

Laura was always academically very bright however she left school not knowing what she wanted to do until one day having been lying around at home not working she was literally dragged off the sofa by her mother given a few words of encouragement ended up working at Lewisham hospital and studying a nursing degree at Greenwich university, the uni coincidentally where I graduated. I am proud to stand up and shout out to the world or to whomever is listening, that my daughter qualified as a nurse and is now a band 7, sister in old money, working in the NHS having survived working with COVID patients in ICU. Proud yes I am.

Laura and Dom met in 2017 but unbeknown to them and their families they have had a long relationship with Cornwall holidaying in Mevagissey and Gorran Haven as children and now again as a couple. Dom proposed to Laura at her brother Simon's wedding in Devon, I remember him well asking me for her hand on the night of 12th March 2022. No I was not drunk although beer had been taken. But I did manage a few whiskys' after.

I have had the pleasure of seeing both Laura's and Dom's love for each other grow over the six years they have been together and I am confident that Dom will look after my daughter in whos' hands I now pass her over to with grateful thanks!!

Seriously Dom, welcome, Elisabeth and I are proud to call you our son-in-law and we look forward to many years of happiness and in particular we look foward to welcoming the sound of tiny feet on the wooden floor!! Other than Blu, Sydney and Otis.

Laura and Dom you both mean so much to me. I love you both. Thank you for making me so very happy today and dare I say every day, Truly.

Before I finish I would just like to impart some advice on a happy marriage:

- 1. Think about the quality not the quantity of your sex life. I used to be young once.*
- 2. Establishing boundaries is a must; taking care of yourselves, spending time together and with family and friends are crucial to the marathon that marriage is.*
- 3. Arguing is healthy, as long as you do so fairly (Laura).*
- 4. Work through your money feelings together and often.*
- 5. Treat Blu, Sydney and Otis as your surrogate family it will give you a good insight and dialogue about future things to consider when raising a family.*
- 6. Dom, having said all of that remember to always say you are sorry and buy a bunch of flowers often, its a healthy option.*

Let me finish with this quote from an unknown source “A good marriage is one where each partner secretly suspects that they got the better deal”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls and those I have missed, are your drinking glasses charged? Can I ask you all to stand. Please raise your glass and join me in a bumper toast to Laura and Dom. Congratulations.

Xxx

The Groom | Dominic Bowden

Can I start by saying a huge thank you on behalf of my wife and I. Thank you all so much for being here, we're genuinely so grateful you could make it out to France to share the weekend with us.

I also know there were a number of people, mainly dads, who needed an excuse to be in France for the rugby World Cup, so you lot are welcome. I'd like to start with a big thank you to the bridesmaids, you all look absolutely amazing.

Firstly, the Sophie's, Laura's sister and my sister. You guys mean the world to us and your support means so much, and I know Laura couldn't be happier to have you by her side and we're both lucky to have you as a constant in our lives.

And the Best friends, Rosie and Liv. I'm not sure who has been more stressed but thank you for being there for Laura and myself over the last few days weeks and months. I've not come across many tighter groups of friends, and I know you'll fight each other's corner no matter what, sometimes literally, I have actually witnessed it. Jokes aside that's all someone can ask for and your love and support mean so much to not just Laura but to both of us, so thank you.

We would also like to thank both sets of parents as we wouldn't be where we are today if it wasn't for them.

Thank you to Laura's parents John and Elisabeth who welcomed me into the family from day one and most of all for bringing up the woman that I have married. I'm sure it was tough at times..

Elisabeth, you're basically a second mum to me, always so generous with your time and always there for myself and Laura and your cooking is absolutely sensational.

I'll always remember coming home from hockey matches to an amazing roast dinner with all the trimmings but I have to say, the washing up back then was pretty bleak. I've never seen so many pots and pans used for one meal and to this day I'm still unsure what some of the utensils were used for.

John, I was actually quite nervous on first meeting, but I've loved watching sport together, particularly sneaking off to the man cave when we're meant to be doing something else. You've always been a massive support to both of us, and hopefully I've shown that I'll take care of Laura no matter what, although we both know she can take care of herself and both of us.

I also owe my parents a huge thank you. Words won't come close to describing what you've done for me over the last 32 years but your unwavering motivation and sacrifice is something I will always be grateful for. You've been a constant source of inspiration and I wouldn't have come close to achieving what I have without you. I am so grateful for the upbringing you gave me and I couldn't be prouder to have Laura officially become part of the family.

Before I go on, unfortunately it wasn't possible for everyone we love to be here so I would like to take this moment to make a toast to absent Friends and family.

Now for the best men Dave and Chris. The Olympian's. We've known each other for the best part of 20 years, playing hockey against each other when we were 13 to playing in the same team for over 10 years, and living together at Loughborough.

And although you come as a pair, individually you both mean so much. Dave I can always rely on you, and you're always there to offer honest advice or feedback, usually too honest.

Griff, truth be told, I can't always rely on you, you probably turn up to 50% of the things we organise, but my god when you do turn up it's always spectacular. Griff was mistaken for the stag, although that's the same for most nights out.

Now I know organising a stag do isn't easy and I'm pretty relaxed, but my only request was that the location was close to London as we're having a destination wedding. But apparently Dublin is cheaper than Birmingham/it's one of Griff's Favourite nights out. Either way, thank you for one of the best weekends of my life.

I'm also quite ready for you both to retire so we can have some Friday beers again.

I guess that leaves just one more person, the most important person, and the reason we're here today, Laura. I tried very hard to imagine what you might look like today but once again you blew any expectations out of the water. You look absolutely incredible, just like you do everyday, and I'm honestly still pinching myself.

I met Laura almost exactly 6 years ago to the day. It was Saturday 2nd September and we met at one of London's finest institutions, Infernos. For those of you that haven't been, Timeout London describes it as the messiest night out that £12 can guarantee inside the M25. Margot Robbie has called it one of her favourite hang outs, it hosted the infamous inbetweeners dancing scene and the sex pistols even recorded an album there. So we're in esteemed company.

When I saw Laura, this absolutely stunning girl, across the dance floor, I did what any strong, confident man would do and I went straight over and spoke to her brother, who she happened to be on a night out with.

God knows why, maybe because I'm a brother myself.

Anyway, thankfully my pitch went down well and I managed to convince him I was worthy enough to have a 5 minute chat. Laura and I had a quick dance and I managed to get Laura's number before Simon dragged her away.

People say you're so lucky to have found the one and you're so lucky to have found the woman of your dreams but I don't believe in luck. I believe in hard work and determination, and this couldn't have been more true when after 2 days of messaging Laura didn't text me back. I remember being sat in the kitchen with Marc and asking whether I should double text this girl and we both agreed pretty quickly that as she was the only girl to have actually replied to me in the last 12 months I should probably just bite the bullet. And am I glad that I did. I followed up with another message, thank god Laura replied, I locked in a first date, and the rest is history.

What I've learnt about Laura is that she is the most honest (sometimes too honest), determined, and caring person I have ever met. In work and in life Laura puts everyone else first and yet she never complains; Laura works the longest and hardest hours of anyone and yet she will come home from a night shift dancing and singing. And more than anything Laura keeps me and our beloved dog Blu on our toes at all time.

Laura even though it's been 6 years since we first met, I feel our journey is just beginning.

I can't wait for more runs with Blu followed by coffee. Or copious amounts of wine in our Favourite wine bar. And more skiing and traveling.

And from this day forward I promise to always say yes to skinny dipping.

I promise that I will annoy you without knowing what I'm doing but I'll always try and make you laugh. And I promise that no matter what I will always be there for you.

You're my best friend, you've made me a better person, and I will always be grateful to have your infectious love and energy in my life. All I know is I'm the happiest man in the world when I'm with you and I love you and can't wait to spend the rest of my life with you.

The Bestmen | Chris Griffiths & David Condon

Ladies and gentlemen, for those of you that we haven't had the pleasure of meeting I am Chris and alongside me is Dave, we have the honour of being best men for Laura and Doms special day. For those of you that do know us, we can only apologise.

Before I start just some quick housekeeping. Firstly, could I ask everyone to have top up of the glasses for a toast at the end.

Secondly, if you've got your mobile phone on you please make sure to keep it switched ON during the speech, for your own entertainment at a later date.

I read somewhere that the perfect best man speech should last as long as it takes for the groom to make love, so please could everyone raise a glass to the happy couple! Cheers.

Before we tell embarrassing stories of Dom there is one aspect of his life that he has hidden away for most of his life, only those closest to him know how much of an avid magic fan he is. His favourite magician, hudini. Any night out or social event ive ever been on with him, 9.30 strikes and he performs his famous magic trick.

Honestly so good you could be at the bar buying him a drink and you pay and pick them to turn and give them to him. And there's just smoke left and no Dom. Just the empty space that he once stood. he was just gone! Hudini'd right out of there. So Please please please if you want to speak to Dom or spend some quality time with him please catch him before he performs his infamous magic trick at 9.30!

As we all know, Dom is a very keen and talented sportsman, from representing represented England at hockey winning a BUCS gold medal and even hitting a hole in one in golf.