



GOLDEN WEDDING CELEBRATION SPEECHES

SUNDAY 27TH MARCH 2011



GILLIAN'S SPEECH

Ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, Mum and Dad - it's just lovely to see so many people here today to celebrate this very special day - a Golden Wedding, 50 years of marriage. Wow, that's certainly worth celebrating! And as someone wrote in their card to the happy couple - it's certainly longer than a life sentence!

Now - 50 years ago a copy of The Times cost 5d, a week in an Italian villa cost £2, 15 shillings per person, a bottle of Claret was 13/6, a packet of tea 2d (tuppence), and according to the *Woman's Own* from this week in 1961, for only £6 18/6, 'budget-wise brides' could buy a Philips Food Mixer!

But, I'm sure that none of these things were uppermost in the minds of two special people, Mum and Dad, who were married on 25th March 1961 in St Michael's Church, Chester Square, London. This was followed by a Reception in the Hotel Rembrandt in Kensington.

Now for those of you who were here 10 years ago and those with very good memories, you may be thinking that you've heard some of this before.... well, you would be right for that is roughly how the speech I wrote 10 years ago - for the Ruby Wedding - began! However 10 years ago I asked Dougal to read it - today you've got me!

So it's going to be shorter and sweeter....

As a quick aside - I have to say that I was momentarily tempted by an internet site that would write a Golden Wedding speech for you in 60 seconds for the budget price of only \$19.97. It was and I quote, 'guaranteed to add sparkle to your special occasion' and even included a Bonus Guide entitled 'How to deliver a speech like a

pro'. However, I didn't think the day would need any extra sparkle - I knew it would be perfect!

Not many from the original guest list are able to be here today, but we extend a special welcome to Mum's bridesmaids, Mary and Ilia, and to Martin and Grieg - all who were there on the big day. Another special welcome and the prize for the person who has travelled the furthest to be here today goes to Auntie Audrey from Midland, Canada.

Also welcome to our Dutch family - Ina and Stephan, Wiesje and Fred, to many friends from south of the border and to everyone else who has travelled to be with us today.

Now, I'm not going to do the whole 'This is your Life' history bit but just want to say that Mum and Dad have been wonderful parents and grandparents – generous, kind, supportive and always there with advice if needed. For that, I thank them. They are a hard act to follow.

I know that their extended family and friends also play a huge part in their lives - this doesn't just happen by accident or chance - Mum and Dad always make time to fit in visits to catch up with people, send a post card from their holidays or a Christmas card . In fact, their Christmas card list is the longest I've ever seen! I am sure you will agree that they are an inspiration to us all.

On that note, I ask you - both family and special friends - to be upstanding and raise your glasses to Mum and Dad, Jean and Sandy.

SANDY'S SPEECH

Thank you very much, Gillian, for your kind words.

Friends & family,

Jean and I welcome you today and thank you for joining us in our celebration lunch. Special thanks to those who have travelled a considerable distance – from Canada, The Netherlands and Hong Kong – we even have some from England. We were told that this is the furthest north in the British Isles that one of you has ever been – so a special northern welcome to you.

Mind you, I cannot say that you would have been particularly welcome to a sleep-over at our house tonight. Being Census Day, I should have had to add you all to my Census Return and I really cannot think what kind of establishment they would think that we were running.

Some of the ladies may have wondered why their place cards had a flower when others were without. Those with a flower are invited to take home the flowers from the table centre.



An old couple were experiencing problems of memory loss. The doctor said that they were OK physically but they might wish to start writing things down. That evening they were watching TV and he asked if she wanted anything from the kitchen.

‘Please would you get me a bowl of ice cream. Don’t you think you had better write it down?’

‘No, I can remember.’

‘Oh! and strawberries on top. Maybe write it down.’

‘I can remember – ice cream and strawberries.’

‘Oh! and whipped cream too but I’m certain you’ll forget – write it down.’

Irritated, he said that he didn't need to, he would remember – ice cream, strawberries and whipped cream; I've remembered it. After 20 minutes he returned from the kitchen with a plate of bacon and eggs for her. She stared at the plate and exclaimed, 'Where is my toast – I knew you'd forget.'

I can assure you that that was not us, was it er sorry, what's your name again?



As many of you will know, we are not long back from a special holiday which took in several African countries, Australia and Hong Kong. It included a spell on a houseboat in Namibia called the *Zambesi Queen* which was our base for game drives when we were fortunate to see lots of species. Jean kept referring to it as the *African Queen* and I think she was really quite disappointed that she had me and not the more handsome Humphrey Bogart. However, one wildlife highlight was then still to come in Western Australia where we were each privileged to be chosen to feed one of the wild dolphins.

Although we did see both the dolphins and the cute Fairy Penguins, our principal purpose in Australia and Hong Kong was to see people and we were very successful in this. Having friends around the world has been one of the by-product bonuses of our lifestyle. Although it has had its downsides, our having many and varied friendships is not one of them. We love it.

Friends took us for lunch in Johannesburg and another guest told of the man who took his wife to South Africa for their Silver Wedding. When he was asked what he was going to do for the Golden Anniversary, he said that he would be going back to South Africa to collect her. Again – not us.



Many of you joined us in this room 10 years ago to celebrate our Ruby Wedding. They included Jean's bridesmaids Mary and Ilia and I am delighted to see them with us again, especially as there has been a serious question mark over Ilia's health but

she was determined to be here and here she is. Get back to full health soon, Ilia. My best man is still in Melbourne as he was in 2001 but we did manage to spend several days with him last month.

At that time, Jean was not at all confident that we would continue to be strong enough to celebrate our 50th with a party and decided that it would be safer to have our big bash for our 40th instead. Or, maybe she just wanted two big bashes – I have got to know her little ways in these 50 years. Happily, we made it but it is really very sobering to note the significant number of our generation who were with us then but who, sadly, have not made it to this year. Please know that we do miss them all and our thoughts are with their loved ones.



But life goes on and so we welcome the generations that follow and thank them for their continuing help, encouragement and support as we grow older. 10 years ago Lara and Mia were not even twinkles in their parents' eyes. Undergraduate Alistair has finished his second year at Edinburgh (save for 3 exams) and hopes that he will be offered lots of holiday work at the Atholl. We have managed to drag Kiera away from her beloved horses but I am so glad to know that she really likes Morrisons, her new school. Katie has grown into a young lady who is very much into knowing what clothing she does not like and, with Grannie's help, is quite fond of her jewellery; she is now having to think about university.

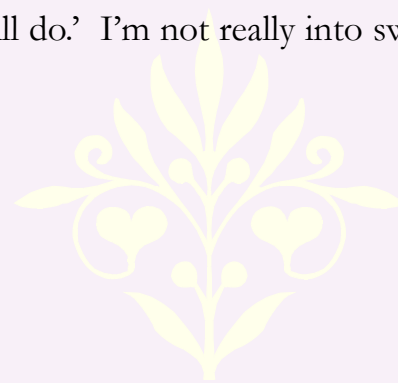
Even as a Lancastrian, I can confidently say that I have no regrets whatsoever about my having been told by Jean that Aberdeen was where she intended to come for retirement and that I could go wherever I liked which was, of course, with her. Aberdeen and its people, especially those who are here today, have been very kind to us in our retirement and we are grateful. Incidentally for the engineering colleagues here, my years of retirement have been very nearly as long as my time on sites around the world.



Golden Weddings, whilst perhaps not rare, are certainly not plentiful; aren't we lucky – though I am certain that there will be considerably fewer in number in the next generations. For those in that category, I urge them to hang in there when the going gets tough as it will from time to time. Do not expect it all to be easy but it will be worth it in the long run. Apart from all else, it does help to keep laughing together.

But I cannot sit down without thanking Jean from my heart for all her continuing love and friendship, support, teamwork and encouragement throughout these many years which have included good times, of which there have been many, and some pretty bad times too. Thank you Jean.

As many of you will know, Jean is an avid fan of The Archers and when Phil & Jill Archer were celebrating their Golden Wedding on 16th November 2007, Jean instructed me to include one of Phil's bits of sweet talking in my speech. He said '50 years is nowhere near enough for us – a life time will do.' I'm not really into sweet talking but I'll drink to that.



JEAN'S SPEECH

Well Sandy, we made it! 50 years is an awfully long time and we certainly appreciate having friends and family all cuddled up with us to celebrate. We surely couldn't have made it without the 3 L's – love, luck and laughter! There is a huge element of luck needed. We've had trials, everyone does, but not major illness or death. We had our four parents behind us for most of our married life. The third L is laughter. I fell for Sandy's twinkly, naughty eyes and I say he married me to have an audience for his jokes. Our big luck is to have been blessed with two children and five grandchildren, of whom we are extraordinary proud.

But what of the day 50 years ago. It was a gorgeous sunny day - 82°F. We were married in St. Michael's Chester Square, London. Poor mum was in too much of a state to help me dress as my bridesmaid and her mother did the honours. The owner of the ballroom on the first floor let us use it to dress. Mary held up a mirror for me to pin the headdress and gave herself a dusty stripe right across her butter yellow dress! I had specially asked for white ribbons on the car and when it arrived naked, I nearly ate the driver and told him to buy some during the service! Because of the cost, we didn't have a choir and everyone was asked to sing lustily and Mary added "except Sandy". If you have ever heard Sandy sing, you'll understand!

Another hiccup was that Mary discovered she had lost my bouquet which I had thrown at her. Mary, her mother and me even went through the bins but it was never found.

It was customary for the bridal couple to leave about five. Our friends had put pennies in the wheel hubs of Sandy's van and covered it in daffodils and anemones as well as the trailing cans. The noise was so strange that we had to stop to check the engine.

Our first night was spent in Dover and guess who had to pay – me! Sandy had left his wallet in his morning suit which was with his mother. Did we laugh and have continued to laugh!

It is a Chinese custom to share your good fortune and we have been able to do this by supporting our Granite Pearls. Homan and Chyun are here today to represent them. Thank you so much for your donations to enable more young Hong Kong people enlarge their horizons with a year abroad.

We have just had a wonderful six week trip to celebrate our 50 years – Africa to see big game and the Victoria falls; and Australia to see koalas, kangaroos, fairy penguins and feed dolphins; lastly Hong Kong to see our Granite Pearls.

Please raise your glasses and celebrate our 50 years, never forgetting absent friends.





Love, Luck & Laughter!

