

Claire and Carl's Wedding



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The Father of The Bride's Speech

Traditionally at a wedding, the father of the bride is the first speaker proper – apart from a brief introduction from the best man - so your speech is a sort of scene-setter for what's to come. The idea behind this is doubtless linked with the fact that the father of the bride was always supposed to foot the bill for the wedding - so if you're paying, you should at least be allowed to get your oar in first! Even today, fathers of brides are often advised to begin, as a 'gesture of humility', by thanking anyone else who has contributed to the cost of the wedding.

So thank you, whoever you are!

Welcome to Bolton

Welcome to Bolton everybody. A special welcome to those of you who have come from far afield, especially the Cornish contingent and others we tried to keep out of the north by arranging for a tanker load of cooking oil to overturn on the M6 yesterday. I'm especially pleased to see so many from Sally's side of the family, most of whom I haven't clapped eyes on for well over twenty years and one or two of whom were small children when I saw them last. It's wonderful to be able to welcome Claire's only surviving grandparent. Lesley you are very especially welcome.

Well, the Cornish gang have come from pretty far afield but there is a couple who have come from even further away, even though they're now our neighbours. I'm talking about Katty and Tony and their two terrors, Luc and Sam. They've come from New Zealand and that reminds me of a tale I heard not so long ago involving an Australian sheep shshshshshearer!

There was a pub quiz and the last two teams competing were lead by a Roman Catholic priest and an Australian sheep shshshshshearer, both equally good. The quiz master asks one question after another, but they match each other every time. So in the end, the quiz master asks the two team leaders to compose a little four lined poem and let the audience decide, which one is better. But to make it a bit harder, he tells them that they have to use the word "Timbuktu". The contestants go behind the stage and after five minutes, the priest returns and recites his poem:

*"Been a father all my life,
Had no children, had no wife,
Read the Bible through and through,
On my way to Timbuktu."*

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The audience is absolutely exalted, they really liked it, and everybody thinks that this can't be beaten. But then the Aussie sheep shshshshshearer shows up and begins:

*"Tim and I to Brisbane went,
The women there were cheap to rent,
They were three but we were two,
So I booked one and Tim booked two!"*

By the way if any of your southerners need a translator to understand the locals please let me know and I'll get Carl to do his best.

There are many people who I need to thank for making this day the very special success it's turning out to be. Firstly, the weather man. Well, he let us down, didn't he, but here in Bolton we're used to the "liquid sunshine" that's one of the mainstays of our weather. Sometime it "shines down" vertically, sometimes horizontally.

Most of all I must thank my wife, Noelene, for the fantastic work, the organising, morale boosting and everything else she has done in the weeks leading up to today. She has worked herself into the ground and deserves a very long rest after today is over; although I doubt she'll get it. Also Carl and Claire too. This has been a very much "do it yourself" wedding and I expect that we'll see a big increase in the B&Q profits as a result! Carl was here until after midnight last night, making sure that the marquees didn't leak (he almost succeeded) and with Claire doing all the fancy decoration that has been the icing on the cake. Talking of cakes, thanks also to Ann who decorated all the little fancy cakes which have made up their wedding cake. They look fantastic.

I must apologise for the music! Many of you sent in the titles of your three favourite pieces of music and I've managed to download just about all of them. So those of you who didn't send yours in will have to put up with the choices of those who did. So sorry about the preponderance of Madonna, Kylie, Take That, Rick Astley!

Claire and Carl

Claire and Carl, well what can be said about them that hasn't already been said. They've been together for about eight years now. Which is interesting, because Claire is usually a terrible pessimist. If there's a chance that something will go wrong she will believe that it's bound to happen. Her glass is always half empty and this reminds me of a tale told by a friend at his wedding. He mentioned that his bride was an optimist and that her glass was always half full, he was a pessimist and his was always half empty. But, looking at her, he said "but I always know who's drunk the other half"!

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This time, however, Claire said that she and Carl have been together nearly eight years whilst Carl says it's just seven and a half!

However, in the time they have been together they've lived in more different places in Bolton than I've lived in all my life. One day they'll settle down (maybe).

I very much hope that they have a very long and happy life together and the mention of a long, long life reminds me of another tale I heard a while ago.

An old lady was 104 years old and because she had therefore lived in three centuries the local newspaper sent their cub reporter and a photographer to see her because they wanted to a feature on her.

The reporter was fascinated by her mental ability and good physical shape for someone so old. So, of course, he asked her the inevitable question, "Mrs. Parry, what's the secret of your long and happy life?"

She replied, "Lots of good times, good food, good wine and plenty of sex".

Surprised to get such a reply from someone so old, the reporter asked, "If you don't mind me asking, when did you last have sex?"

"1945", She said

"But that was almost 60 years ago", He responded.

"What do you mean, it's only 20:15 now", She replied, looking at her watch!

Weddings are, hopefully, very romantic affairs. Claire's sister, dawn and her husband, Jon, were married in the Lake District so I was able to quote the local poets:

Love's Philosophy by Percy Shelley

*The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix forever,
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle:-
Why not I with thine?*

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And from the I Ching

*When two people are at one in their inmost hearts,
they shatter even the strength of iron or bronze.
And when two people understand each other in their inmost hearts,
their words are sweet and strong,
like the fragrance of orchids.*

We also have some local poets, maybe not quite as well known as Wordsworth and Shelley but romantic nonetheless.

I Rely On You by Hovis Presley

*I rely on you
like a Skoda needs suspension
like the aged need a pension
like a trampoline needs tension
like a bungee jump needs apprehension*

*I rely on you
like a camera needs a shutter
like a gambler needs a flutter
like a golfer needs a putter
like a buttered scone involves some butter*

*I rely on you
like an acrobat needs ice cool nerve
like a hairpin needs a drastic curve
like an HGV needs endless derv
like an outside left needs a body swerve*

*I rely on you
like a handyman needs pliers
like an auctioneer needs buyers
like a laundromat needs driers
like The Good Life needed Richard Briers*

*I rely on you
like a water vole needs water
like a brick outhouse needs mortar
like a lemming to the slaughter
Ryan's just Ryan without his daughter*

I rely on you

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(I Married A) Monster From Outer Space by John Cooper-Clark

*The Milky Way she walks around
All feet firmly off the ground
Two worlds collide, two worlds collide
Here comes the future bride
Gimme a lift to the lunar base
I wanna marry a monster from outer space*

*I fell in love with an alien being
[She had a head as big as a TV screen]
Whose skin was jelly, whose teeth were green
[A glutinous complexion with a day-glow sheen]
She had the big bug eyes and the death-ray glare
Feet like water-wings, purple hair
I was over the moon, I asked her back to my place
And then I married the monster from outer space*

*The days were numbered, the nights were spent
In a rent-free furnished oxygen tent
Where a cyborg chef served up moonbeams
Done super-rapid on a laser beam
I needed nutrition to keep up the pace
When I married the monster from outer space*

*But when we went walking tentacle in hand
You could sense that the earthlings would not understand
They'd go nudge nudge when we got on the bus
Saying "It's extra-terrestrial, not like us;
And it's bad enough with another race,
But fuck me... a monster! from outer space?"*

*In this kind of atmosphere love went lame
She took a flare to from where she came
I read all the papers, looked up the stars
"Uranus is active and so is Mars"
My horoscope was horrible, told me to my face -
Avoid monsters from outer space*

*In a cybernetic fit of rage
She pissed off to another age
She lives in 1999
With her new boyfriend, a blob of slime
Each time I see a translucent face
I remember Errrrxxzztt from outer space.*

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But one of my main jobs is to propose the toast to the happy couple.

Claire and Carl, there is much love in this room today. A wedding is not only about love for each other, but the love you share with all the people in your life. You are amongst family and friends who wish you all the happiness and love in the world. Good luck and all our blessings to you both in your lives together.

*May there always be work for your hands to do.
May your purse always hold a coin or two.
May the sun always shine warm on your windowpane.
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain.
May the hand of a friend always be near you.
And may your hearts be filled with gladness to cheer you.*

Ladies and gentlemen, be upstanding and toast the bride and groom. Claire and Carl, we love you.