

## Neville Roy Stott Tribute

WBro Neville Roy Stott, you were born on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1946 in Whitewell Bottom, which for the uninitiated is on the road leading out of Waterfoot towards Burnley. You were the only child of Neville and Alice Stott and you grew up being educated, first at Waterfoot Primary School and then at Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School, leaving there in 1963 to start work as an Articled Clerk with Longthorn Hartley & Co, who were a firm of Chartered Accountants in Great Harwood. On completing your qualifications you then began to improve your professional status by successive career moves through employment at various companies which saw you advance your position from Accountant to Group Accountant, Company Secretary and finally Finance Director.

It was in 1965, whilst working in Great Harwood, that you met your future wife Marion, the daughter of a most respected member of this Lodge, WBro Reggie Gee and his wife Barbara who, for many years, worked tirelessly for the Accrington Masonic Fellowship. You married into this Masonically involved family in January 1972 and it was no great surprise that only five months later you were initiated into the Lodge of Remembrance by the Worshipful Master of the year, Bro John Mulligan Townsend, having been proposed by WBro Harry Dugdale, a long standing family acquaintance from the Rossendale Valley and seconded by your Father-in-law WBro Reggie Gee. You were quickly Passed and Raised in September and November of that same year and very soon became an active member of the Lodge, serving as Assistant Secretary from 1975 to 1978 and Social Secretary from 1975 to 1979. It was also in 1975 that your only child, Elizabeth was born and of course, she now lives in Thornton Cleveleys and works for NHS England. In 1977, along with two Past Masters of this Lodge, WBros Jack Harwood and Bill Simmons, you organised a Provincial – wide raffle in aid of Hewlett Court. It's perhaps an interesting fact worth mentioning that some of the prizes were obtained through the connections of one David Lloyd, the well known professional cricketer, who was at the time also a member of this lodge. The prizes in question were a cricket bat signed by England and Australian players, a football signed by Manchester United and Manchester City players and a Rugby football signed by the players of two Rugby League clubs. Unfortunately, there is no record available of who had the winning tickets.

You were Installed in the Chair by WBro Derek Bunn in 1982 and, following your year of office, you continued your involvement by serving as Lodge Representative on the Masonic Hall Committee from 1982 to 1987, Treasurer of the Lodge from 1984 to 1990 and Treasurer of the Masonic Hall from 1987 to 1990. Your efforts were recognised by the Province in November 1991 when you were invested with the Acting Rank of Provincial Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies.

It was shortly after this that changing events in your working life put, shall we say, a hold on your Masonic activities. The local company you were working with at the time had sold out in 1993 and you spent a couple of years working for yourself in a consultancy capacity before taking a major decision to become involved in a management buyout of a company in Milton Keynes. Geographic location and managerial responsibilities had a huge effect on your priorities and, as a result, your attendance and involvement in the Lodge took somewhat of a back seat. To your credit, you remained a member and continued paying your subscriptions throughout this period until you finally retired from work in 2010. The door was now open for you to return but we all should know how difficult it might be to make that first move. After all, the biggest majority of your colleagues were no longer here. Quite possibly the phenomenon which triggered off your return was the pandemic. You began tuning in to the Zoom meetings which were a feature of the lockdown periods and when restrictions were at last relaxed, you made the effort to turn up in person and we were all so glad to see you. An indication of your eagerness to very quickly slot back in came at the Installation meeting last February when you willingly accepted the office of Junior Deacon. How far you go on from there, we shall have to see.

There is just one final snippet which the brethren may not know about. It was between 1964 and 1975 that you were a member (and Treasurer for a time) of Lancashire Automobile Club. You assisted in the running of various motor sprints, rallies, hill climbs and even the Manchester to Blackpool Vintage Car Rally. It was during this period that you met one of our own Grand Lodge Officers, WBro David Taylor and I understand you claim he was adept at rolling Mini-Coopers. I'd like to think he probably still is.

WBro Neville Roy Stott, we congratulate you on your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and hope that you can now spend many more years enjoying Freemasonry to the full.