

HOW DID I BECOME A MASON?

How did I, a Past Officer of United Grand Lodge become a Freemason without any family connections or ties to this organisation?

It all happened through the distinguished and vibrant masonic social scene. A close rugby playing colleague invited my wife and I to his Lodge's Ladies Evening, informing us dutifully of the dress code. We eagerly and gratefully accepted, having never been to one before. I hired a dinner jacket and my wife purchased a stunning down-to-the-floor evening gown, the vivid memory now still takes my breath away. Stylish, graceful and beautiful, as clear as if it was yesterday.

On the day, late afternoon, we promptly arrived at the banqueting hall at Belle Vue , Manchester. The card tables were out amongst a bustling and friendly atmosphere. A thrilling whist drive took place and was enjoyed by all. Following this we were amazed to join a long cheerful queue, to be introduced, by the DC, to the nights host, the Worshipful Master and his Lady.

We then sat down to a beautiful dinner, wonderful food and drink, marvellous socialising followed by splendid speeches. Then came a song to the ladies, during which elegant long-stemmed roses were handed out to specially selected ladies. Additionally, all the ladies received a gift, which my wife thought was a lovely and charming token of an evening.

The dancing commenced, to the marvellous live music of the resident band. The evening concluded after enjoyable dancing and with the ladies leaving through a column of gentlemen all singing good night ladies. Before carriages everyone enjoyed supper of scrumptious bacon muffins. The perfect end to a memorable and unforgettable first ever ladies evening.

A year passed, and around the same time after much rugby playing and socialising my friend asked me if my wife and I were free on the same Friday. I told him I would check.

Upon arriving home, I asked my wife and said I think we are again going to be invited to the Ladies Evening. I was quick to inform my friend "Yes! We're available," he rejoiced: "Thank god for that, we were so stuck for a babysitter!"

That Friday, we watched them gleefully depart dressed to the nines, and settled down to enjoy coffee, sandwiches and our babysitting duties. We chatted and recalled the previous year remembering that delightful and magnificent night with the occasional interruption of "can I have a glass of water" from two children upstairs. On our friends return, we made them coffee and listened to their tales of what another splendid and marvellous night they had enjoyed.

Needless to say; this was not going to reoccur and having met and been made welcome by so many likable people previously, I made a few more enquiries into the meanings and charitable causes of Freemasonry. The next move was to ask my friend "How do I join?" to which he professed, "I'm so delighted. I always hoped you would ask"

The rest is history. I was initiated in 1965, since which I have held many and various offices. Never once have I regretted that time I was invited to babysit, as it led me into this wonderful order where in the present day there is still decency, decorum, a willingness to learn as part of a team and offer assistance to those unfortunately less well off than ourselves, whilst enjoying social occasions with family and friends, with the hope that one day they too will ask "how do I join"?

Long may it continue.

Bro Donald Roberts