



Our Golden Wedding Anniversary

Our Golden Wedding Anniversary

June 21, 2015

Robert and Molly Hillery

June 21 1965 was our wedding day, hence 2015 was the year of our Golden Wedding Anniversary. We were unable to set one date on which we could expect all our family and friends to join us for a single celebration, so we enjoyed a number of smaller, but nevertheless memorable, functions over the course of several months.

We started in April with a weekend in Ohio on which both our children and all four grandchildren were with us for a long weekend. This included a stay at Great Wolf Lodge (a nearby water park), a family dinner and a presentation of a wonderful gift from all eight of our guests—a canvas mounted collage of wedding pictures (us and our children) together with beautiful photographs of our grandchildren.

On the actual date of our anniversary, Elizabeth posted one of our wedding pictures on her Facebook page and we received many favorable comments. Needless to say, we proudly display this extremely thoughtful gift in our home.







Our second series of celebrations was held in England during our regularly scheduled visit to our nephew Mark's apartment in Ilkley.

On June 13, shortly after our arrival, Bob's sister Dorothy and her husband David took us out for a very good dinner at the Blue Lion Inn in a small village in the Yorkshire Dales.

Then, on the weekend of our anniversary, we organized a family and friends dinner as the next step in our continuing celebrations. The dinner was at Monkman's restaurant in Ilkley—one of our favorites.

Present at the dinner were Dorothy and David, cousin Keith and his wife Eileen, cousin Roy and our good friends Keith (my best pal in Grammar School) and Zena.



Also present were Molly's brother Robert, her sister Frances and brother-in-law Alan who had arrived in Ilkley the previous day (on which we had a great meal at our favorite Italian restaurant) and stayed with us until Saturday (Fran and Alan) and Sunday (Robert) so we were able to enjoy a mini-reunion over the weekend.

Unfortunately, Molly's other brother Richard and his wife Elizabeth were unable to attend but a visit to Sheffield in July allowed all siblings to be together.



On the actual day (Sunday June 21) Molly and I drove to the venue of our wedding reception in Sheffield. The church where we were married is gone unfortunately, but the Whirlowbrook Park Hall still stands and indeed is still used for weddings and receptions.

Following a family debate as to the actual location (fifty years had caused confusion in some minds between Whirlowbrook Hall and nearby Whirlow Grange), there was no doubt that we were at the right place as we entered the park grounds on the outskirts of Sheffield.



The Victorian home looks as it did 50 years ago and the grounds are as beautiful as ever – albeit somewhat more “established” than in 1965. There are two lily ponds situated across the main lawn from the house which provided a classic backdrop for bride and groom photographs. In fact, on our wedding day (and I suspect on many others) the photographer stood across the lake to capture the couple and the water, with a tree-filled rock garden as backdrop.

Apparently the house and gardens had had a period of inactivity and lack of attention over a number of years and it was only in the past few years that efforts had been made to restore the gardens and use the house again for weddings. We met a couple who knew a little about the work that had been done in what had become a very overgrown garden and they told us of the recent transformation.

We asked the couple to take a picture of us near the lily pond in a fifty year on (and color) photograph of the classic shot taken of all newlyweds at the time. On our visit this year we had to settle for photographs with cameraman and couple on the same side of the water – but we felt we had re-captured the moment rather well. In fact – without the benefit of the old black and white pictures from 1965 – we could easily think that the scene and ourselves hadn't changed at all!

The area around the lily ponds appeared to be much more dense vegetation than when we were there a half century earlier (or even one time after that when we took our children there) but it was unmistakably the same place. It was lovely to stroll through the area once more on a beautiful summer afternoon – at precisely the time we had been there in our wedding outfits.

June 21, 2015

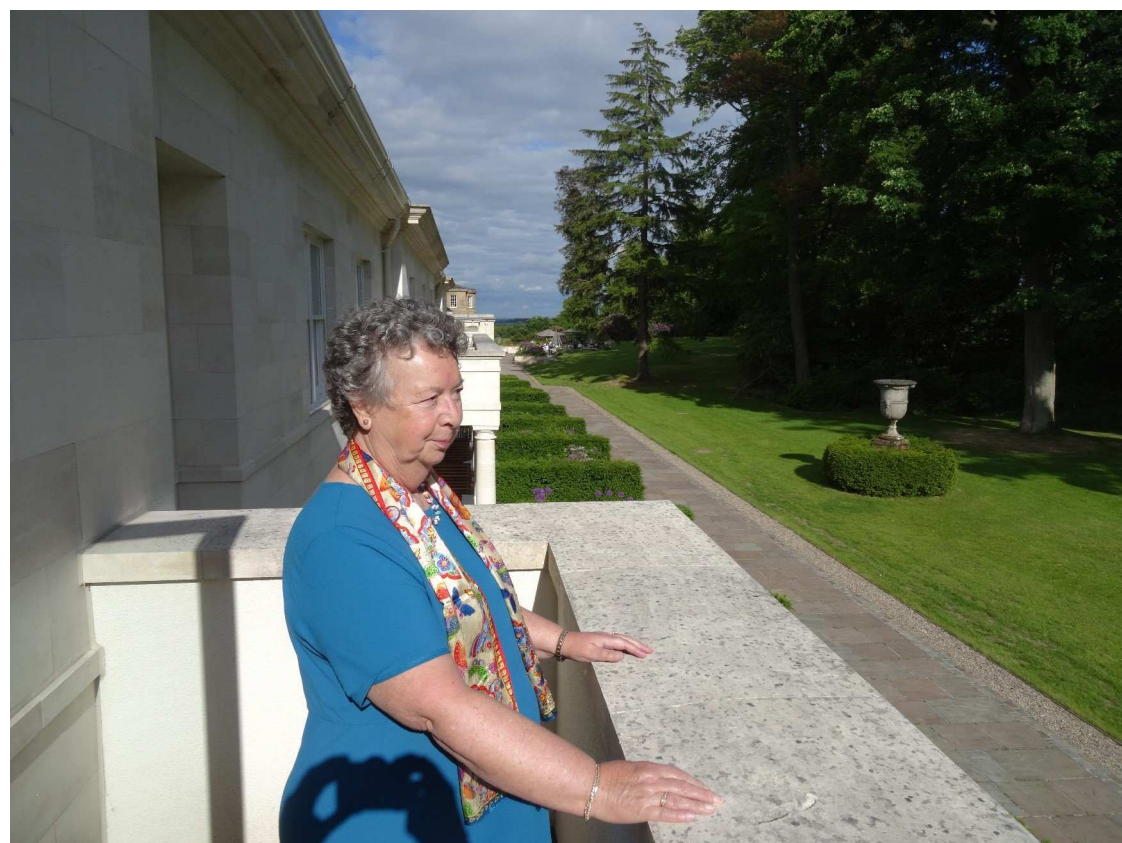




The celebratory weekend finished with dinner on Sunday evening with our niece Joanne at the Clocktower restaurant in Rudding Park near Harrogate. It was a very pleasant meal with Bob's late brother's daughter and her husband Robert and another chance to reminisce and extend the festivities.



But there was one more treat: our nephew Mark had booked us into a suite at the Rudding Park Hotel ("The best UK hotel outside London") so we didn't have to drive back to Ilkley that night. Quite a contrast to our honeymoon fifty years ago spent in a two person tent!



We had one more celebration to come. Two weeks after our anniversary date (July 8), we spent three days in Northumberland with our friends Keith and Zena. Keith (my grammar friend from the fifties) and Zena celebrated their Golden Wedding at the beginning of June so we decided to spend a few days together to cap off a wonderful series of family activities. The resort hotel was the Linden Hotel and Country Club but we stopped on the way there to visit Beamish, a reconstruction of a Victorian coal mining town and, although the main town is said to be set in 1913, there are a number of older buildings and settings.

On the following day we visited Cragside Estate. This is a large Victorian home in a very large estate (there is a six mile drive – which we took – around its perimeter) and its major claim to fame is that it was the first home in Britain to have electricity generated on site from its own water supply.



On our final day we visited Alnwick Castle. The castle of course is ancient and is the ancestral home of the Dukes of Northumberland but the adjoining gardens are a relatively modern feature and major attraction of the town. The central attraction is a very big water feature that fits well into the natural hillside which contains a magnificent hedge, pathways and additional water features and gardens.

Finally, on our way home we stopped in Haltwhistle, "the center of Britain", being equidistant from east and west coasts and the northern-most tip and south coast of the islands).

It was a great holiday with some very good friends.

Our anniversary gift to ourselves was a visit to one of our favorite countries and to two of the most beautiful cities we have ever seen - Venice and Florence. On July 15 we left the flat in Ilkley and flew via Amsterdam to Venice, where we spent four nights.

One of the benefits of visiting somewhere for the sixth (or more) time is that one doesn't feel obliged to "do everything" in the few days of the visit, so our time was spent simply strolling the pedestrian streets and visiting a number of churches along the way.



It was extremely hot and humid in Venice and even hotter in Florence, although here the humidity was down somewhat. Needless to say, our daily strolls were limited in duration.

In addition, coffee breaks (or, more often on this trip, cold drink breaks) and the evening meal were an important part of our experience - and there can be fewer better places than Italy in which to enjoy them.

We went by train from Venice to Florence and spent another four days there, once again visiting many places that we had seen before. Of course we saw the Duomo, the Ponte Vecchio and many beautiful buildings, in addition to spending half a day in the Uffizi Gallery. Also, for the first time, we spent time in the excellent Galileo Museum.

Once again, we found excellent small restaurants for the obligatory two hour evening meal.



We returned to England for one final week before flying home to Ohio at the conclusion of our four month long celebration of our Golden Wedding Anniversary - or so we thought!

On our return, we dined (as we often do) with our friends Bob and Pat Allen at Trio, one of our most frequented restaurants, and they paid the bill as an anniversary gift. Finally, in October we were given a bottle of champagne and a restaurant gift card by Angelo and Diane from our Financial Planning company.

We have mentioned that our celebrations and parties with friends and family spanned essentially a six-month period around the actual date of June 21, with lots of opportunities to enjoy their company and reflect on our fifty years together.

But we also received many notes of congratulations not only from those we spent time with but from others who we were not able to see throughout the year. As we mentioned, our daughter Elizabeth announced our anniversary on her Facebook page and we received dozens of congratulatory notes and favorable comments on the photograph she posted with the following words:

"Happy 50th wedding anniversary to my wonderful parents!"

Here is just a sampling of the notes we received: some from people we don't know very well, some we haven't seen in many years, many from those we are privileged to call friends. To all we say THANK YOU.

Oh my golly gosh - your GOLDEN wedding anniversary! Many, many congratulations. You are such a sweet couple and I know you know you are SO lucky to have each other. May your life travels be as exciting as your world travels. Frankie Croisant

*Happy Anniversary!
You two look as good as in the wedding pictures
(maybe a little change in hair styles).
May you have many more celebrations.
Gord and Jay*

Beautiful picture, Liz!! (Shari Rose Lamping)



What a fabulous picture! (Debbie Boyd)

*A very Happy 50th Anniversary to you Mr. & Mrs. Hillery, many more
(Sheila McKaig)*

Happy Anniversary, Bob and Molly!! (Karen Marley)

Awesome -not many of us get to do that. (Ruth Brueshaber)

Happy Anniversary, Bob and Molly!! (Ed and Jean Milbrada)

*What a beautiful picture! Congratulations to a
wonderful couple. (Cathy Temple)*

*Love that picture! Tell them I said Happy Anniversary! (Michelle
Gleason Zimmerman)*

Adorable couple (Elizabeth Chopra)

*INSPIRATIONAL!!! You both are models of grace and commitment. May
we all aspire to follow in your footsteps! Congratulations!!! *Eric
Frischmuth)*

*I remember that day well xxx (Jackie Blitzer Knowles - Molly's
bridesmaid now living in Australia)*

Wishing you the best of Golden Anniversaries and sincere wishes for many more to come. - Jim & Ann Kightlinger

*Wow. 50 years. That's pretty amazing. I for one am extremely glad the two of you met so long ago! It's inspiring not only that you've been together so long, but that you're able to do so many wonderful things together.
So what do you have planned for the next 50?
Love, Widgie (Our son)*

We also received notes from those who were at our anniversary dinner in Ilkley:

Hi Bob & Molly,
It was a lovely evening. I did have a bit of a speech prepared but thought it was not appropriate with other diners present. However I will save it and use it on another occasion. I may change the names to protect the innocent.
Keith & Zena

Hi,
Excellent evening last night, good meal and good company I think everybody would happily vote it a great success. Congratulations again to you both !
Keith and Eileen

Hi M & B,
Thank you very much indeed for yet another most enjoyable time. I hope you have a great stay tonight too.
With much love to the both of you from me. (Robert)

Thank You very much - was a lovely evening- did send you a text this morning to say Congratulations etc but you may have been too busy celebrating to see it! Anyway, hope you are having a great day.
Dorothy and David

Molly and Bob,
Thanks for a great evening yesterday, really enjoyed the venue, tasty meal, excellent company and a few good laughs.
Thanks again, Roy

Finally, a note from a good friend with some sound advice:

Hi Tykes Abroad... and 50 years of it... Congrats! Well Done! Cheers!

Subject: 6 LITTLE STORIES

**{1} Once all villagers decided to pray for rain, on the day of prayer all the people gathered, but only one little boy came with an umbrella.
That's FAITH**

**{2} When you throw a small child up in the air, she laughs because she knows you will catch her.
That's TRUST**

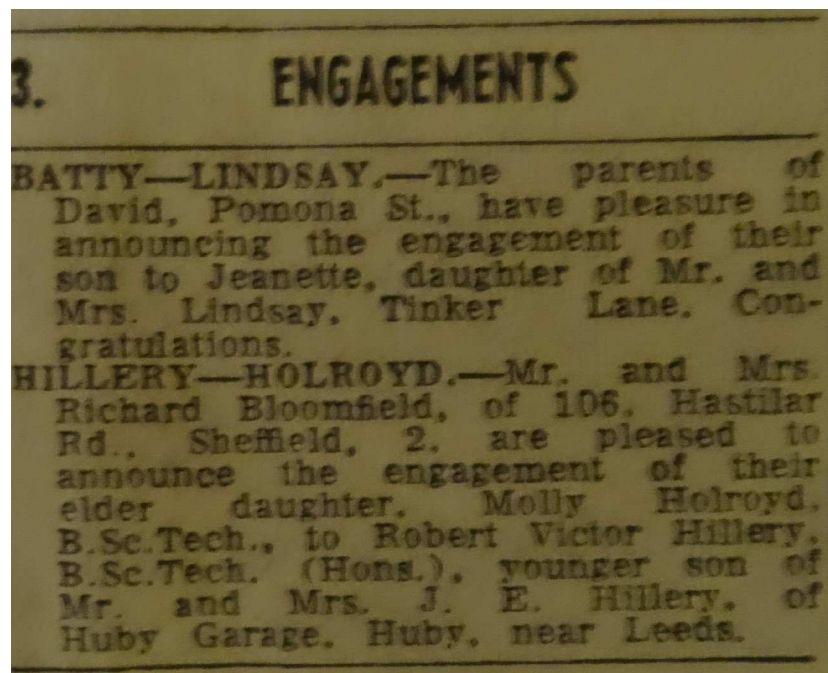
**{3} Every night we go to bed, without any assurance of being alive the next morning but still we set the alarms to wake up.
That's HOPE**

**{4} We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future.
That's CONFIDENCE**

**{5} We see the world suffering, but still we get married.
That's LOVE**

**{6} On an old man's shirt was written a sentence 'I am not 60 years old....I am sweet 16 with 44 years experience'
That's ATTITUDE**

**Have a happy day, live your life like the six stories!
Gordon**



*Molly Holroyd, BSc Tech (Mathematics), June 1962
met
Robert Victor Hillery, BSc Tech (Metallurgy), June 1963
on
June 17, 1961
and were engaged in
August 1964*

Married on June 21, 1965

Lived in a caravan in Wilmslow while Bob completed his PhD and Molly worked with Hawker Siddeley and English Sewing Cotton

In early December 1966, Bob graduated with a PhD in Corrosion Science and, on December 28 1966

We emigrated to the United States

We lived first in an apartment and bought our first house in August 1967. Molly worked for Crouse Hinds and Bob worked for General Electric, both in Syracuse, NY

On August 12, 1968 our daughter Elizabeth Anne was born

In March 1971 we moved to West Chester, OH as Bob moved employment with GE to Cincinnati

On April 3, 1972 our son Christopher James was born

In May 1978 we moved to a larger home in West Chester where we would live for the next 32 1/2 years

Elizabeth graduated from High School in June 1986

Christopher graduated from High School in June 1989

In June 1990 Elizabeth graduated from Miami University

In December 1993 Christopher graduated from Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute

On October 24, 1992 Elizabeth married Christopher John Shepard in West Chester, OH

On July 30, 1996 our first grandchild, Hayley Christine Shepard, was born

In September 1996 Molly retired from her job as a librarian

In September 1999 Bob retired after 33 years with GE

***On December 1, 1999 our first grandson,
Colin Christopher Shepard, was born***

***On August 6 2000, Christopher married Cyndi
Beth Schreiber in Sacramento, CA***

***On May 20 2002, our second grandson,
Cameron Christopher Shepard, was born***

***On November 24 2008, our second grand-
daughter, Samantha Brighton Hillery, was born***

In October 2010, we moved to a condominium in Mason, OH

***On June 5, 2015 Hayley graduated from High School and, in
August, started classes at Ohio University***

***On June 21, 2015 we celebrated our
Golden Wedding Anniversary***



