

Hello everyone, thank you for coming to our Golden Wedding lunch.

The 50 years is really down to Brenda. How did I get tied up with a girl like Brenda? I was working in Whitehall, London, for the Royal Navy. Living at home, a mate and I used to go to a dancing place at Shepherds Bush, known locally as The Court. This was in the late 1950's. Girls on the opposite wall to the boysone night I took courage and crossed the floor and danced with Brenda. Then I had a few more dates with her and sometimes walked her home. Then Feb '58 I was sent out to the Far East to join a destroyer. That was the last I saw of Brenda, or, to be honest even thought of her until a few months later when my mate from Whitehall, who I went to the Court with, came out to the Far East and joined a destroyer in the same squadron that my ship was in. When we met up ashore one night he told me that that girl, Brenda, was asking after me"..... well I thought about it and didn't know whether he was having me on or what, but eventually I thought I'd write to her Brenda was the name. sorted when it came to the envelope and address, well, this was not so easy. I had no idea of her surname, Brenda question mark would do (I hoped); address, I recalled it was Stewart Road, lucky here, it was Stuart Road but spelt differently. Acton, West London, England was easy enough, oh the number I got correct too. We corresponded fairly frequently from then. There were no visits home in those days, after a few months, no this was the real navy I flew out to Singapore to join my ship in February '58 Back to the UK in

October, 1959 To save you doing the calculations that's 21 months away, I was single but think of the married men on the same ship, most of those married would have been out there longer than 21 months and came home to see some children, for the first time. My enjoyment was that Brenda was there to meet me Her Mum's persuasion was the force behind this. There are lots of jokes about Mother in laws well mine is no joke, it's her I have to be thankful for that Brenda was there.

After nine months based in Portland Dorset, and coming home most weekends I was once again in receipt of a draft chit to join another ship in the Far East, HMS Yarmouth. I had a few months' notice and during that time I proposed and was chuffed to bits that Brenda accepted Then I approached her Dad, that was no hardship we were then engaged. We would get married when I came home on Yarmouth I thought.

When was the wedding going to be? "Well it's up to when you're coming home" in the long term plan this was easy so the date was given to Brenda I have to say, everything was down to Brenda, organised the banns, the church, the reception, etc. etc, all of the wedding was arranged by Brenda. Then !!!! What do we hear dah dah dah daaaa dah dah dah daaa The arrival date in the UK has been deferred because of a problem in the Middle East, which I cannot recall what, but it did put us on guard off Kuwait in the Persian Gulf for a few weeks. I couldn't go to the Captain and say "please sir, it was tough, although the skipper was sympathetic. Brenda got down to the task in hand and re-

arranged what she could, of course a church wedding was out now, and there were other things to change, the big wedding was off, and Ealing Registry was booked..... So we were married on 9th December, 1961, That's when my life really began and 50 years later here we are celebrating 50 years together, which I can only thank Brenda for and I will be most thankful to her for ever and a day.

From that date on we moved as the naval requirements were ordered, many more moves, as with a lot of naval families. One posting (an army expression) was the joy of 2 years in Gibraltar where Gerald (our eldest son) was born. Home from Gib, another ship, this was based in Portland so it was home quite often and we had a flat fairly local. After nine months I was sent to another ship, HMS Eagle, an aircraft carrier, my good friend John Eilbeck over there was the Chief Radio Supervisor on Eagle. Another trip out to the Far East. Brenda was seven months pregnant, Tough, I still had to go, no "we'll let you join the ship later"!!! Simon was born a few weeks after we left Plymouth; the ship was in Capetown then. I saw Simon for the first time at age about 10 months, when Eagle returned to Plymouth. We are both very proud to have 2 smashing sons, who have their own families and have given us Grand Children we are also very proud of. Our eldest grandson Leon, with his partner Chelsie, have blessed us with a Great Granddaughter, Grace Louise, Milly's an Aunty. Grace is over there ... or there or is she with Mum & Dad? You will all see her I'm sure, a little darling. More recently, our eldest son Gerald and his partner Beckie have also blessed us with another

Grandson, Finley, a young brother to Mollie and Tayler. Happy days for all of us.

We've had a happy marriage, a tiff now and then, but soon resolved ... we'll not be talking for a time then we would end up looking at each other and smile and we would forget we had an argument. 50 years. On my side I won't just say "yes" to Brenda, as my good friend Charlie suggests JUST SAY YES I'll learn though, in time.

I often refer to Brenda as "MY BRIDE", she corrects that to "YOUR SLAVE"

On that note I will say, once again, thank you all for coming to join our celebration.

Oh, by the way, show your individual cards at the bar to allow you to get drinks, there is another party here so this will ensure that your drinks are charged to my "tab"