

You all knew my father. You all presumably liked him. You all know about his sometimes subversive sense of humour; his intellect; his love of cricket; his enjoyment of a good wine; his Mastership of the Feltmakers.....His Honour.

I'd like to tell you a few things, on behalf of Philip, Susan and myself, that you may not have known, as only the three of us knew him as Daddy.

He was also a midwife, a cartoonist, a story teller, a fisherman, a National Service Second Lieutenant, a technophobe, an epicure and a music lover.

A midwife? Well, Susan's appearance here proves it. She was born at Boswell's End in Wendover, and it was my Dad who delivered her.

Talking of Boswell's End, that was where many of the tales that he loved to tell were first told. He loved a tall tale. And there always had to be a fall guy. If it was an army tale, it was Private Tweedy who was the butt of the joke. If it was a tale from his adolescence or as a young man, then it was Patrick Ridett's turn, or if it from his childhood, then it was my late Uncle Terry who was the victim. His other brother Colin was

of course too young to be ridiculed. But it was never unkind, and in all instances it was with affection. We always knew they were tall tales, but my father was reasonably consistent with detail, so they must have been based in fact. Allegedly.

Talking of Private Tweedy, my Mum told me a couple of days ago that she and my father bumped into Tweedy completely by chance in their Streatham days. He was by then a bus conductor on the number 59 And he refused to take a fare from them!

My father also told some wonderful bedtime stories, no doubt influenced by the likes of Lewis Carroll and C S Lewis, but delightfully original, and these stories which he recorded on tape, so we could listen to them over and over again, naturally had to feature Stephen, Philip and Susan as the heroes. Especially Stephen!

My Dad was a very able cartoonist, though he probably did not consider himself as such. He used to draw Christmas and Birthday cards for each of his children when we were young. Only when I saw a few examples some years later did I truly appreciate how good he actually was.

He also designed and made a superb Advent Calendar when we were all very young. It was a beautifully painted Alice in Wonderland themed design, complete with silver glitter, and each door when opened contained not a liquorice allsort, but a little scroll, containing a clue as to where the allsort could be found.

He loved fly fishing. From quite a young age until he was well into his fifties. He even made his own flies. He used to go to Latimer Lakes, sometimes before going on to Court, and he was the fly fishing equivalent of Jimmy Greaves it seems, as he always seemed to come back with a full bag. Philip or I occasionally went with him, but we were both completely useless fishermen. My mum had to gut the fish afterwards, so she came to hate trout, and my dad decided that the fish had started to look at him in a funny way, so he stopped eating it too. So they were given away to neighbours (ungutted), or more usually ended up as cat food. Yes, trout is cat food in our family!

He wasn't very good with technology. He didn't like it, and it didn't like him back. Many is the time when the video or DVD remote just would not work for him. He would ask me to have a go....and it worked perfectly first time, EVERY time. We reckoned that his body's electrical field may have been too strong. It started as a joke, but over time we came to

actually believe it. He was also a random button presser, but he was only able to randomly and accidentally turn things ON that he didn't want. He was never able to randomly and accidentally turn them off! He also became very adept at accidentally recording the same programme multiple times when he got digital tv for the first time earlier this year.

I mentioned he was an epicure. He certainly liked good food and good wine, but he also had some more bizarre tastes. Sild in tomato sauce, with Smash and broad beans anyone?

He loved music of course, but he had just a few favourite albums or artists that he was particularly fond of, which we as children heard played over and over again, night after night. Personally, if I never hear the soundtrack album to the film Cabaret again, then it will be too soon! He also used to like the Mamas and the Papas, the Seekers, the Carpenters and even the Monkees. He refused to admit that any of it was "pop" music though. [He was never that fond of the Beatles interestingly enough. He used to disparagingly refer to them as the Ladybirds, blissfully unaware that there actually was a group called the Ladybirds.] Safe to assume that he preferred classical then!

He did have his idiosyncrasies of course, for example he occasionally bought items that must have seemed like a good idea at the time. To him and nobody else. These included a band-saw (why?), a croquet set (have you seen the slope on our back lawn?), a ridiculously expensive musical box and a yoghurt maker. All used once or less! I'm sure that many better examples will occur to me later. Which is always the way!

How can I possibly cover a lifetime in a few minutes. I can only scratch the surface, and I've of course left out more than I've told. I don't feel that I have really been able to properly do him justice in only a few minutes, but maybe it'll spark conversations and shared memories later in the Abbey. Anyway, he was a wonderful dad in my book. My Dad. Our Dad.