

Derek and companions, may I thank you all for allowing me to share with you this 50th jubilee celebration in the Royal Arch. I feel honoured to do such a thing especially when I see those who have assembled here to witness this event and trace the development of this gentle man's life.

During my several discussions with Derek, I discovered he has a love of both Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra songs, as well as the Beatles, and so I will be punctuating this presentation with music from these two. You may sing along if you feel moved to do so but no dancing!

Song: My Way by Frank Sinatra plays

Derek, was born in September 1936 at Victoria Park Maternity Home Warrington, the only child of Edith and James. 20y days later he was baptised at St Elphin's Parish Church. And so started a life guided by strong Christian principles and beliefs.

This was of course three years before the outbreak of the second world war, and the one in which Edward VIII abdicated and the Hitler Olympics were held from 1 to the 16 of August in Berlin.

Meanwhile, in the West, this was the most popular song of that era:

Song: Pennies from Heaven by Louis Prima plays:

Just before his third birthday, his father was called up. He survived Dunkirk but didn't see his only child again until he was nine years old after the war had ended. During those war years he was brought up on the Bewsey Estate by his mother. As she worked regular nights at the Risley Munitions Factory, he slept at neighbours for safety.

In 1945, as if to raise the spirits of post-war Britain, Bing Crosby and the Andrew Sisters were singing this:

Song: Accentuate the Positive by Bing Crosby plays:

Derek attended Bewsey Primary and Secondary Modern Schools where in his final year he became Head Boy. Derek represented the school at football, rugby and cricket, and was also selected for Warrington Schoolboy's Rugby Team.

In this formative period, Derek also attended St Barnabas Sunday School and was confirmed in 1949 by the then Bishop of Liverpool, Right Reverend Clifford Martin. He was also a member of the 31st Workingmen's Mission Cubs and Scouts Group, participating in the Warrington Walking Day for several years.

On leaving school in December 1951 at the age of 15, he started work at the longest established wire works in Warrington, N Greenings & Sons, as an apprentice engineering draughtsman, his first day at work was on New Year's Eve 1951 and his second day was New Year's Day, no holidays in those days! This also involved attending Warrington Technical College on day release for 6 years, studying mechanical engineering where he gained his HNC.

As Derek left school, Bing was singing this:

Song: Domino by Bing Crosby plays:

National Service then beckoned in January 1960 and Derek served for two years in the Royal Artillery as a Driver/Radio Operator, mainly in Germany, where he quickly realised it was a big advantage to gain a place on the regimental rugby union team and travel round Germany most week-ends, rather than be on guard duty when the situation at the time between East and West was very strained with Germany itself divided.

Re-joining civilian life in February 1962, he returned to Greenings and Warrington Technical College, studying further engineering endorsement subjects in the evenings for another three years, which eventually led to him later achieving Chartered Engineer qualification and Corporate Membership of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. (MIMechE).

In 1965 Derek worked for a number of iconic engineering companies in the North West, including English Electric, where he was a Design Engineer on the famous diesel engines, but **THE EVENT OF THAT YEAR** was held at St Mary's Church in Great Sankey where Derek and Doris were married. Doris, at the time, was a very successful town centre hairdresser.

So, in two years' time Derek and Doris will celebrate their ruby wedding, marking sixty happy years of marital bliss.

There was only one song that Bing Crosby sang that would fit the occasion

Bing Sings "The Bells of St. Mary's"

The old groaner obviously had Derek and Doris in mind when he recorded that!

In 1967, their daughter Elaine was born. She now lives in Reading and has two grown-up boys aged 22 and 25. In 1969 their son Stuart was born - he now lives in Sale – both of the children have successfully made their way in the world.

In between the births of their two children, Derek moved jobs to Lockheed in Speke and into aircraft hydraulics and landing systems. This gave his claim to fame as you were responsible for the stress analysis and certification of the undercarriages of the Hawker Siddley Hawk, an aircraft which is still flown today by the Red Arrows.

Song: Well Did You Evah? By Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra plays

In 1976 a move to the nuclear industry followed with a short spell at BNFL, where he was involved with nuclear and mechanical plant design. Two years later, he joined Drafting and Technical Services (DATS), Widnes working on a design for a Chemical Plant at ICI Runcorn. Completing the contract in 1981, Derek gained a position as Head Office Engineer with Royal Sun Alliance Engineering Insurance in Manchester and in 1989 became Assistant Manager of the Special Services Division. As computerisation increased in the 90s, he took early retirement at 60 in 1996 but worked for a further five years as a self-employed consultant engineer, mainly at Allianz Cornhill Engineering Insurance in Manchester before finally retiring completely when he reached 65 in 2001.

There is one song by Ol' Blue Eyes which fits in with Derek's steadfast application to all he has undertaken during his 87 years:

Song: All the Way by Frank Sinatra plays

Derek, was initiated in Lodge of Lights No148 on 27 of October 1969, passed in 1969 and raised in 1970, a speedy progression in those days. He was installed as WM in January 1982 and there followed a series of offices in the lodge including several treasurer's jobs, lodge chaplain, ADC, preceptor, 1997 Festival Rep, auditor and in 2008 you became almoner a position he still holds.

Such application has been rewarded by being appointed PPJGD in 1991, promoted to PPSGD in 1998 and then PPGSuptWks in 2012.

In the Royal Arch, Derek was exalted in Elias Ashmole Chapter No 148 on 15 January 1973 and Installed as first principal in March 1988. He has been the assistant director of ceremonies since past first principal, an auditor and has been the group representative since 2012.

All this work has been rewarded by an appointment as PPAGSoj. in 1995, promotion to PPDGSwdB and then further promotion to the extremely high rank of PPGSN on 9 October 2019. Derek is also a member of two other Masonic Orders.

His group activities include being the coordinator from 2010 to 2015 of the Annual Group Church Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication. Along with Doris, they are also members of the Warrington Masonic Fellowship, where he has served in the office of vice chairman for 2 years and chairman for 2 years.

As if all this was not enough, Derek still finds time to maintain a very sizeable garden, go to the gym and support Warrington Wolves which he has done for 73 years, including attending every Wembley and championship final that they have been involved in since the Second World War.

There can only be one Beatles song which lends itself to the memories which Derek keeps: In My Life

His main commitment however is to the Church, his personal relationship with God being all important in his life.

Derek has served on the Parochial Church Council at St Mary's, Great Sankey, at various periods over the last 54 years and assists in the services by delivering Bible readings on a rota basis, also bell ringing every Sunday and at weddings. He has been responsible for the church grounds since he retired from work and was instrumental in designing and building the Garden of Remembrance in 2004 for the interment of ashes; this is still an ongoing commitment.

Derek, has contributed much to Royal Arch Masonry and this chapter by giving up much of his time. He has served the community and his church so well.

Colin remarked: "Consequently Derek, in all of the discussions you and I have had, in all the conversations with other companions I've had and indeed all I've been told about you by others, there is a common attribute that stands out and that is with you, personal integrity comes first. Your adherence to Christian virtues makes you a true gentleman.

I am sure you have derived a great deal of pleasure and enjoyment from all that you have done, and it is a great honour and privilege to say to you, Derek, thank you and congratulations on achieving 50 years as a Royal Arch Freemason. I am sure we all look forward to seeing you enjoy many more years as a member of this great order.

I would now be grateful if Andy Barton, the group chairman would assist me by reading the jubilee certificate."