

The Life and Times of Louis Jacob COLLINS

Good evening, Companions.

I have had the enjoyment of attending many celebrations over the last 13 years as a member of a Group Executive, but it is certainly one of the special privileges of an Assistant to the Provincial Grand Principals to be invited to take part in the celebration of a companion's special anniversary.

Companions, 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 companions 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.....

Companion Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies can you please place Louis Jacob COLLINS PPrGSN, on the floor of the Chapter before me and ensure that he is comfortable.

In 1942, Great Britain was in the middle of the Second World War with Germany and its allies and the major news stories included: In February several weeks after Japan had joined the war, 135 Japanese aircraft attacked Darwin in northern Australia, 240 people were killed. This was the first and largest of almost 100 air raids that Australia would endure during 1942-1943.

The Battle of Java Sea took place when the allies failed to stop Japanese attacking Java. 16 B-25 bombers, launched from the US aircraft carrier Hornet, carry out the first raids on Japan. The Americans successfully defend Midway Island and stop the Japanese from capturing it. Rommel's Panzer Army Afrika capture Tobruk and take 35,000 troops as prisoners including 7,000 from the British 8th Army. Rommel as a result is promoted to Field-Marshal. General Montgomery leads the 8th Army in the battle of El Alamein and sends the German Army in North Africa into full retreat. Heavy Russian fighting halts the German army at Stalingrad.

Some very famous people were born in the persons of Muhammed Ali the world heavyweight boxing champion, Stephen Hawking the theoretical physicist, Bob Ross the painter, Harrison Ford the actor, Jimi Hendrix the musician, Aretha Franklin the singer, Paul McCartney the Beatles musician, Barbara Streisand the singer and actress, Carole King the composer, John Thaw the actor of the Sweeney fame and of course maybe the most famous of them all in Dublin's fair city, Louis Jacob COLLINS in January 1942.

Louis you were born and raised in Dublin, your father Norman was a company director, and your mother Rachel a housewife. You enjoyed your time growing up in Dublin and enjoyed school and excelled at sports. You finished secondary school and went to St Andrews College Dublin to study dentistry. Whilst at university you continued to enjoy sport especially sailing dinghies and fencing, specialising in the foil.

You graduated in 1964 and sought a practice in Dublin, however it was suggested that you seek your fortune in England due to employment opportunities in the National Health Service. You subsequently travelled to Liverpool where your grandmother had been born and where you had several extended family members. You took lodgings in Barndale Road, Allerton and secured a position with a dental practice in Long Lane owned by a Mr Meredith who had several other practices in Liverpool including Woolton and Walton at which you worked for two days a week at each. You stayed there for six months and cleared the patient backlog for Mr Meredith who then decided that there was no further work for you. You then obtained a position in a practice in Belfast, Northern Ireland as that also had a National Health Service.

You enjoyed your time there, however the sectarian differences between the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities were such that they seemed to enjoy throwing bricks at each other on a regular basis. This was taking place well before the advent of what is now known as the Troubles.

Being a young man who enjoyed a lively social life it was disappointing to work all week and then find that every weekend in Belfast at that time was somewhat subdued, to such an extent that the local authority locked up even the swings in the local park on a Sunday. As a result, you travelled every Friday night to Dublin seeking entertainment and a good night out until on one occasion when returning at about two in the morning in your old car, you were forced to stop on a lonely dark road by a soldier stepping into the road.

The soldier approached your car and as you wound down the window you were confronted by the soldier placing his rifle on the window sill pointing the weapon at you and demanding where you had been to and

where you were going. This event coupled with the rising tensions in Belfast caused you to re-consider your position at the dental practice and you resigned the following day. After serving your period of notice you returned to Liverpool.

A postscript to your time in Belfast was an event some three years after you left during which time the Troubles were in full flow, you learned that three Norwegian sailors were in the dentist waiting room when terrorists entered and shot all three of them dead. This caused the practice to close.

On your return to Liverpool, you again obtained lodgings and through some friends you were invited to join a bridge club in Upper Duke Street, Liverpool. You enjoyed the social aspect of learning and playing bridge, an activity you continue a couple of times a week. Whilst at the bridge club, learning the game, there were two young ladies who caught your eye. You eventually asked one of them out on a date which happily resulted in your marriage to your wife Jillian on 10 September 1967.

Your father-in-law Lester Davidson was a very generous man and as a wedding present he gave you funds to allow you to buy a house and a dental practice. You secured a dental practice in Salisbury Road, Wavertree where you practiced for 36 years prior to your retirement at the age of 60.

An interesting fact during your practice was that when you took over the patient list when moving into Salisbury Road you discovered the file of patient who was none other than the comedian Ken Dodd. The file recorded that the dentist at the time refused to remove Ken Dodd's two front teeth when as a child he wanted them taken out because they were so prominent. What a fortuitous decision that proved to be for Daddy's career!

You have enjoyed a loving marriage to Jillian for 56 years during which time you have had three sons, Nigel, Andrew and Richard who have all left home pursuing careers in England and the United States of America. You have five grandchildren, Aimee, Lucy, Shmaryatu, Naftali and Mordechai and one great-granddaughter, Miriam.

MASONIC CAREER

Your connection to Freemasonry started when your father was a Mason in Dublin. However, your journey actually commenced when your father-in-law Lester Davidson suggested that you join the Craft, you agreed and subsequently you were proposed, at the age of 26 years, as a candidate for Lodge of Israel No 1502 by Lester Davidson and seconded by the immediate past master T M Elsworthy. You were initiated on 13 May 1968.

You were Passed to the second degree on 10 February 1969 and raised to the sublime degree of a master Mason on 14 April 1969. At that point in time Lodge of Israel had over 200 members and as such it was not uncommon to wait many years to progress through the various offices. You became a steward, one of about 20y, who used to meet and learn the various degrees to such a proficiency that they were able to perform ceremonies with ease. You progressed to take the chair as WM on 9 November 1981.

You subsequently served the lodge as treasurer for 12 years and as chaplain for ten10 years. Your service to the lodge was recognised by the Province of West Lancashire when you were appointed to the rank of PPrJGD on 18 May 1992 and subsequently to the high rank of PPrJGW on 4 October 2000. You are also a member of King David Lodge No 7256 having joined on 15 December 2021. You celebrated your membership of the Craft for f50 years on 14 May 2018.

Turning to your Royal Arch Career, you realised during your time as a steward in your lodge that you wished to expand your Masonic knowledge and as such explored the prospect of joining the Royal Arch. You were proposed and seconded as a candidate for exaltation into Menorah Chapter No. 4513. You were exalted into the chapter on 18 January 1973.

You enjoyed the new ritual and camaraderie of the companions and progressed through the various offices until you were installed as the first principal on 3 September 1987. You served as the chapter charity steward from 9 June 1996 until 9 November 2016 when unfortunately, the chapter was forced to surrender its charter due to falling membership.

You decided to have a break from Royal Arch Masonry when the chapter closed, however when approached by your good friend Barry Ellman PPrGSN you realised that you missed the enjoyment etc. of the Royal Arch

and decided to seek membership of Royal George Chapter No 4119. You joined Royal George Chapter No 4119 on 16 March 2022 and your experience and skill as a charity steward was utilised by appointing you as the chapter charity steward, an office you now hold.

Your service to your mother chapter and the Royal Arch was recognised by the Provincial Grand Chapter of West Lancashire when you were appointed to the Provincial grand rank of PPrAGSoj on 11 May 1995, followed by a promotion to the rank of PPrGSwdB on 24 April 2003 and subsequently to the high rank of PPrGSN on 7 April 2010.

It is such an importance of your own golden jubilee that our Grand Superintendent Mark Francis Matthews has caused a certificate to be struck to mark this wonderful achievement which I shall now ask our group chairman. David Thomas Atkinson to read.....

Many congratulations, I hope you continue to enjoy your Freemasonry and spend many more years as a member of the Chapter

John P. Murphy PGStB APGP
4th December 2023
Garston Masonic Hall