

Keith Alan Beardmore *PAGDC*

50th Celebration in the Craft

Thursday 8th April 2025

Brother inner guard, will you please admit the tyler.

Good evening, brethren, and welcome to this very special meeting of Blackpool Lodge. Today, of course, we are here to join with Keith Alan Beardmore, Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies of United Grand Lodge of England, Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden of the Province of West Lancashire, in celebrating the magnificent achievement of 50 years a Mason.

No matter what organisation, or what age you are when you join, I don't think anyone ever expects to achieve 50 years' service, but fortunately, many brethren are now living longer lives enabling them to reach that goal, Keith being an example of that at the age of 77, and tonight he joins that select band of brothers in the 50s Club. Brethren, as I have said before, the privilege of leading the celebration of a brothers' jubilee is always the most enjoyable occasion an Assistant Provincial Grand Master could wish for, and I am grateful for the opportunity. Keith, it gives me the greatest of pleasure to be here at Blackpool Lodge this evening, and to be able to join you and all your members and guests in celebrating this memorable achievement, and I hope you enjoy your evening.

Provincial Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies, will you please place our celebrant before me so that I may address him.

Early life

Keith, you were born in March 1948, in Bolton, the day the US Atomic Energy Commission announced a \$3,000,000 program to encourage research into the use of radioactive materials for treating cancer. You were the youngest of three brothers, Leslie being the eldest and Kevan in the middle.

You were born under the star sign Pisces and the Chinese year of the Rat. Apparently, Pisces are compassionate and friendly, Pisces men are lovers of adventure and social gatherings. These men love travelling, being around people, having conversations over numerous topics and sharing their experiences with like-minded people. Restrictions and routines are what they dislike the most. Pisces men are ambitious and hard-working and can get the best in life, provided they learn to shake off laziness. Nonetheless, they are not money-minded, but in their attempt to obtain their goals quickly, they are inclined to take an easy route, forgetting the fact that there are no short-cuts as such. Just how well this fits your personality Keith, I will let the brethren judge.

You share your birthday with artist and sculptor Michelangelo, poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, actor Lou Costello, American economist Alan Greenspan, John Noakes of Blue Peter fame, opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Musicians David Gilmour and Kiki Dee (who is a year older than you) so good company there.

Your father was Leslie Beardmore and your mother Edna Wood. After serving in the RAF in Lincolnshire during the war, your father became a Hoover salesman. He was so good at this that he was the leading salesman in the country in 1954/55. You remember an all-expenses paid trip to London for a week, a posh hotel, tickets to the Palladium to see Norman Wisdom, dinners here, there and everywhere and of course a tour of the Hoover factory, which was at Perrivale at the time. With the highlight being a visit to the Derby, very impressive. It is possible that you continue the family ability to sell.

Your grandmother and aunt had moved to Blackpool before the war, your aunt marrying a local man and lived in Bloomfield Road. In 1956 on a day trip to Blackpool to visit them, your aunt told your dad that there was a hotel for sale across the road, so ever one for an opportunity, he went across the road and knocked on the door. The door was opened by a chap called Harry Jacks with whom your dad had been at school. To cut a long story your dad bought the hotel, the Limes, now I believe the Bloomfield Medical Centre. This was the start of a 16-year involvement with that hotel.

Your education started at Markland Hill Primary School Bolton up until you were 8 and the move to Blackpool. You then attended Revoe followed by Tyldesley Secondary Modern School until you were 16. You said you enjoyed art and sports but didn't really like school and you were never the best sportsman as the other kids tended to be a bit bigger (as you say six-foot thugs).

You were also in the ATC and made sergeant, you went to Germany with the RAF and visited RAF Gütersloh which had Lightnings at the time. Must have been very interesting.

At Tyldesley you had been in a vocational class spending two half days and a full day at the renowned 'Courtfield' Catering College in Blackpool. This led to a full-time place at Courtfield's from 1964 to 1966 and on leaving, having gained City and Guilds qualifications, you joined your mother and father in the family hotel business.

This was the Merseybeat era and together with your brother Kevan and three others, you formed a group and as a five-piece played all over Lancashire. Playing record hits of the day but especially soul and Motown music.

In 1971, your mother became ill, and your parents decided to sell the hotel. This of course left you unemployed, not a good situation for you. You happened to ring one of your college lecturers from Courtfield's to let them know you had moved, and they asked you what you were doing. When you said you were at a loose end, they told you there was a job going lecturing at the college. Getting on the short list, your availability swung the scales in your favour, and you spent 5 happy years there lecturing in food preparation.

Marriage and home Life

You had been in the same class as June (Allen), your wife, when you were at Revoe and Tyldesley, and when you bumped into her on a night out in the early 70s, her question to you was; "Do you remember me from school?" Romance and business blossomed, together with June you opened two coffee shops in Blackpool which she ran while you continued to lecture.

You were married on 9 June 1973 in Blackpool. The 12th stage of the Milk Race, 84 miles between Penrith-Blackpool finished that day and it caused a few problems with your reception. Your plan was after a 2 o'clock church wedding to go to the Chequers Hotel for a meal and then an evening do later. However, the manager of the hotel told you he had all the Milk Race people in for a meal at 5:30 and it wouldn't work. You compromised, had the wedding at 12:30, meal at 2 o'clock and then returned to the hotel later for a 7:30 evening reception.

You have a son Alan and a daughter Hayley. Alan is an artist but unfortunately Covid really impacted his career and ongoing ill health is not helping. He does help you out in your businesses and drives you to engagements. Hayley is a trained dancer married to a professional musician. Together they run a Performing Arts College in Leeds. The artistic streak also seems to run in the family.

You had been searching for a suitable location to open a restaurant in the Fylde and had frequently passed by what would later become Braithwaite Manor without it registering. One day, you noticed it and, despite its derelict state, decided that it could be the perfect place for your restaurant. You learned from the landlord of the pub across the road that the manor was owned by a Plastic Surgeon from Newcastle named Fenton Braithwaite, the last surviving member of his family. Although he was initially reluctant to sell, your suggestion of naming the restaurant Braithwaite Manor ultimately convinced him to make the deal. Renovations took two years, and in August 1978, you opened the doors to Braithwaite Manor, an A La' Carte Restaurant.

The restaurant was very successful expanding as a wedding and events venue. It also hosted many social events for Blackpool Lodge and hosted Christmas Dinner for the staff and residents of Fairlawn including Sir Knowles Edge.

In 1993, you opened an Early Years Childcare Centre in part of the building, which quickly became successful. This allowed you to retire from hospitality in 2000 and focus on childcare. Managing both the restaurant and childcare centre was detrimental to your health, as June pointed out.

After a 30-year break, you and Kevan resumed playing music in 2001, performing as a three-piece band for ladies' evenings. This ended in 2012 when Kevan fell ill and sadly passed away.

In 1999, you joined a liaison committee of Blackpool Borough Council overseeing and developing Early Years Childcare and Education (EYDCP). This committee later became the Surestart Partnership, encompassing all aspects of childcare and education.

Now known as the Early Years Strategic Group, you've developed and implemented sustainable provision in the borough. Your tenacity ensured the PVI childcare sector remains the mainstay in Blackpool.

You set up the Blackpool Private Nurseries Association, bringing together all Early Years Providers and giving them a collective voice. Your colleagues say the sector would be worse without your foresight and passion.

You've represented your colleagues on the Strategic Group with enthusiasm for 25 years, contributing to the stabilisation of sustainable childcare in Blackpool. 6

Freemasonry

You were introduced to Freemasonry by your father, a past master of Blackpool Lodge, attending traditional ladies' nights and other social functions which is what ultimately led you, in 1975, to become a Freemason.

A quick overview of the world back in 1975:

- Petrol is 16p a litre
- Bitter is 20p a pint
- Cigarettes are 20p for 20
- The average house price is nearly £17,000
- Fawlty Towers is first broadcast.
- The National Railway Museum opens in York – the first national museum in the country outside London.
- British punk rockers The Sex Pistols make their first public performance.
- The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Monty Python and the Holy Grail and Return of the Pink Panther all debut in cinemas.
- Bill Gates co-founds Microsoft at the age of 19.

- Climbers Dougal Haston and Doug Scott are the first British climbers to summit Mount Everest.
- Manchester United are promoted back to the First Division just one season after being relegated.
- Derby County wins the Football League First Division title for the second time in four seasons.
- American tennis player Arthur Ashe wins Wimbledon, making history as the first black player ever to win the title.

Your father joined Blackpool Lodge on 12 April 1966 but didn't want to propose you or your brothers. He believed you knew members who could support you and didn't want it said that he pushed you into Freemasonry. You were proposed by John Barber and seconded by Alan Burton following which you were initiated, in the presence of 106 members and guests, on 8 April 1975, a month after your brother Kevan who was initiated on 11 March 1975. Your brother Leslie never joined as it seems he was put off by his mother-in-law.

Brother secretary, will you please read a précis of the minutes of the meeting held on that date.

You were passed on 14 October 1975 and raised to the third degree on 9 December 1975.

You held every progressive office and were installed into the chair of King Solomon on 9 February 1988 by your brother Kevan, it must have been a proud moment. In due time you installed Douglas Gordon Dimond into the chair. You remember your Ladies Nights on 15 November 1988, with 130 people present at the Savoy. Over the years, you have been almoner and mentor of the lodge.

In Provincial Grand Lodge you were appointed to the rank of Past Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies on 18 April 1997, promoted to Past Provincial Deputy Grand Superintendent of Works on 28 September 2006 and yet again promoted to the high rank of Past Provincial Junior Grand Warden on 16 October 2012. You were appointed as a Past Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in United Grand Lodge on 26 April 2017, a highlight.

You were exalted into Bispham-with-Norbreck Chapter No 4731 on 20 September 2005 becoming First Principal on 15 November 2011. In Provincial Grand Chapter you were appointed as Past Provincial Assistant Grand Scribe Ezra on 11 October 2018.

You have also been very active in Masonic charity work and were the lead party in raising £100,000 toward the provision of a new lifeboat at St Annes on the Sea. This came about after you attended a fund-raising evening at the Lifeboat Station in 2016. The local RNLI Association needed to raise £240,000 toward the cost of a new all-weather lifeboat and at the time were falling short of reaching the target, having only raised half the required amount. The evening raised £1,200 and on returning home you contacted Masonic colleagues and in a very short time put together a donation of £20,000. In addition to this you petitioned another charity who very generously increased the original sum by £80,000 making a total of £100,000. This took the St Annes total up to the required amount of funding.

On 14th April 2017 the 'BARBARA ANNE' was dedicated and commissioned at the St Annes Lifeboat Station. You were in attendance and a commemorative plaque marked the occasion.

Without the efforts and contribution, this certainly would have taken far longer to achieve.

Keith, between your music, your work in hospitality and childcare and Freemasonry, you have had a very busy, interesting and successful life and your service to Freemasonry is an example to us all. Brethren, this evening he celebrates his golden jubilee in Freemasonry, and I am sure that we all wish him the very best of health and happiness for many years to come.

At this point, may we thank Ray Lamb for the research he did into the minutes.

May I now call upon your group chairman Steve Jelly to read out the scroll from our Provincial Grand Master, Mark Matthews.

(From the floor) - Keith, may I conclude the proceedings here in the Lodge Room by offering you my warmest personal congratulations on achieving this wonderful milestone in your Masonic career. I consider it both a privilege and a pleasure to be here this evening and to have been able to take part in such a happy and enjoyable occasion.

Produced by Dr David F. Barr **PAGDC**, Assistant Provincial Grand Master.



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