

Derek Gilbert Gardner 50 yrs in Royal Arch Masonry.

The February meeting of Bective Chapter 1074, who meet in Kirkby Lonsdale was dedicated to celebrating the Golden Jubilee as a Royal Arch mason and the Bective Chapter membership of Companion Derek Gilbert Gardner. E.Comp. Peter Mason PAGSoj, Deputy Grand Superintendent was present to celebrate and present Comp. Gardner with his certificate.

Derek made the journey from his home in Newark in Nottinghamshire to attend the meeting in this his mother chapter and celebrate his 50 years membership.

Comp. Derek was born in Goole on Humberside on the 9th May 1930, by the time Derek finished school he and his family had moved to Ferrybridge from where he enrolled on a commercial course at a college in Wakefield. Whilst living in Ferrybridge Derek joined the Scouting movement in which he progressed and in later life became an Assistant Commissioner of Scouts in South Africa. Derek's family moved for a short time to Carlisle and then south to Lancaster where Derek worked for stationers, WH Smiths before his family acquired a house in Morecambe where he eventually became the Assistant Manager of the Royalty Theatre.

As a regular worshiper at St Paul's Church, Scotforth, he became an active member of the youth group, where he met his wife Doreen, they were married on the 3rd September 1952 and have enjoyed a busy 61 years together, they have two children and five grand children.

Encouraged by his father, Albert Gardner, Derek was initiated into Underley Lodge on October 14th 1955 and celebrated his 50th anniversary in that lodge in 2005. Derek was exalted into Bective Chapter on the 7th February 1964, unfortunately for his lodge and chapter Derek embarked on a life of exceptional achievement and travel dedicated to the welfare of young people and their education in far off places from the West Indies to Rhodesia as it was then called and finally to South Africa working in colleges and for the YMCA.

Whilst his foreign travel interrupted his Masonic progress in Kirkby Lonsdale, Derek's love of Freemasonry continued and he became an active member elsewhere, he joined Victoria Lodge 2196 in Bardados, New Sarum Lodge 7626 and Lister Chapter 6842 in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe before becoming a founder member of Flame Lily Lodge 8540 meeting in Johannesburg and in 1976 a founder member of Flame Lily Chapter. Derek is now an honorary member of both Flame Lily Lodge and Chapter and holds the Craft Rank of Past District Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies in the District of Transvaal.

E.Comp. Mason offered his own sincere congratulations and on behalf of the ME Grand Superintendent Comp Norman James Thompson DL and the Royal Arch Province of Cumberland and Westmorland, he said "50 years membership is a remarkable milestone in anyone's life and achieving this in a Royal Arch Chapter is nothing short of amazing and we are all delighted to have you here to offer our congratulations and celebrate this momentous occasion with you".