

THE WEDDING

All met the evening before at the Jesmond Hotel in Highworth. There was some concern that the contingent from "up North " may not make it on time to have a beer as their plane was delayed. However, all was OK and beer was duly drunk by all. Unfortunately the sandwiches that had been saved for the latecomers had curled a bit at the edges. Best Man doing his utmost to get the groom to bed moderately sober before 3 in the morning!

Most guests having had a hearty breakfast, served by the oldest waitress on the circuit, then spent Saturday morning strolling around Highworth (which took all of 10 minutes) then back to the hotel to change in to best bibs and tuckers for the afternoon ceremony. Several of the male guests could be found in the bar area awaiting female counterparts, accompanied by beer or spirits. And in the case of Colin (Mike's brother) several pretty females.....

Bridegroom wore smart grey suit and not Dress Uniform, as we think it's a bit of a tight fit nowadays! Best Man (big Keith) and Colin reader of the monologue, also wore contrasting grey suits to match the Bridegroom. All other attendees were duly dressed in a manner becoming of the occasion. Guests all gathered in the foyer of the hotel waiting to board the Chara to take them to the registrars' office. A rather quintessentially English 20th century building in the lovely market town of Swindon. Coach was adorned with pink ribbon and set off to pick up the Bride.

After what seemed like an eternity Annie appeared wearing a full-length two-piece in a pale dusky rose pink with matching check jacket in a mandarin style, sporting the most delicate tiara, looking a picture of sophisticated elegance and graceful beauty. Later Annie admitted she thought she'd been wearing her glasses all day.

Don't ask about the bouquet, lets just say Teresa saved the day!!! Bridegroom and other officials sporting matching corsages. Best Man was given a pot of money to throw at small children, apparently a northern custom (Hoy Out). However small children were thin on the ground! and most of it ended up in Annie's son's pocket, much to his approval.

The coach then made for Swindon..... parked in the nearest bus stop to the office, and everyone disembarked to march through the town looking like a contingent of royalty on a yearly visit, or to open the latest steel and glass construction. Upon arrival best man was asked to tell everyone

"NO THROWING OF CONFETTI IN THE BUILDING". So he did.

To the proceedings

In true British fashion everything was running late and we had to wait for the female registrars to organise themselves. At last we are ready.

Proceeding to the ceremony room Annie had a momentary hot flush and for a moment thought she would have to call it all off. But she overcame this to carry on with grace and dignity, and in the event it just made her fashionably late.

The room was adorned with flowers becoming of the proceedings. The Bride, accompanied by her Mum, entered to the strains of 'Monday, Monday' by M&P, whereupon Bridegroom immediately fell in love with her all over again and beamed with pride and admiration.

Ceremony was of average length; Colin read a beautiful poem by an anonymous acolyte of an unknown order, entitled "In Beauty". At which time Bridegroom was visibly moved - also several members of the congregation.

Vows were of a modern format and spoken with significance, at which point hankies were snuffled into, not least by Bridegroom who was audibly moved. The registrar gave the blessing, and the signing of register completed. Witnesses being Bride's mother and Best Man.

The happy couple left in contented bliss, to be showered OUTSIDE by confetti, congratulations and good wishes from all.

The wedding party then made for the coach to attend the wedding feast, but first the obligatory photo call was made, one of Annie's friends from way back taking charge of the proceedings, gallantly rounding up all the right ones at the right time.

So to the feasting.

The actual feast was a bit of a parody of Bridegroom's culinary skills, but none the less bangers and mash is very welcome when you last ate 7 hours ago, and went down a storm once the joke had been realised.

Speeches and such like all formatted and delivered rather splendidly. Colin² - eldest brother of Bride standing in for middle brother Fred (who had written a speech but lost his voice), duly performed short but meaningful words, thanking all concerned and welcoming Mike to the family. Which is no mean feat for a softy southern git, apparently.

Bridegroom thanking all and making the customary joke or two cut short his speech when overcome by emotion again. Best Man who had by this time over indulged in alcohol, but was on the verge of death by Bride and mother managed not to mess up too badly and only faltered on the first few lines of his version of what a best man is supposed to do. The long and short of it being that if you are ever asked to become a best man, visit www.bestmanspeech.com immediately, as they have the answer to every thing you need to know regardless of, colour, creed, acquaintance, age, sex, religion etc,etc. Stood Keith in good stead I can tell you. But in true, Big Keith style the now iniquitous prose was spoken, in true, stiff upper lip British, mainly because of the drink.....

Finishing off with the one about the difference between female and bridesmaid, wait for it... there's no 'F' in bridesmaid, and so endeth the speeches.

The Cake cutting ceremony was almost forgotten, which would have been a shame as Mike brought his special, long ceremonial one to cut it with! But recompense was made and the cutting took place amidst a barrage of camera flashes and cheers from the gathered throng.

Evening

The Bride choose not to change for the evening celebrations, saying that the dress cost a pretty penny and she was going to have her money's worth. Thus everyone else promptly went and changed in an effort to make her feel bad.....some stopping off for a snooze. As there age was against them!

Mid evening a large delegation showed up from hashing circles offering there support and good wishes, then in true hashing style rushed straight to the bar. Fortunately no one suggested a Down Down. The first dance for the happy couple was to 'Dance the night away' by the Mavericks and later a dancing exhibition was provided by GO Margaret and Brian which was fantastic, and everyone got to see Margaret's knickers. I have been told not to mention the incident with the top half of Margaret's dress. So I won't. Oh la la!

DJ did his best to keep us on the dance floor, some longer than others and some not at all unless dragged, Ian.

Celebrations went on into the wee hours, and suffice to say all had a jolly good time.

