

Good evening, brethren,

I have had the enjoyment of attending many celebrations over the last 16 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 didn't already know!) who that person is..... Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies can you please place Alan Chambers PRESCOTT PPrJGW, on the floor of the lodge before me and ensure that he is comfortable.

So let us think back to 1931 and what was happening in the world, the year would see some momentous events:

- January 26 – Winston Churchill resigns from Stanley Baldwin's shadow cabinet after disagreeing with the policy of conciliation with Indian nationalism.
- January 16 - Australian cricket batting prodigy Don Bradman scores 223 v West Indies in 3rd Test in Brisbane; most runs scored by a player in a Test match in Australia in one day.
- The Charlie Chaplin comedy film 'City Lights' receives its premiers at the Los Angeles theatre with Albert Einstein as the guest of honour, to critical acclaim.
- Malcolm Campbell sets world land speed record speed of 246.08 mph driving his famous Blue Bird car at Daytona Beach, Florida.
- The original "Dracula" film starring Bela Lugosi as the titular vampire, is released.
- 1st nonstop transpacific flight, Japan to Washington
- June 12 - Al Capone is indicted on 5,000 counts of prohibition and perjury. October 18 – the gangster is convicted on five of the 23 counts of tax evasion against him, later fined \$50,000 and sentenced to 11 years in jail.
- February 4 – Soviet leader Joseph Stalin gives a speech calling for rapid industrialisation, arguing that only strong industrialised countries will win wars, while "weak" nations are "beaten". Stalin states: "We are 50 or a 100 years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they will crush us." The first five-year plan in the Soviet Union is intensified, for the industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture.
- The Second Spanish Republic is proclaimed in Madrid. Meanwhile, because of the victory of the Republican Left of Catalonia, Francesc Macià proclaims in Barcelona the Catalan Republic, as a state of the Iberian Federation.
- Construction of the Empire State Building is completed in New York City.
- In Brazil the 'Christ the Redeemer' statue opens standing 30 meters high (98 ft) on top of Mount Corcovado overlooking Rio de Janeiro, built by engineer Heitor da Silva Costa
- The George Washington Bridge across the Hudson River in the United States is dedicated; it opens to traffic the following day. At 3,500 feet (1,100 m), it nearly doubled the previous record for the longest main span in the world.
- November 7 - The Chinese Soviet Republic is proclaimed by Mao Zedong.

Some very famous people were born in 1931 including, William Shatner the actor famous for playing Captain Kirk in the films and television series Star Trek, James Dean the Rock and Roll singer, Angela Dickinson the actress, Boris Yeltsin the former Russian President, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Diana Dors the actress and probably the most famous of them all Alan Chambers PRESCOTT.

Alan was born in June 1931 at Oldham to his parents, father Ernie and mother Alice, both of whom were spinning operatives in the local cotton spinning mill. Alan was one of seven children, sadly his sister Mary who lived in Oldham, and brothers James, who lived in New Zealand, Ronald who lived in Chadderton and Eric who lived in Hampshire are all deceased, but his sister Hilda who is a sprightly 88 years young lives in Llandudno and his brother David who is 84 years young lives in Rochdale.

Alan started his education very early at the age of three years, when after regularly following his older brothers to Stanley Road School in Chadderton are of Oldham. The head at the time said he could start early as he was

obviously fascinated by the prospect of attending school. Somehow, I think Alan was just curious about what his brothers were getting up to.

As with many schools in the 1930's and 1940's Stanley Road School covered infants, juniors and seniors' education, so Alan remained at the school until he was 14 years of age and sat the special entrance examination for Oldham Technical College.

After finishing at Stanley Road School and having past the special entrance examination, Alan attended Oldham Technical College and completed his studies with a School Certificate, which covered English, mathematics, science, history, geography etc. It is interesting how history looks at the past and the future sometimes we think what has gone previously is worth bringing back into fashion. Just like the modern new English Baccalaureate or EBacc as it is known, that covers a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers. The Ebacc consists of English language and literature, maths, the sciences, geography or history and a language.

Whilst at school Alan told me that rugby was the sport of his choice, and he enjoyed playing for both the school teams and teams in the local leagues. Of course, living in the north of England, the only rugby permitted was rugby league. As well as playing rugby in his early years, Alan has been a lifelong supporter of the game, even to this day.

Alan, in his spare time, was a member of the Boys Brigade, starting as a Life Boy's and progressing to become a member of the company and a senior boy. Alan would remain with the Boy's Brigade and become an officer for several years until he commenced National Service.





At the age of 16, like most of his generation, Alan would leave full time education and start work, Alan was fortunate and obtained a bonded apprenticeship as a joiner / carpenter with a local firm Fred Ainsworth Ltd. A search of google only revealed one entry in relation to this company: an advert inside an Oldham Rugby League Football Club programme for the home game between Oldham and Whitehaven on 26 March 1966.

**1965/6**

# MACKESON

## Rugby League Contest

*Organised by Whitbread & Co. Ltd.  
in association with The Rugby Football League*

The Mackeson Rugby League Contest Trophy and a cheque for 200 guineas goes to the team with the best scoring record for the season. Cheques for 100 guineas and 50 guineas go to the runners-up.

The Champions' Flag and inscribed silver tankards are awarded to the top scoring team in each of five periods during the season.

**THE 5 PERIODS ARE:**

August 18	to	October 2
October 4	to	November 27
November 29	to	January 22
January 24	to	March 19
March 21	to	May 21



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OFFICIAL  
**6d.**  
PROGRAMME

# OLDHAM

## Rugby League Football Club



**RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE**  
Northern League Championship Match  
**OLDHAM**  
v.  
**WHITEHAVEN**  
SATURDAY, 26th MARCH, 1966  
Kick-off 3.0 p.m.

## Wellington Garage

VIPs "Kick Off" with VIP PETROL & OILS  
Save 6d. per gallon Oil 8/9 gallon Open 24 hours

**HUDDERSFIELD ROAD - OLDHAM**

**MAIN VAUXHALL/BEDFORD DEALERS**

with St. Helens, Wakefield, Wigan, Leeds, Swinton, Castleford and Bradford taking the first seven places.

We travelled to Swinton yesterday to play the 'Lions' for the fourth time this season. Let us hope we were successful in registering a win. We travel to Rochdale on Monday for another tough League encounter and then we have to visit Leigh on a date still to be arranged.

'The Hazards of being famous!' Our coach Frank Dyson was really under the weather over the weekend.

After visiting the Astoria Ballroom on Friday evening to judge the final of the Carnival Queen, Frank, along with his wife, started off on their unenviable task of returning home over the snow-covered Moors. When they reached Stanedge the road was blocked, so they had to spend the night in the car. On the Saturday they hitched hiked back into Oldham and caught the train to Huddersfield. Frank, of course, had to return to the Moors on Sunday in order to 'dig' out his car.

We are pleased to report that the road at the Pavilion end of the ground has now finally been completed, and I am sure that the tarmac surface will be better for everyone.

## H HEGINBOTTOM & SONS

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### ARE YOU A GOLFER?

The Annual Golf Competition for the Rugby League Golfing Trophy presented by the late Major C. W. Robinson of York will be played at Grange Park Golf Club, St. Helens on Wednesday, 4th May, 1966.

Any person who has played Rugby League Football at school or with a club, who has been an official connected with the game in any capacity, or any journalist who has written about the game, and any person who is a shareholder or a full member of a Rugby League Club, is eligible to compete. Attractive prizes are offered. This is a social occasion as well as a pleasant day's golf.

Competitors should write for application forms to the Rugby League Offices, 180 Chapeltown Road, Leeds 7, before 20th April, 1966.

W. FALLOWFIELD, Secretary.

### CUP FINAL TICKETS

Standing enclosure tickets (under cover) at 5/- each are being sold at the Rugby League Offices, 180 Chapeltown Road, Leeds 7. Stamped and addressed envelopes should be sent with applications. Tickets are going faster this year than for several seasons and supporters wishing to see the match are strongly advised to book their tickets NOW.

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**OPPOSITE THE NEW CIVIC CENTRE**

At the age of 21 years and after completing his bonded apprenticeship the British Army came calling for Alan and he was called up for his National Service in Her Majesty's Forces. Although he did not want to go, Alan just like those brave men of his generation duly went to do his service for Queen and Country. He served for a period of two years in the Royal Corp of Information Signals. Alan was lucky to be seconded to the Royal Airforce after initial training to maintain and repair the signal equipment on Royal Airforce bases across Europe.

Alan would find himself based in the West German City of Cologne at RAF Wahn, which was one of the airfields operated by the RAF during their occupation of Germany in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Cold War. Wahn had been a Luftwaffe airfield during the Second World War, until it was occupied by the RAF.

During the Berlin Airlift of 1948-49, three Mosquito squadrons and one Spitfire squadron of the British Air Forces of occupation were based there, concentrated to free up other airfields for the transport aircraft to fly supplies into the besieged city.

The RAF left Wahn in 1957. It is now Flughafen Köln/Bonn 'Konrad Adenauer', an international civilian airport. When the Royal Air Force handed over Wahn Airport to the German authorities on Thursday, 18 July 1957, the official ceremony was run on strictly interservice lines between the RAF and new Luftwaffe.



Alan recalls that he and a colleague would load up a truck and a trailer with tools and materials and set off from RAFG Wahn around the RAF bases and airfields in Germany, Belgium and Holland. They would have to beg a bed and food for the night at whichever RAF or Army base they could find on their trip until they arrived back at RAF Wahn.

I asked Alan if ever he had been offered a flight in a jet or other airplane during his time in Germany and he recalled that during the day the pilots had to practice night flying in two-seater Gloster Meteor airplane. Alan told me of the one time he had been given the opportunity of going up in the air with an RAF pilot, who allowed him to take control of the joystick and use the foot pedals to fly the plane.

The Gloster Meteor was the only allied jet to see combat in World War Two and in its various marks served in day, night and training operations. Its sturdy construction also made it an ideal test bed for a variety of products which followed it. Between 1950 and 1955 the Meteor F8 provided the backbone of Britain's air defence capability.





By the end of the 1947 the British Meteor fighter had fallen behind its contemporaries in efficiency and performance. To redress the balance the Gloster design office produced a re-design which was a marked improvement while retaining as much of the structure of the earlier aircraft as possible for production purposes. The new Meteor proved a success and over a 1000 of the new fighters were built to re-equip 20 Fighter Command squadrons and 10 squadrons of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. The Royal Air Force never used the Meteor F8 in anger, but it did see combat with the Royal Australian Air Force during the Korean War (1950 to 1953). Outclassed by the MiG-15 in the fighter role, the Meteor was switched to ground attack where it notched up an impressive record.

Alan was also fortunate enough to play rugby for the Regiment and the Army during his national service and yes, he even had to play Rugby Union. In 1954, at the age of 23 years, Alan's national service concluded and with a set of civilian clothing and a few pounds in his pocket, and a travel warrant he returned to England.

Upon Alan's return from National Service although a place was available at Fred Ainsworth's Ltd, as per the rules of National Service, for Alan this was not what he wanted to do, so he decided to work with his brother Ron who was also a joiner / carpenter. They worked together for several years in the building trade, both on building sites around the country but also as shop fitters.

It was on a shop fitting job in St Helens when Alan would find true love, for he met the manageress of one shop that they were fitting out, a young lady by the name of Miriam. Before the job had finished Alan had asked Miriam out on a date and the rest as they say was history as some 12 months later in November 1971, they were married at the Registry Office.

Alan moved to Wigan with Miriam and set up home together and starting his own carpentry business, which was a time of hard work and long hours, as a self-employed businessman. In 1972, shortly after its formation, the building workers union UCATT, together with the General Municipal Workers Union (GMWU) and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), who were involved in construction and civil engineering, started what was the single most important building trades unions strike in their history. For the first time ever in the building industry, workers all over the country went on a national strike to demand a minimum wage of £30 for a 35-hour week and abolition of the "lump." This strike affected most major sites, effectively forcing employers to negotiate.

The background to the 1972 strike was the building boom of the 1960-1970s. This was a time when there were numerous sub-contractors with many crafts making for a constantly changing workforce, differing contracts and pay rates. Employers were constantly seeking to break union organisation by bringing in non-union labour and by blacklisting or victimising trade union activists. It was a time of labour-only subcontracting, or the "lump".

Lump workers were self-employed and thus not entitled to holiday pay, national insurance or PAYE tax deductions, instead receiving a fixed “lump” sum, supposed to cover all expenses. It was also a time between 1951 and 1971 when the building unions had lost up to 30% of their members.

In April 1970, 288 delegates from 50 union branches and a similar number of stewards from sites met in Manchester and founded the “Building Workers’ Charter” (BWC) as a rank-and-file movement. And just before the strike in April 1972, 865 delegates attended its conference. The Charter was responsible for the unions adopting a militant claim for £30 for 35 hours.

The strikes began between May and June 1972, with selective strikes on what were high-status sites – mainly hotel and larger construction jobs. It was hoped that stoppages of work on the employers’ highly lucrative jobs would force them to negotiate. The national trade union leadership tried hard to keep the dispute to one of selective strikes. If this strategy had prevailed, it would have fragmented the strike and could have led to a defeat. Activists knew that this selective strike action would not be enough to secure their demands. In a meeting of building workers in Conway Hall in Central London the demand went up for an all-out strike. One site was already out on strike and following the Conway Hall meeting many other sites in London stopped work. At the same time, other similar actions took place throughout the country. The system of flying pickets was widely developed to bring most sites out on strike. In east London, 100s of us would meet at 6am every morning in what was then the TGWU Dockers’ offices in the East End of London. They briefly discussed our targets and then got into vehicles to spread the strike.



So, what began was a very effective use of ‘flying picketing’ throughout the country. With only a small number of exceptions it was not at all difficult to get a clear majority of building workers to join the strike. Workers were so fed up with low rates of pay that they readily welcomed us. In those days, you did not have the security on sites you have today. So, in most cases it was quite easy to walk onto the site and call a site meeting. After explaining the reason for strike action there was no problem in getting a vote from the workers to join the strike. Following the success in getting all-out strike action, the employers began to buckle and after 13 weeks agreement was reached with our unions.



The deal made never met the demands for an immediate 35 hour working week for a £30 basic rate of pay, and an end to the use of labour only and the lump. Protests from the rank and file were massive; 12,000 building workers marched in Liverpool, demanding no settlement short of the full claim.

Alan would suffer during this strike as his work was broken down as he was not a union member and would not join the strike, so after the strike ended Alan decided it was time for a different occupation.



In the mid 1970's Pilkington's Glass would offer the change of occupation he sought; the company was founded in 1826 as a partnership between members of the Pilkington and Greenall families, based in St Helens, Lancashire, England. The venture used the trading name of St Helens Crown Glass Company. The company grew to become the biggest employer in St Helens. The distinctive blue-glass head office tower block on Alexandra Business Park, off Prescott Road, originally used as the firm's world headquarters, and completed in 1964, still dominates the town's skyline.

Following the departure from the partnership of the last Greenall in 1845, the firm was renamed as Pilkington Brothers. During 1894, the business was incorporated under the Companies Act 1862 as Pilkington Brothers Limited. In 1903, it became the sole British manufacturer of plate glass as well as the dominant producer of sheet glass.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the company struck a series of market agreements with various domestic and European glass manufacturers of varying effectiveness. European competitors, particularly those based in Belgium, had applied considerable competitive pressure to Britain's glass making industry; Pilkington was less susceptible due to a strong focus on exports and international developments throughout the British Empire and South America. The company also invested heavily into its manufacturing capabilities and introduced new production techniques.

After the First World War, Pilkington was one of only two large glass manufacturers remaining in Britain, the other being Chance Brothers, which mostly produced cast glass. The two companies formed various agreements during the interwar period to share the domestic market and to not undercut each other; furthermore, Pilkington agreed to purchase any shares in the firm that Chance's owners wished to sell, thus it gradually built up a sizable stake in the firm. In 1951, Chance became wholly owned by Pilkington. Pilkington of course developed the first ever self-cleaning coated float glass product, called Pilkington Activ. This self-cleaning glass has a coating which uses a method of photocatalysis to break down organic dirt with sunlight. The dirt is then washed away by the rain during a hydrophilic process.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Pilkington used the flow of float royalty payments to finance its investments in float glass plants across several countries, including Argentina, Australia, Canada and Sweden, and also to acquire major existing flat and safety glass producers and plants in the United States (Libbey Owens Ford), Germany and France.[citation needed] Pilkington, with its subsidiary Triplex Safety Glass, in which it gradually acquired a



controlling interest, also became a major world supplier of toughened and laminated safety glass to the automotive, aerospace and building industries.

It was in late 1985, Pilkington was the subject of a hostile takeover bid from BTR Industries, a large British-based conglomerate group, which valued the company at \$1,640,000,000. Pilkington's management rejected the offer and fought a successful defensive campaign in which various politicians took sides in the matter, thus BTR was compelled to withdraw its offer in February 1987.

Alan started his career with Pilkington's on the first floor by the hot furnaces in the glass plant, but it was not long before Alan saw other opportunities and openings within the firm. Alan would continue to move within the firm taking on a variety of roles until he was made a Senior Research Technologist in the Research and Development department at Pilkington's at its Lathom base, a job he loved so much he stayed in it until his retirement from work.

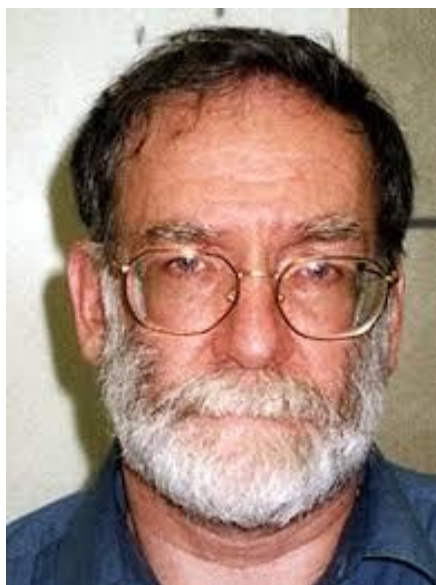
After his retirement Alan was not to be bored or tired as he dedicated himself to three important roles. The first was as a visitor for the Pilkington Family Trust who aim to provide welfare and community support services for retired Pilkington employees and their families across the United Kingdom and overseas. Based in St Helens, it aims to promote health and well-being whilst tackling social isolation. Alan made regular visits to staff who had worked for Pilkington's to make sure that they were alright and being looked after properly. Sadly, this role only lasted for four years until the trust ran out of money and the role ceased to exist.

Not to be kept back Alan became a member of the Wigan Schools Appeal Panel who would meet to discuss the appeals from parents who had been unable to get their children into the school of their choice. Alan recalls that some of the cases were very upsetting and difficult to deal with as every school only had so many places available. Alan fulfilled this role for a period of four years.

Alan also spent time as one of her Majesty's Prison Inspection Board members for Liverpool Prisons, a role he enjoyed. He worked at Liverpool Prison in the Walton are of Liverpool and recalls that his role was to attend the prison anytime during the day or night as an independent person to check on the conditions in the prison. This included the fabric of the building, the conditions that the prisoners were being kept in and the working conditions of the prison staff.

Alan recalls that one of the most infamous inmates he interviewed was Doctor Harold Shipman who at the time was on remand at Liverpool Prison, Alan recalls that he did not say very much and was very arrogant. Harold Frederick Shipman (14 January 1946 – 13 January 2004), known to acquaintances as Fred Shipman, was an English doctor in general practice and serial killer. He is one of the most prolific serial killers in modern history, with an estimated 284 victims over roughly 30 years.

On 31 January 2000, Shipman was convicted of murdering 15 patients under his care. He was sentenced to life imprisonment with a whole life order. On 13 January 2004, one day before his 58th birthday, Shipman hanged himself in his cell at HM Prison Wakefield, West Yorkshire.







Turning to Alan's family life, as we heard earlier, he married the love of his life Miriam in November 1971, during their happy married life of 54 years, they have been blessed with four children, eight grandchildren and five great grand-children, although I believe that we are only a couple of months away from great grandchild number 6 due in May this year. Alan and Miriam's four children are twins Susan and Diane, John and Steve.

Susan is married to John and live in Mawdesley, they have two children called Alan and James. Alan who is married to a Swedish lady have provided one great grandchild Otto, and he lives with his family live in Oslo, Sweden. Susan was a nurse and midwife before finishing her working life as a Senior Lecturer at Edge Hill University. Diane is married to David and in live in Suffolk, they have two children Richard and Jenny. Richard and Jenny and their partners have provided three great grandchildren Ted, Alice and Robin. Steve and his wife Karen live locally in Golborne and have two children Jordan and Adam. Adam and his partner have provided one great grandchild Eva who is just 12 months old. John and his wife Julie live in Thirsk, Yorkshire and have two children Michael and Matthew. Matthew who now lives in Altrincham and his partner are expecting great grandchild number six in May 2025. John served all his working life in the Royal Airforce and flew fast jet planes such as the Tornado and he was stationed throughout the world. John saw active service in the Falklands, the Middle East, Iraq and Afghanistan, for which he was awarded the officer of the Order of the British Empire by her late Majesty the Queen.

The OBE is the second highest ranking Order of the British Empire, below Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and above Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). Recipients have made notable contributions to the arts and sciences, charitable and welfare organisations, and public service. John retired as Air Commodore, after 32 years in the Royal Airforce, which is equivalent to the rank of Commodore in the Navy or a Brigadier in the Army. He was at the time Head of Carrier Enabled Power Projection at the Ministry of Defence.



Alan and Miriam are rightly very proud of all their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who they love dearly.

Alan let us know turn to your Masonic career, you were initiated into Lodge of St George Lodge No. 6048, on the 7 May 1975, it is of nearly exactly 50 years ago.

Alan was raised to the degree of a fellow craft on 5 March 1975 and raised to the sublime degree of a master mason on 1 October 1975. Having rose through the progressive offices of the lodge Alan was installed as its WM on 3 April 1985. He also held the office of almoner and was a regular holder of many progressive office, particularly junior and senior warden over many years.

Alan's services to his lodge were recognised by the Province of West Lancashire when he received his first appointment to Provincial rank as a Past Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies on the 23 May 1995. He was subsequently recognised by the Province again when he received promotion in Provincial rank to Past Provincial Grand Superintendent of Works on 17 October 2002. Alan was again recognised by the province when he received promotion in Provincial rank to the high rank of Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden on 15 October 2008.

Alan remained a subscribing member of Lodge of St George No.6408 until 3 April 2023, when the lodge honoured Alan after his 48 years' subscribing membership for his hard work and service to the lodge, by making him an honorary member.

It is interesting to note that Alan was exalted into the Royal Arch completing his journey in pure and ancient Freemasonry, in Ionic Chapter No 2405 on 12 December 1986. Alan was to become third principal of the chapter on 9 February 1996, second principal on 14 February 1997 and its first principal on the 13 February 1998. Alan held the office of treasurer for a short time due an emergency in the chapter.

Alan's services to his chapter were recognised by the Royal Arch Chapter of West Lancashire when he received his appointment to Provincial rank as Past Provincial Assistant Grand Standard Bearer on 11 May 2005. Sadly, Alan resigned from the Royal Arch on 16 January 2017 due to personal reasons.

Alan also joined another masonic Order in which he received promotion to a high rank.

Alan, of such is the importance of your own golden jubilee that our Provincial Grand Master Mark Matthews has caused a certificate to be struck to mark this wonderful achievement which I shall now ask the Mersey Valey Group Chairman David Atkinson PPrJGW to read....