

The Long Wait Is Over

*The Wedding of
Andrew and Ros*

17th February 2007

by Andrew Host
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I expected to wake early, full of excitement, but I slept until the alarm went off at seven-thirty.

Everything was mostly ready to go, but there were so many last-minute things to attend to. I had to clean out the fridge, pack toothbrushes, take cat food to our neighbours, the Giliams, and a number of other things. I was working off a checklist, but my greatest fear was that I might have forgotten to put something on the list.

A little after nine, I walked to the chemist, and when I returned home, I then popped into the Giliams' to give them the cat food.

Then I drove around to the florist on Lady Street to collect the corsages for Mum and Grandma and the buttonhole flowers for me, Dad and the groomsmen.

Not long after my return home, Mum and Dad arrived to collect all of Daniel's many bags for his fortnight away.

They stayed long enough for a cuppa.

Then, when they left, time seemed to go quickly and slowly at the same time. There wasn't much left to do, so I did a bit of tidying up, but hardly scratched the surface.

Around two o'clock, Ralph arrived with Mark also in the car. They were already dressed in their suits, and Daniel and I were mostly dressed. We filled in time chatting and looking things up on the computer. Ralph drank a cup of coffee.

Suddenly, it was a quarter to three, and time for us to leave. My luggage just fitted into the boot of

Ralph's car, then we all piled in. I drove to the top of the driveway because Ralph was unsure about negotiating my difficult driveway. Then Ralph drove the rest of the way to the church.

I was grateful for the airconditioning in the car. Outside, it was about thirty degrees and as humid as it was possible for it to be.

We arrived at the church at about a quarter past three, so I was surprised at how many people were already there. Mum and Dad had arrived, Neil and Kathy and family were there. Adrian had already set up the sound system and his video camera, and Roland Ward was also there with a video camera borrowed from Lance Lenehan. Lance and Anne arrived shortly afterwards. There were others there, but I've now forgotten who, and minute-by-minute more people arrived.

Most people arrived early, and I was surprised at how quickly time passed.

I was terribly uncomfortably hot in my double-breasted suit, but tried hard to put that out of my mind.



Ros at her parents' house before the wedding.



Ros and her parents before the wedding.

At ten minutes to four, I made a dash to the toilet, only to find both of them occupied. Knowing that I was quickly running out of time, I darted out the back of the hall to the outside toilets.

I made it back just in time. It had been announced that the cars had arrived when I realised that I'd forgotten to start my audio recorder. I managed to get it started and recording with only moments to spare.

Then there was no more time to think about nervousness, or how hot I was feeling, for the minister David Reay asked everyone to stand, the sound of Alison Morley playing the Processional on the church organ filled the church, and the first of Ros's bridesmaids, her niece Annaliese, walked out of the entranceway and into the church. Seconds later, Ros's friend Judy Wilson entered, followed by Ros's sister Andrea, and then friend Jane Curran.



Arriving at the church.

Then came the moment I'd been waiting for. I'd managed to catch a glimpse of Ros through the glass into the entranceway, but now for the first time, as she entered the church building, I could see her magnificent beauty properly.

But something was wrong. Ros didn't look happy. She had a worried, nervous look on her face - until she rounded the corner, turned to start her walk down the aisle, and made eye contact with me. At that moment, her worried look vanished and was replaced with her beautiful, broad smile. Her face lit up. That complete change in her face when she made eye contact with me, will be the image that lingers in my memory.



The walk up the aisle.

The walk with her father took a little longer than during the rehearsals, but Alison seamlessly extended the music until the time that Ros stood by

my side at the front of the church, with her four bridesmaids lined up at a ninety degree angle on her left, and my four groomsmen facing the bridesmaids at my right.

There was a brief welcome from David Reay, and then we launched straight into our first hymn, "O For A Thousand Tongues".



The bridal party during the service.

We sat on the first pew for the Bible readings, performed well by my Uncle Garry and our friend Peter Kirkwood, and then the prayers, delivered by our friend Wayne Marshall.

David Reay then spoke for about eight minutes. I tried hard to concentrate on what he was saying, but was distracted as I caught frequent glimpses of my beautiful bride beside me.

Then came the official part of the service, and we all stood out the front again.

The formalities mostly followed the standard Anglican Prayer book, but instead of the vows from the Prayer Book, we'd composed our own.

I would have liked to have memorised the vows, but if I ever had that sort of memory, I no longer did. We read the vows from beautifully printed sheets of paper that Kristina at work had specially prepared for us.

As we read the vows to each other, Ros was shaking with nervousness so much that I



The exchange of vows.



Angus, Neil, Aileen, Grahame and Oscar.



The kiss!

thought she was going to drop the sheet. And even though Ros made mistakes every time we rehearsed the vows, on this occasion they were performed flawlessly.

The Exchange of Rings followed, including an awkward moment when my ring wouldn't go on, as my fingers had expanded because of the heat of the day. We were then pronounced Husband and Wife. The Signing of the Register followed at the Communion table. While we were doing that, my nieces Jacqueline, Katherine and Christine sang "Only Love Goes On", the piece for which I'd written the words and Jacqueline had written the music. That was immediately followed by Ros's sister-in-law Kathy and Ros's nephew Oscar playing "Impromptu" by Schubert on their trombones.



Jacqui, Katie and Christine.



Oscar and Kathy.



Signing the register.

David Reay announced us as Mr and Mrs Host, and

then we walked back down the aisle and exited the church while a recording of the song "Walking On Sunshine" was played.



The bridal party after the signing of the register.

It was still uncomfortably warm outside, but it was cooler than it had been inside the church, so it was a relief to get outside.



Outside the church.



Immediately the church bell was rung by Katherine and Christine. Then the endless photograph taking began. And it wasn't just the official photographer. It seemed that every second person had a camera. Various people attempted to greet us, especially those who had come to see the wedding service but hadn't been invited to the reception or weren't able to come to the reception.

Eventually, it was time to leave the church. Three beautifully preserved, very old white Bentley cars were waiting for us.



The wedding cars.

Two of the three cars were airconditioned, but as it turned out, it was more pleasant with the windows down. In a way, it was a pity that the drive was so short. I would have liked a little longer in that car with my new bride.

All too quickly, we'd arrived at Asquith Golf Club. Champagne was served to the bridal party, and I worried, because of my empty stomach, about becoming drunk before the festivities even started. But they also offered little sugary sweets to eat, and that seemed to help. But I was so dry, I also asked

for a glass of water.

Lisa Ward had kindly supplied two little Eskys of water for the bridal party. She'd previously told me that someone had provided water for her bridal party when she married, and she'd never forgotten how grateful she'd been for it. Sadly, we didn't need it because the car people had provided drinks, including water.

We then dismissed the drivers, all of whom were true gentlemen. I was most impressed with the Camelot Bridal Car Company, from the booking process right through to the end.

We then proceeded with some more professional photograph taking. We walked through the club building and onto the golf links, finding a pleasant, shady spot. By this time, the heat of the day was over, and a breeze blew which made it quite comfortable.

When we'd finished with the photographs, we returned up the hill to the club house, the women with pointy heels on their shoes having more difficulty than the others walking on the grass.

At the club house, our Master of Ceremonies, Bob Davis, took over. This meant that there was nothing for us to worry about. We congregated at the bottom of the stairs in the entranceway, and waited for Bob to announce our arrival.



On the golf links.

We entered in pairs, each pair being separately announced: firstly my Mum and Dad, then Ros's parents, Daniel and Annaliese, Ralph and Judy, Richard and Andrea, Mark and Jane, and then to a

tumultuous applause and cheers, and with a few bars of "Moondance" being played by the band as a fanfare, Ros and I entered the room.

Very little time passed before it was announced that dinner was being served. It was a buffet-style dinner, with a fine selection of food. Ros and I had chicken with a little vegetarian lasagne, with potatoes and various vegetables.

There were so many guests (about 135) that we had finished eating by the time the last table of people had gone up to collect their meal.

Throughout the dinner, Ric Herbert and his band played live music. It was so much nicer than having a disk jockey playing CDs, and many people commented on how good the music was. At times, I thought it was a bit loud, but when I mentioned this to others, most people disagreed with me.

After dessert, which was another fine selection from the buffet (I chose a fruit flan), Ros and I made our way around the tables, doing our best to say "Hello" and chat to all the guests. Despite our best efforts, there were some people we didn't manage to speak to.

Then came the time I was most dreading - the speeches. All the speeches were made from the dance floor, thankfully with a wireless microphone.

Ros's Dad, Grahame, was first, and I marvelled at how well he spoke without once referring to notes. His speech included kind words for Ros, me and Daniel, and I found it daunting to follow such a fine speech.

I've made a few speeches at weddings, usually as Best Man, and on a couple of occasions I've been

able to deliver a speech without referring to notes. But I didn't think it was possible this time. Reluctantly, I took my notes out with me.

I began with an old gag that's a favourite of mine, inspired by the credits in the Rocky and Bullwinkle Show. I held up a small piece of paper, no larger than a business card while assuring the crowd that my speech wouldn't be very long because everything I had to say was written on "this itty bitty little card". At which point I let go of the attached sheets which concertina down to the floor.

That had the right effect, and people did laugh as I hoped they would. I then brought out my real notes and delivered my speech. Listening back later, I felt that some of the pauses were too long, but I needed that time to keep referring back to my notes. At least I think the content was good, and many other people agreed that it was.

As tradition would have it, my speech ended with a toast to the bridesmaids.

My Best Man, Mark, replied on their behalf. He delivered a fine speech.

With the speeches over, we had the "Loving Cup" and the cutting of the cake.



The "Loving Cup" and the cake.

Then the Bridal Waltz followed. I hated dancing while being the centre of attention, and was happy to be dancing only when the dance floor was full of others dancing. The first dance had been to a recording of "The Blue Danube", but all the other music was played live by Ric and the band, and here they excelled.

The first song they played while we were dancing was, at our request, "Moondance". Then they played a couple of slow numbers including "Somewhere



The Dancing, and top-right: Ric Herbert and the band providing the music.

Over The Rainbow”, a favourite of Ros's.

Then the music became more energetic, and considerably louder, so I didn't stay long on the dance floor. Anyway, it soon became time for Ros and me to change into our “going away” outfits, which we did in a room downstairs.

Bob had some difficulty organising the assembled crowd into a large circle for our farewell, but did manage it in the end.



Farewells said: Ros and Daniel, and the farewell archway to the background of “Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye.”



I wanted to spend longer talking to each person, but if I did we would have been there all night. Once we'd said goodbye to everyone, they all formed an arched tunnel and, to a background of a recording of Vera Lynn singing “Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me

Goodbye” we made our way through the tunnel of arms, and out the door.

I'd previously asked Daniel to meet me outside when it was all over, and when he came out, I gave him an extra big goodbye hug.

Andrea kindly drove Ros and me to our hotel in North Sydney. We chatted and reminisced about the evening that had just passed, and soon we were in North Sydney.

Checking into the Harbourview Hotel was quick and painless. We didn't even have to think about breakfast, as I'd submitted breakfast menu to them a few days prior.

Our room was on the twelfth floor, Room 1201, and the Harbourview Hotel lived up to its name. At the far side of the room, a large window revealed a sparkling panorama of the Harbour Bridge, the city of Sydney and the Parramatta River.

We admired the view while sipping complimentary champagne and eating a couple of chocolates that had been waiting for us.

But while we marvelled at the view, our minds were soon focused on other things.

I'm sorry if you thought that I was going to write about the rest of the night, but I will not be writing about our intimate moments. Suffice to say that it was a wedding night to remember!

We remain very grateful to all the people who contributed to making the wedding so very special for us, (in no particular order):

- Aileen and Grahame, who gave time, effort, and money, above and beyond the call of duty.
- Mum and Dad, who paid for the beautiful flowers in the church as well as the bouquets and corsages, and who each Thursday, drove Daniel to his early start at school for Band practice, and who looked after him each weekend.
- Richard and Stacy, who spent hours and hours designing the printed Order of Service booklets, and then spent considerable time assembling them with ribbons which matched the bridesmaids dresses. Thanks to them also for looking after Daniel while we were away on our honeymoon.
- Bob Davies, who was the perfect Master of Ceremonies. His expertise meant that we had nothing at all to worry about at the Reception.
- The videographers, Roland Ward, Lance Lenehan and Adrian Tyler, who gladly volunteered their time and expertise to beautifully capture the events of the day.
- Andrea, who was a strong emotional and practical support for Ros in the weeks leading up to the wedding, and especially on the day, including her willingness to drive us to North Sydney on the night of the wedding. And thanks to Andrea and Paul who organised and paid for the splendid wedding cake.
- All the bridesmaids: Jane Curran, Andrea

Griffith, Judy Wilson and Annaliese Griffith-Jones, plus the groomsmen: Mark Bryant, Richard Host, Ralph Davis and Daniel Host, who all willingly gave time and money to help make the day so lovely.

- Garry Tyler and Peter Kirkwood who read the Bible passages so well, and Wayne Marshall, whose thoughtfully written prayers added much to the service.
- Christine Furse-Roberts and Jenny Delaney who spent a lot of time arranging the flowers to ensure that they would look spectacularly beautiful.
- David Reay, who conducted the service with a perfect balance of solemnity and jocularly.
- Alison Morley, who volunteered her time at rehearsal and on the day playing the church organ for us.
- Neil Griffith and Stuart Tyler, who arrived early in order to act as ushers, and in performing their duties well they ensured that we had one less thing to worry about.
- Jacqueline, Katherine and Christine Host, and Kathy and Oscar Griffith whose musical performances during the signing of the register were enjoyed by all.
- Neil Turner, who made extra seating available as the church began to fill, and who packed the chairs away afterwards.
- The many people who took photos on the day, and have either sent us prints or digital copies, some rivalling the professionally taken photographs, including Mum and Dad, Richard

and Stacy, Anne Lenehan, Malcolm Lawn, Daniel Large and Wayne Marshall.

God truly blessed us on the day of the wedding and while we were away on our honeymoon. We kept reminiscing about the wedding and the honeymoon, and could find nothing that we would have changed.

[the end]