

“I’ll keep this short...”

“...Chapter One.”

“Sorry, I’ve been preparing this for a while... last weekend, to be precise. Thanks, ChatGPT.”

Opening & Introductions

Good evening everyone.

If you’ll kindly notice, each table has a bottle of port labelled “best man’s speech”

Please feel free charge your glasses while I’m talking to get ready for a toast at the end

I’d like to start by thanking all of you for being here today to celebrate this truly momentous occasion — for Matt, for Cathy, and of course for their beautiful new arrival, little Maddy.

I know some of you have travelled from far and wide — from exotic places like Romsey... and Basingstoke...

For those who don’t know me, my name’s James, and I’ve known Matt since sixth form at Wellington College — or as my non-school friends like to call it,

Hogwarts School of Toffcraft and Tomfoolery.

About Cathy & Maddy

Before I go any further — can we all take a moment to appreciate how stunning Cathy looks today.

(pause for applause)

Absolutely radiant.

And a special mention to little Maddy — one of the most adored babies I’ve ever met.

She’s also proof that when Matt sets his mind to something, results can follow very quickly.

Meeting Matt

I first met Matt in maths class. He took one look at the question on the board, confidently put up his hand, stared the teacher straight in the eye... and proudly gave the wrong answer.

That's when I thought, "Now there's a man who commits."

In the end, he decided maths wasn't worth his time, but that confidence has never left him — it's seen him lead Air Cadets, survive his first and second gap years, captain rugby and rowing teams, survive gap years three four and five, and somehow convince everyone they were "career development."

He's a man who's always been bold — whether on the rugby pitch, the river, or the high seas. Though after a few knee surgeries and the odd ligament mishap, he's traded full-contact sport for the gentler arts of touch rugby — and, of course, yachting. Because nothing says "athlete" quite like sitting down with a beer in hand while the wind does the work for you.

And if you ever get the chance to do a pub quiz with Matt — take it. But be warned. He'll give an answer like "347,893 miles" to "How far is it to the moon?" and say it with such conviction that everyone believes him. He knows it's wrong. He just wants to see if you'll believe him.

That's the sort of honesty you can expect from Matt: always blunt... rarely correct

When Cathy Entered the Scene

When Cathy entered Matt's life, things... changed.

I remember visiting his house in Basingstoke for the first time after they got together, and immediately there was a difference. The smell. More like fresh linen and flowers and less like old yachting kit.

Soon after Cathy moved in came their first child — Billy the cat.

Now this was Matt's chance to show Cathy his masculine prowess and DIY skill. Which he did —

The result? The Cattio.

A sizeable portion of the garden turned into a feline adventure park. Three levels, multiple toys, climbing routes — basically the Soho Farmhouse of cat enclosures.

I would love to talk about the blood sweat and tears Matt poured into it, but Matt's true talent lay in coming up with the plan, and then outsourcing the entire project to his Dad.

They say getting a pet together is great practice for parenthood — you learn about teamwork, patience, and responsibility.

In Matt's case, it was mainly learning how to assemble furniture while being supervised by Cathy.

Matt & Cathy Together

Since meeting Cathy, I've seen Matt transform. The confidence that once fuelled five gap years and a thousand travel stories has become the quiet assurance of a man who's found his purpose.

Cathy brings out the best in him — the loyal, grounded, dependable man we see today. And Matt, in turn, makes Cathy laugh, keeps her adventurous spirit alive, and occasionally even remembers to put things in the dishwasher.

Together, they handle life's everyday challenges beautifully. Cathy, of course, has mastered the art of "Matthew MANAGEMENT."

With a little help from Nikki his Mum, she quickly learned:

If she says, "Matt, do these shoes go here?" — he'll say, "Yes." (blank stare)

But if she says, "Let's move these shoes, shall we, Matt?" — he'll say, "Yes." (same blank stare)

That, ladies and gentlemen... is growth.

The Stag Do

Now, I was told in no uncertain terms not to mention the stag do.

(pause)

So I won't.

But let's just say, if you ask Matt whether it's possible to survive 12 hours of Reggae, questionable decisions, pineapple leaf crowns, hula skirts, and a lovely Italian meal? He'll say

zzzz

The Heartfelt Bit

All jokes aside — watching Matt and Cathy together is genuinely heartwarming.

Matt once told me he'd finally found "The One."

Naturally, I assumed he meant the yacht.

But then I met Cathy — and it was immediately clear he was talking about her.

They bring out each other's best qualities:

her warmth, his wit,

her grace, his grit;

her faith, his belief that "if it's not nailed down it's fair game".

They've built a beautiful home, a wonderful family, and a life full of laughter and love.

Closing Toast

Now the port -

Matt bought this port for my 18th birthday, and I figured there's no better occasion than to be able to share it with all of you on this joyful day.

So if you'd all please be upstanding for a toast

— the Bride and Groom