a generator up to the roof so that the transmitter would continue to work. On one such occasion Ron attended the cathedral at about two o'clock in the morning and having put the generator in place, he went into the small hut inside the cathedral by the bell, Ron tells me that he tapped the Bell lightly but that it boomed out ringing across the locality probably scaring most of the residents. Ron eventually retired in 1994.

Returning to Ron's family life; his son Mark went to London to study for his degree, before following his father's footsteps and joining Merseyside Police, where he met his wife Leanne, also a police officer whilst they were both working at Speke Police Station. Both are now retired after thirty years police service. Mark and Leanne provided Ron and Pauline with two grandchildren William aged 21 and George aged 16.

Ron's daughter Ruth went to Hull University to study for her first degree and then attended Liverpool University to qualify as a teacher. Ruth went on to become a primary teacher and married Ian Copeland, they also provided Ron and Pauline with two grandchildren Hannah aged 12 and Isobel aged 8. Unfortunately, Pauline never met Isobel as she sadly passed away on 11 November 2012.

Let us now turn to your career in Freemasonry, it was on 27 November 1962 that you were initiated into Rodney Lodge No 4625 being passed on 24 November 1962 and raised on 24 March 1964. Following the usual pattern of fulfilling all the progressive offices in the Lodge you became its WM on 2 November 1978. Over the years you have held many offices in the lodge including secretary, treasurer, chaplain, and group representative. Rodney Lodge No 4625 was amalgamated with Derby Lodge No 724 on 11 September 2007. Ron is very proud of the fact that since being the WM of Rodney Lodge No 4625 he has never been out of office; he is in fact the chaplain of Derby Lodge No 724 and has been since 2014.

Ron also became a joining member of Sovereign's Peace Lodge No.8911, on 2 February 2014 a lodge for retired police officers, until it surrendered its warrant 30 November 2021, Ron served this lodge as its chaplain between 2018 and its closure.

Ron, you received your first appointment to Provincial grand rank in West Lancashire as Past Provincial Senior Grand Deacon on 23 May 1989. The Province again recognised you with a promotion to the high rank of Past Provincial Grand Junior Warden on 5 October 1999.

On 5 May 2010, the Province awarded you a final promotion to the highest rank available to a Provincial Grand Master that of Past Provincial Senior Grand Warden. This exceptionally rare rank was awarded in no small part to recognise the invaluable work you had carried out for over 14 years as a volunteer in the offices of the West Lancashire Freemasons' Charity.

You were also exalted into the Royal Arch in De Grey and Ripon Chapter No 1356 on 1 April 1970. Over the years you have held many of the progressive offices in the chapter but have never gone through the three principals' chairs.

Ron, you received your first appointment to Provincial Grand Rank as a Past Provincial Assistant Grand Sojourner on 4 October 2013.

And I'm sure I speak on behalf of everybody present that we are absolutely delighted to see you here this evening to celebrate your 60th anniversary and even more so that you have allowed us to celebrate your special evening with you.

Ron, such is the importance of your own diamond jubilee that our Deputy Provincial Grand Master in Charge Philip Gunning has caused a certificate to be struck to mark this wonderful achievement which I shall now ask our group vice chairman John Gibbon to read.