

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 that our celebrant is held in.

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

Brother Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies can you please place W.Bro. Roy James SMITH PPrJGD, on the floor of the lodge before me and ensure that he is comfortable.

In 1947 the major news stories included:

- The International Monetary Fund began to operate advising and lending money to governments all over the world, a service that still operates to this day.
- The year saw the start of the 'Cold War' as it was to become known, which would last for four decades.
- India and Pakistan gain Independence from Great Britain.
- The United Nations votes in favor of the creation of an Independent Jewish State of Israel.

Some very famous people were born in the persons of Hilary Clinton the former first lady of America, Elton John the rock singer, Arnold Schwarzenegger the movie actor, David Bowie the rock singer, Camilla Parker Bowles, the Queen Consort, John Cruyff the footballer, Farrah Fawcett the movie actress and of course maybe the most famous of them all Roy James Smith, born in May 1947, in Smithdown Road Hospital to his father James Smith a Marine Engineer and his mother Glennys Smith who was a shop assistant. A year later in 1940 Roy's parents had a daughter Barbara who would complete the family unit. The family lived in Wavertree, Liverpool.

Roy's early schooling took place at Lawrence Road Infant School followed by Sefton Park Junior School. Roy showed early potential at school and in his final year at Sefton Park he sat and passed the elven plus, which allowed him to attend Hillfoot Hey High School in Woolton.

Roy's mother worked at the Fish and Chip Shop in Lawrence Road and when her boss became ill, he asked them if they wanted to buy the shop. Roy's parents proceeded with the purchase and became the new Fish and Chip shop owners, moving the family to live upstairs in the accommodation above the shop.

Whilst at Hillfoot High School, Roy admits that he did not excel at scholarly subjects but did represent the school at both Athletics and Rugby. Roy obviously showed some flair at Rugby as he had a trial for the Liverpool School Boys Rugby XV.

Outside of school Roy joined the 11th Wavertree St Bridget's Scouts, something that he thoroughly enjoyed. In 1963 at the age of sixteen Roy was chosen to go to the Scout World Jamboree which was held at Marathon in Greece. While at the Jamboree Roy met the King of Greece King Constantine and represented Great Britain in the Scout Olympics as a sprinter.

Roy also remembers the Jamboree as it was the first time that he had been abroad and flown on an airplane, the usual family holidays up to this point had been spent in Hoylake.

Roy also left school in 1963 and took up a position with Alan Dale & Sons Fish Merchants as a junior salesman with a view to learning the fish trade so that he could open his own shop at a future date.

At the same time some friends at the Scout Troop decided to form a beat group, I wonder if growing up during the late 1950's and early 1960's in Liverpool with the explosion of music talent had a part to play in Roy's decision to join the band. Roy went out and purchased a set of drums and became the bands drummer.

The band was named "The Runaways" and soon began to play at various clubs and music venues in the Merseyside area such as The Cavern, Mardi Gras, Down Beat and Orrell Park Ballroom amongst them. The band was supporting many groups who were hit Parade artists starting out on their careers, such as, Rod Stewart, The Bee Gees and The Moody Blues.

The band were introduced to a young actor called Bill Kenwright by a mutual friend and eventually made a record with him, the A side was a cover of the song written by Berry Gordy Jnr and first released in 1967 by Chris Clark called "I want to go back there again". The B side was a song called 'A walk Through Dreams' written by Daniels. It was released in 1967 but never made the top 10 I am afraid. (play song on apple music)

The band also managed to make a few TV appearances. Sadly, the group disbanded after five years in 1968. Roy returned to his original plan and opened his own fish mongers shop also in Lawrence Road. Roy would in later life join another band called "Magic" a social band that would play around the working clubs of Merseyside

Whilst in 'The Runaways' Roy met a young lady named Kathleen and following as was the case in those days a suitable courtship period, they were engaged in 1968. Roy and Kathleen married at St Clares Church on the junction of Arundel Ave and York Avenue in Sefton Park on the 1st September 1971 and have been happily married ever since. We will return to Roy and Kathleen a little later.

Following the opening of his own Fishmongers, Roy decided that he would become a Scout Leader for St Bridget's Scouts to pass on his knowledge and experiences gained through his enjoyable time as a scout. Roy stayed as a Scout Leader at St Bridget's for six years until 1974.

After several years of running his own fishmonger's shop and the decline of people eating fish, the emergence of the big supermarkets and of course the 'Cod Wars' he eventually decided that there was no real future in the fishmonger business. After speaking to friends, he sold the business and went to work at the Ford Motor Company in Halewood, as it was a steady job with good earning potential. Roy enjoyed working at the Ford Motor Company and rose through the ranks to become a quality control Inspector.

Brethren if you remember we are often told that three of the things that will bring us the most stress are moving house, starting a new job, and having children. Well Roy and Kathleen managed to combine all three of these between 1979 and 1984. Roy and Kathleen had their first child a daughter Laura in 1979 his first and two years later in 1981 another daughter Nicola was born. Finally in 1983 a son Andrew was born completing their family.

They had moved to Southport in 1980 to open a small hotel, which Kathleen ran whilst managing her first daughter who was only one year old and then having two further children. In 1984 Roy decided that bringing up three small children and running a small hotel was maybe too much for Kathleen and combined with the daily travel for him to Halewood, he left the Ford Motor Company to assist her in running the Hotel.

Returning to the Scouting theme both Roy and Kathleen's daughters Laura and Nicola became brownies at Holy Family Church, and when their leader left, they volunteered their mother Kathleen to become "Brown Owl" His son Andrew joined Beaver Scouts and then moved onto Cubs.

When the Sea Scout Troop leader left, the other leaders discovered that Roy had held a Scout Leaders Warrant in Liverpool. Roy then became Sea Scout Leader for the 58th Southport Sea Scouts where the young people called him "Skip".

He was literally thrown in at the deep end with not having any experience of water activities. Eventually after several years and a great deal of training Roy became a Kayak coach, sailing instructor, power boat and safety boat driver, bell boat instructor and a dragon boat coach.

In 1997 with their children getting older and the impact of the recession, Roy and Kathleen decided to close the Hotel, sell the property, and moved to a home in Sussex Road, Southport and take up less, demanding occupations. Kathleen became a medical secretary at Southport District Medical Hospital and Roy went to work in a local bakery where he became a manager. Roy eventually retired in 2012

Southport Scouts had their headquarters burnt down by some young lads who had broken into the building and set it on fire. What was sad was that these young lads had been working at the headquarters as part of their community sentence painting the building.

The new Scout Headquarters was built in 1999 and funded by the National Lottery at a cost of around 1.5 million pounds. Roy was integral to the building of the center as he and his wife Kathleen were on the committee

in charge of its construction. The buildings are now a Water Activity Center on the Marine Lake open seven days a week and used by schools and many community organisations as well as the scouts.

Roy managed through raising local donations to purchase two Dragon Boats and set up the Southport Scouts Dragon Boat Team called "The Southport Serpents." They entered several regional and national competitions in the early years, eventually becoming National Scout Champions in 2005.

The team were helped by a Masonic Grant which bought the buoyancy aids and T-shirts in their team colours of yellow and black. Many of the team went on to become members of the Great Britain under 18 team and represented Great Britain in various countries around the world such as, Italy, Germany, Poland and even Australia. Roy would also go on to coach to the Great Britain team and spent several happy years touring with the team.

Roy was instrumental just before the pandemic in raising donations totaling twenty thousand pounds to purchase three new Dragon Boats for the Scouts and others to use. The boats were built in China and shipped over to the Water Activity Centre at Southport. Roy has spent a great deal of time instructing many children in various activities and is very well thought of within the Scouting Community. After thirty-five years of volunteering within the Scout Movement he was awarded the Silver Acorn award in 2020.

Roy is often seen down at the Scout Headquarters and Water Activity Centre at the helm of one of the Dragon Boats, driving the Safety Powerboat or just doing some of the vast array of jobs required to keep such a large Centre going.

Roy and Kathleen are very proud of their three children, Laura is a Primary School Teacher and has followed in the family scouting tradition as she is also a beaver Scout Leader along with all 4 of her children. Laura has also just taken a course on boating to assist her father on the water.

Nicola is now a film producer working in the advertising industry after having had very successful roles on shows such as Jeremy Kyle and Coronation Street. Nicola also worked on two films 'Eaten by Lions' starring Johnny Vegas and 'Under the Mud'.

Andrew after serving in the Royal Navy following in both his Grand Father's footsteps as a Mariner, although they served in the Merchant Navy. Kathleen's father survived having the vessel he was serving on torpedoed by the Germans in World War II. Andrew is now a father of three children and working as an engineer. His eldest Daughter is a budding actress having gained roles in several stage and film productions

Roy having retired is now of course employed as 'Grandads Taxi Service' running the seven Grandchildren around. He enjoys the experiences but says the pay is not so good

Let us now turn to your masonic career. Your father James Smith was a member of Phoebus Lodge No. 7705 which was consecrated in 1960 and met at several venues, The Constitutional Club in Tithebarn Street, Carlton Masonic Hall in Eberle Street, and finally the Masonic Hall in Hope Street until it surrendered its warrant in 2007.

On the 28th November 1972 you were initiated into Uranus Lodge No.6485 at the Carlton Masonic Hall in Liverpool, your proposer was WBro Steve Phillips, and your seconder was his son Bro Keith Phillips. You were passed to the degree of a fellowcraft on the 27th March 1973 and raised to the sublime degree of a master Mason on the 22nd January 1974.

After having passed through the usual progressive ranks you were installed as Worshipful Master of the Lodge in September 1988, by this time the Lodge was meeting at Garston Masonic Hall having met at Bootle Masonic Hall for eleven years between 1977 and 1986. During his year as Worshipful Master Roy had the pleasure of initiating the current Treasurer of South Liverpool Lodge W. Bro Ron Ibbs. Following his year in the chair Roy served the lodge in several positions including Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies and Charity Steward.

Uranus Lodge No.6485, Queens Lodge No.2681 and Temperance Lodge No.2714 all suffering from a reduction in membership amalgamated in November 2009 to become the South Liverpool Lodge No.2681. Roy was Worshipful Master of the Lodge.

Roy you were also a founder of Garston Lodge of Installed Masters No.9403 consecrated on the 9th September 1991 and remained a member until the 30th April 1998.

Roy, you were recognised by the Province of West Lancashire with appointment to Provincial Grand Rank as Past Provincial Junior Grand Deacon on the 5th May 1998.

You were also exalted into the Holy Royal Arch in Neptune Chapter No.1264 on the 12th January 1976 and remained a member until the 28th April 1999.

Roy you are also a member of the Mark Master Masons Degree having been advanced in 1997 into Coronation Mark Lodge 563, serving as its Worshipful Master in 1983. During your year as Worshipful Master you had the great privilege to advance your father James Smith into the order. Roy you would serve the Lodge as Secretary for eight years. Roy you were again Worshipful Master of Coronation mark Lodger No.563 in 2020 and served for two years due to the COVID Pandemic.

Roy you were recognised by the Mark Province of West Lancashire in 1987 with appointment to the rank of Provincial Deputy Grand Sword Bearer and promoted in 1993 to the very high rank of Past Provincial Grand Junior Warden.

And I am sure I speak on behalf of everybody present that we are absolutely delighted to see you here this evening to celebrate your 50th anniversary as a Freemason and even more so that you have allowed us to celebrate your special evening with you.

Roy such is the importance of your own golden jubilee that our Provincial Grand Master Brother Mark Francis Matthews has caused a certificate to be struck to mark this wonderful achievement which I shall now ask our Group Chairman Worshipful Brother John Murphy to read.....