

To talk about Ted Edgar is a near impossibility, where do you even start?

I can stand here and regale stories of Ted all day and I still wouldn't even scratch the surface, I hope today we will see a little smile on your faces as you all remember your own stories of Ted and there will be hundreds! but that's the mark of the man.

When Liz kindly asked me to step up here today, I thought; so you want me to tell stories about ted....in a church.... (looks around) If anyone hear's thunder, tell me before the lightning strikes!

The raging bull himself, outspoken and a trailblazer in his own way. Who else would ride around the Hickstead derby with one arm in a sling or broker one of sports first major sponsorship deals. A demon to follow in the hunting field and not much different out of it. With Ted they didn't just break the mould, they smashed it, he wouldn't have it any other way!

Born in 33, ted's family moved to Leek Wootton in the 40's starting his riding career taught by his mother Ethel- father was less enamoured with the idea.

From winning on show ponies Puzzle and debutante (yes, for those that make the connection) before moving onto jumping through juniors and then seniors.

Some will be aware too of his career as a jockey starting from the age of 14 in Point to Point, as ever not just dabbling, he rode over 70 winners! That was before he even he went onto jumping success.

In 49 he took over the ride of Jane Summers from his sister and from there it took off. He went on to win the Horse and Hound Cup on her twice, first in 57, then the following year they won the Leading Showjumper of the Year at Horse of the Year Show. Which he would go on to win again in 69 on Uncle Max. The horse that would probably give him his proudest success, Winning the King George the V Gold Cup, in true Ted style on the football pitch at Wembley ...and who should present the Trophy but Her Majesty herself... who else!?!
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Ted was a man of many parts, his confidence was one of his biggest assets, not just in himself but how he would inspire it in others, he made you believe you could win anything, not just himself but when in 64 he married Liz, she at the tender age of 21, one of the great partnerships came together. Two different people you can't imagine but opposites attract and this was one of the best. Liz one of the most stylish riders the sport would ever see and to all of us, a lady on a level par with the Queen herself. ... ma'am (nod to Liz)

Ted used to drive down to Wales from Warwickshire in a white 2 door jag to take Liz out, she went too, despite her parents words when his car would be seen in the distance, their response simply a less than inspired "he's here"...

Ted's great love was the hunting field with the Warwickshire, following Ted was described as like riding the wall of death. Keep up if you dare. With the likes of Grandpa he was fearless.

With Skelly in tow he would tour up the country and back down, in the off jumping season from up to the Buccleuch and back down the east coast, with 4 or 5 horses, selling a few on the way.

The meets at home at the farm had one initial purpose, getting everyone as pissed as possible before they start! Make the punch as strong as possible, instead of the usual 30 mins before moving off, it would be an hour and half before they got going. The first fence out of the gate of Rio Grande was a trot across the road and off they went, Ted took great delight in how many empty saddles there were at the first fence!

At the end of one day's hunting from the house, many would join for a drink afterwards. On one occasion, with encouragement from the boss, while the others were inside, Geoff Luckett and Nick went out to the wagons and switched the horses on them. Out rolled John Funnell and Brian Charley, who drove off home. The next day Brian comes roaring back into the yard looking for his missing horse, spitting sparks. John in the meantime had taken it out hunting back at home, because frankly it was a better horse than the one had!

Robert Bell was often Ted's partner in crime out with the Warwickshire and a few other hunts. On arriving for day with the Pytchley they parked up the boxes and hacked a few miles to the meet. On getting close they see the rest of the field and go to join them. In between there stands a very neat field and a couple of well kept hedges, perfect. Over the field they go, hop the hedges and arrive to greet the lady Master – Anne Hawkins.

= Good morning Lady master

= Good Night to you....came the terse reply, both a little perplexed..."you've just ridden over husband's cricket pitch!"

= a tip of the hat, a swift exit back over the prized cricket pitch, reboxed and off for day with Grafton!

On one occasion Rob and Ted are out in the North of the Country and decided to head off on their own... but some guy keeps following them, after a few more fences Ted is starting to get a bit irked by this, so stops at neatly trimmed hedge and calls across; here why don't you give me a lead" so said chap duly obliges, over he goes and Ted immediately turns in the opposite direction... "come on" Rob looks perplexed "what's down there Ted?" "No idea but I do know the reservoirs down there' – and rides off!

The greatest achievement of Ted and Liz has to be the list of great riders that have been based with them and of course the heyday of the Everest team Sponsorship. He was ahead of his time, negotiating with the help of Bob Dean, a sponsorship that grew with the company and lasted 21 years back in 1970. The stable of riders that would be part of this operation over this period and beyond was second to none – Olympic Champion Nick Skelton of course, who came to Edgar's a teenager and stayed the longest; 12 years, Beat Mandli -

World Cup Champion, Geoff Lockett, Michael Mac, Lesley Mcnaught, Emma Jane Brown, Janet Hunter, Young Rider Europeand Champion, Marie and in later years Olympic gold Medallist too Ben Maher and of course at the centre, Aachen Grand Prix Winner – Liz

In total riders from the Edgar yard accounted (so far) for 33 Championship Medals – Quite the legacy!

Nick will tell you that so much of how he is now is down to Ted, the professionalism in the yard and the way it ran was like clockwork. Starting at 7am, the day was regimented. Clean and tidy was the order of the day, the boxes had to washed down on the return from a show and everything was about working hard and discipline. You always had to prove yourself, as Liz puts it; you never let your saddle get cold.

Above all else though it was always a TEAM effort.

It was all about preparation – Nick describes a crack of dawn start at the Great Yorkshire one morning, up at 4.30am to jump the course that had been built and out before you could be discovered...

Heading back to the stables, on the horizon comes a security card. Bugger rumbled!

(in Yorks Accent)

“Up early Mr Edgar, that’s what I like to see, you’re a hard worker, well done” Good Luck, have a good day!”

Ted knew everyone at the shows and even more importantly every International organiser – that would get he or Liz into any show. Not quite like today’s rules.

He was an amazing man to have on the floor... as Liz recalls if you wanted to do something that was maybe pushing the rules a little, ted would go and chat to the steward in charge and keep them nicely distracted until it was mission accomplished.

When Liz rode Forever to become the first lady rider to win the Aachen Grand prix, she was headed for the ring when ted called her back and instructed her to jump another fence. The horse had already jumped three rounds, Ted’s reasoning; he will think he’s going in for rosette after this many rounds, give him another pop. She did, she won. He was always thinking ahead....

Ted’s sixth sense however was his talent for knowing what was wrong with a horse and putting it right. David Broome recalls a Horse of the year Show, when he had a pole down in each class for four days. “right you in the collecting ring at 8am” said Ted. He placed a pole on the floor, put David through a series of exercises and for the next three months his horse was unbeatable.

There was always only one way though with ted “it’s my way or the highway” he liked winning and didn’t like not!

Ted would have his moments for liking the odd tippie and then heading for home, to put it mildly, amongst a list of encounters with the local constabulary, back in 83 he had been summoned to court in Leamington. So, in Ted style, he went to court in the horsebox, with the view that he'd drive the box there and if they banned him, he'd ride the horse home! ...He actually got away with it and drove home. More forward planning!

When Skelton was 17 he was in the lorry emblazoned with Ted Edgar on the side, when they were stopped for speeding on this occasion

"I'm going to teach you a lesson now in how to get out of a speeding ticket explained Ted" The police told him that he had been doing 40 miles an hour in a 30 mile an hour zone and asked if he knew he was speeding..?

Ted was extremely polite "no officer I didn't, I didn't think I was going that fast, I'm truly sorry"

The conversation continued with Ted still in grovelling apologetic mode, it seemed to be working until the policeman said" you were speeding in a built up area in a lorry – I'm going to have to book you, what's your name?"

With the lesson to Nick now shot, fine and points looming Ted was less apologetic now: leaning out of the window he pointed to the side of the lorry and replied "Can't you fucking read"?

From one conveyance to another...

Ted – Colonel of the camel Corps at Olympia.

When Olympia first started in it's current guise back in the 70's, everyone thought Raymond Brooks- ward was nuts to try and put it on. Ted and Tom and Hudson thought otherwise. Back in the first year with only £300 of ticket sales in the bank. Raymond dressed Ted as a circus master with elephants, camels and liberty horse and headed up Kensington High Street. Giving tickets away for the new show.

Ted was arrested for herding "unlicensed animals on a public highway"

The story made the daily Mail, the Sun and the Mirror!

Queue publicity and with it ticket sales... the rest is history!

In 77 at the last night of Olympia, the finale was "Coming home for Christmas"

The Brooks – ward sons were dressed as boys "coming home from Eton" on top of the mail coach.

The Coach tipped over in the ring on the corner – Simon walked away without injury, Nick had a broken arm and James a broken femur.

Having been deposited in the ambulance – Laid out. Ted came over and put a large cigar in each of their mouths, lit them and said “smoke these on the way”!

Ted coached none other than Prince Charles to ride at Olympia as part of a charity evening, he also hunted with. He even phoned the house one day, with Marie picking up the phone not believing that the future monarch was on the end of the line “there’s someone on the phone who reckons he’s Prince Charles”...

The Prince not only presented him with a signed set of photos of the Olympia event but even sent him a Christmas card that was one of his own hand painted water colours

Ted’s influence and character can be summed up from the poem we will hear shortly and from the words of Kipling “if you can walk with crowds and keep your virtue, or walk with King’s - nor lose the common touch” Ted knew everyone and everyone knew Ted. He was a hell of a character, not easy at times but no one ever had success without breaking a few eggs.

He will be missed sitting at the side of the ring, passing on advice, sitting in the truck, which every show rightly had reserved spot for. In that bloody fur coat – which I didn’t know, there are actually two of them, god forbid! Another Nick and Ted wheez.

Liz and Marie carry on as they’ve had to in the later year’s but we prefer to remember him as the hell raiser, the brilliant tactician, the Mischievous bugger, a man always ahead of his time.

Leaving a legacy in the sport and beyond like no other, an influence like no other and one that will never be matched.

A true legend – Ted Edgar.