

Ronald Denys Lowe

1936–2019



My good friend Ron Lowe passed away peacefully at home on 26th November 2019.

A chance meeting with Ron 45 years ago sowed the seeds for what became David Stanley Auctions and much more.

Ron, a gifted cabinet maker and wood carver, worked for a local joinery company, I met him on my weekly visits to the joinery shop to collect sawdust and shavings for the animals on my farm to help out with winter bedding.

We gradually got to know each other and eventually got on to the subject of tool collecting. Ron was very interested in early tools and had accrued a small collection.

I didn't know one end of a woodworking tool from the other (and still often have trouble) but the more we chatted the more I became interested. Although I had never troubled a plane or a chisel to any great extent since I left school I became quite interested in his hobby. It sounded really exciting calling on retired joiners, curious as to what might be found, so I tagged along on a few calls with him and became hooked.

With his knowledge and my enthusiasm, we started advertising further afield, weekends would be spent on buying trips following up answers to our adverts. In those days joiners had proper tools, there was very little of the later new fangled tools that required electricity or batteries to make them work.

The problem we found was that retired joiners and joiner's widows didn't just want to sell us a few interesting pieces, they needed to sell the whole kit so we soon found we had garages and

other places full of tools we didn't know what to do with.

So, eventually, we decided to have a little auction on a Sunday afternoon, in an upstairs room at a local pub, a bit like a car boot or a garage sale but having an auctioneer. We put a three line ad in the Woodworker Magazine and awaited the handful or so of customers we expected who might want to buy our unwanted tools.

Well, surprise surprise, we struggled to get the crowd in the room, we even had customers from abroad. The tools sold remarkably well and from that day forward we were advertising for tools to have another auction, Stanley & Lowe was born.

After the first couple of auctions Ron decided he wanted to set up his own building and joinery business with his brother Barry.

They became Lowe Bros. of Coalville and employed 10 people before they retired in 2000.

So, it was just Ian and myself running the auctions on our own (always with Ron in the background to explain what on earth that tool might be used for).

After the first few auctions a number of joiners and tool dealers asked if they could enter tools into auction, we were very pleased to oblige, we were promised some really splendid items so we decided to produce our first International catalogue and the rest is history.

As the auctions grew we needed more space to store all the tools we were receiving for auction so we bought a couple of second hand portacabins from our local cabin hire company to restore and use for the auction business but as soon as we renovated them someone wanted to buy them, not wanting to miss a trick we sold them and bought two more to do up, we sold those as well, so another little business was forming.

Anyway, Ian had to deliver one of these units to Lincoln, about 55 miles, on a tractor and trailer at about 15mph. On his return ... well let's just say he wasn't pleased and wasn't going to do that again!!

So, we bought a proper truck for our new cabin restoration business.

A few months later our aforementioned local cabin hire firm telephoned to say their truck had broken down and could we deliver some cabins for them with our truck, which we did, but they never repaired theirs' so we carried on doing their work, before long we had to buy another truck just to keep up.

Other cabin hire companies spotted our lorries on the roads and asked if we could do some work for them, within a year we had four. We now have 20+ and Stanley Transport employs 40 people.

All from that chance meeting with my very good friend Ron Lowe.

Ron was an accomplished wood carver, in his spare time he made and gifted a beautifully carved pulpit for his local church where his wife Pat was the organist. He made many pieces of carved oak furniture for his home, family and friends, he enjoyed building sweeping staircases, something that required a bit of thought and few joiners were capable of doing, amongst other things he made a pair of glazed arched doors for our lounge about 30 years ago, they still click closed as if they were made yesterday.

Ron was a great family man, his wife Pat and his two daughters Juliet and Kerrie were the centre piece of his life, he spent long periods of time caring for his beloved Pat at home during her cruel illness before she passed away in 2003.

A loving family man, a skilful carver and joiner, a great friend who is sadly missed.

David Stanley

The above could be seen as being as much about the Stanley businesses as Ron, but often, half-jokingly, he pointed out that he hoped his impact on these businesses would be noted in his obituary.