

1 EARLY DAYS

How I got into throwing? I suppose not only having a good father to help in athletics, I was always throwing things. Probably got into trouble with the local police, local attendants on the sea front because I was always throwing stones into the sea to see how far I could throw them, and when I was a young chap I can always remember, people still remember me, when I was still in Felixstowe, I was the only one who could throw a stone the long distance to Felixstowe dock to hit these gas sort of supports. They didn't believe it until they heard the little noise going bing. They used to come with a booty of cigarettes and liquor so I was a very popular man amongst the dockers in Felixstowe at the time.

They used to say do you think this young chap can throw a stone to hit that tank across there and they would say never, so they used to say so many cigarettes I bet he can, but in the end they were so happy because they came away with a half a load of the ship that had arrived with the booty because they could do it so I knew then I had the talent to throw things.

I threw at the Coronation drive when the school was open, his Majesty the Duke of Edinburgh I was ten I threw the discuss, I didn't win it, I came fourth but just to say that I threw under some royalty watching me throw and that started it, but javelin was my main event but then I got elbow trouble like tennis elbow and then I thought my athletics career was finished but my father would say you can throw anything lets try the discus. I said you had to be a big chap to throw the discus but that's another story.

2 TRAINING

My father was the coach and the leader and looking back you have to laugh because you couldn't say I've got homework to do first it wouldn't be a priority. If he was ready to coach you would have to go, and go to one of the roads or find a bit of grass to throw. To give you an example when we first moved to Ipswich from Felixstowe we used to use the Ransomes Sims Jeffries path or road and we would draw with chalk, put a little circle but unfortunately when you threw the implement it landed in 3 foot of grass and you would lose the implement. You'd get very frustrated and my father would say this is good stuff; its good training this is keeping you calm under pressure.

We used to have a book that you could flick and as you flicked, it showed the discus technique so we didn't have the videos and all that they have today. And you used to see the person throwing the discus which was very, very good – that was my study – not O levels or A levels – you read this and look at this all the time. And the other one was a book by Toni Nett, it was on ... it was a German book that my father had going back into the early 60's and it was all about various exercises that you could do. So interesting that today people still think that if you had these exercises it's what's going to be happening now. Forty odd years ago – so he was really in advance of what sports science or conditioning actually was. So these little books- the Germans would use cos they were very good technically, very good at conditioning all those years ago. So, my father was a great believer in that's what you've got to learn so that was my one... one hours preparation every so often looking at techniques and then trying to rehearse it.

Then on weight training he used to take us to the Ipswich airport for example which looking

back now was asbestos filled and my mum used to get all worried but it was the only place where I could train - either that or the back garden when the snow was there etc. So we just had to do it we didn't have the facilities.

My father would improvise with equipment as I said I could throw anything so we would have little shots, little discus or discs but they weren't the best, but its only later on the track shoes, my father would say for example I want you to do this technique and you have got to do it a hundred times well the left foot where you turn or spin used to have little holes where you would put newspaper in to make sure you know all these things

I'll give you a lovely comment from my late father to show you what a man he was, I broke a British record - I broke 19 in my time, which is quite an achievement. I remember breaking one at the White City and some people said to him "Are you proud Mr Tancred that your son has just broken a British record?" He said, "No". They said, "No? Why is that?" He said, "He can do better." You have to laugh at that but that was the mechanics of the man.

3 SELECTION

Ipswich Harriers - wonderful club for a young aspiring athlete. We used to train - my father worked in Ipswich and during his lunch break or during the evening we used to go to the Ipswich Town training ground which they use now, that is an area, which we used for Ipswich Harriers. Because there was no sort of fields as such there was no concrete circles but we used to train there so Ipswich Harriers was a good club it gave you the opportunities for competition within the county and also Eastern Counties and then gradually other National clubs, so it was a good start.

You represent your local county, you compete in the Eastern Counties. Its like a ladder and you are trying to achieve things and then to get your first international vest for Great Britain for me was 1964 Great Britain against many Benelux Countries in Ghent to think that you got a lovely international vest and you are paid to go to catch a plane live in a nice hotel and compete and then come back it was just like - well just like winning the pools to me it was just such an achievement to go abroad.

The pinnacle of being an athlete is to compete at the Olympic games, so you can compete at the Commonwealth game for England, you can compete at the European Championships, but to get those five rings for ever like this tie I am wearing what an honour. So when you do fairly well you are hoping that you are selected and when the letter comes and its signed by the Duke of Edinburgh, Phillip and says you have been selected to represent Great Britain in the 1968 Olympics its just a wonderful achievement and I was so elated I remember taking out not my father but my father, my mother, friends and my brothers and sisters for a meal to celebrate. I was that happy and I just thought it's a wonderful honour they can never take that away from you and just to represent your country in the Olympic games is just the highest you can do - so a wonderful honour.

4 THE GAMES

Well it was so exciting you left Britain and you knew you were going to be away for about

6-8 weeks to get acclimatised so its longest you have ever been away and its all just wonderful. I went to breakfast and I had never seen so much food in my life coming from Ipswich you know and Suffolk you know I was there. It was so good I would queue up again at 11.30 and go for lunch. It was all bad because you would put on weight which you didn't need to do but no one sort of told us this was bad for you etc so the food was excellent you know and coming back home to tell my parents what I had was an inspiration for everyone to try and become athletes because the food was fantastic. It was just like lots of steak, lots of fruit, lots of vegetables, you could just eat, show your pass and go and eat as much as you like. It was the first sort of way, which I knew to be a good sportsman you need to have good nutrition.

But it was just a great great thing to be in the village to see every one you know. Then when you talk about events track and field I saw Bob Beamon the guy who jumped 29 feet, 8 metres 90 - unheard off. That record lasted 20 odd years. I saw the world records being broken one after the other I saw the triple jump the guy they said this guy jumps over the bar backwards we all talk about the Fosbury flop I'd never seen this I said jump over the bar back wards and then you see him going into the arena and then sort of watching all the crowd watching say Jim Ryun running they would all say someone's on the high jump you could tell by the sombreros all moving from side to side just as they were going to jump so it was all this happening and then of course my biggest idol was Al Oerter the discus champion although I didn't qualify he actually won his 4th gold medal so he got a gold medal for each one of his daughters. So to see the great man himself it was just wonderful to come back and it was so inspirational that when you come back home although you haven't done as well yourself and some people like David Hemery who won the 400 metre hurdle I saw a gold medal which was so exciting it then give you chance to regroup if you like and retrain and start to become a better athlete yourself, so wonderful experience which you will remember for the rest of your life. That the being there the Mexico City the altitude. Also not only seeing world records but famous people runners not doing very well because the altitude finished them and people perhaps who did not have the techniques in the steeple chase winning it you know because the Kenyans lived in altitude, so it was a bit on an unfair games looking at it from an event point of view but looking because of the altitude situation.

I didn't do as well as I perhaps should have done but like everything else you don't train with that in mind like they would do now. To give you an example you get 3 attempts to try to get the qualifying distance so if you missed the first one, did a foul or didn't do as well you got to wait another hour for the other competitors before its your turn again. And I was never used to waiting an hour because I was all syched up waiting to throw like I was on Ipswich airport I could throw a discus one after the other. I could do 30, 40 throws in one hour so it was different so it was a learning, it was a very good learning experience in which you could probably adapt to later on so but nice to say I went to the Olympic games, I competed it did give me an idea but I didn't do well performance wise so a little bit disappointing especially when the ladies and friends had said come back with that medal so I let a lot of people down in some ways you know it was disappointing, you get over it very quickly but it will always be with you that you didn't do as well as you should have done.

I probably trained too hard when I look back and perhaps been ... again preparation ... it's no good doing it on the training field you've got to do it in the arena so you learn that way as well but you've years taken away, you don't have that many years to do it that's why Al Oerter – he was never the world record holder but every Olympic Games, he won.

He would be the first one to say "What do you think, Bill, when you throw?" And I'd be just

like anyone else and say "I'm dreaming that the discus has gone, flowing away. It's a world record. I'd get on the rostrum and I'd wave to the crowd – all the Union Jacks" and I said "Well don't you dream that?" And he says, "No, I always dream this way ... the wind conditions have suddenly changed. How do I adjust my technique? Or the rival who I didn't think was good enough suddenly breaks the Olympic record. How do I respond to that sort of stimulus?" So he was in terms of sports psychology way ahead in 68 of what we now know for fact that you can prepare for anxiety control, performance control etc and don't get too worried. He was a supreme competitor. Supreme.

"BLACK POWER" SALUTE (short clip)

I was in the arena when they won their event they marched on to receive their medals and all of a sudden a hand would go up, a fist it was the black power thing and I just thought well maybe either they are cold or I don't know, this was a new style or whatever it didn't mean it didn't have the implications of course in the end you know what it was and that was the Olympics when that started.

5 FUNDING

The better you got you tend to have more sort of equipment in terms of tracksuits and shoes but no finance at all not like today when you've got lottery funding whatever. But I was happy about that because I was so grateful that someone had shown me this is a nice tracksuit and I would end up looking very smart again with the three stripes whatever so that was good fun.

I happened to break the British record at the 3A's championships in 1972 and as a prize not financial it was a tracksuit, windcheater it was sponsored by Nationwide so it had Nationwide written on it and the following week I wore it with pride and I was warming up and was told take that thing off you are contravening the rule of the game take it off and you will be banned I said I got this last week at the 3A's take it off, so they were very very strict in what you did and what you wore etc etc, so it was strictly amateur which was silly when you think it was a prize from 3A's from Nationwide at the time.

I could tell you a lovely story but I will probably get shot for this we used to have to get travelling expenses to come from Ipswich to whatever I used to train from Penzance so you used to get more money that way, but the whole team used to come from Penzance. We probably get into trouble for that but nothing really it was only later on that they were a little bit more generous, but no it was strictly an amateur, so it was the Amateur Athletic Association the British Amateur Athletic Association and I notice nowadays they have dropped the word amateur because they are all professionals really as such so no.

I do remember getting paid by an official of Adidas. I threw the discus as I said with the Adidas shoe – I broke the British record, and so pleased were the promoters of Adidas who said "I'm going to give you some money for this because you've earned it. I'm going to put £20 in your pocket" And I said "I've never had a man put £20 in my pocket before". And I was so please when I pulled it out I said "Lads what are you going to have to drink?" That was my first professional pay if you like - £20 note was put in my pocket.

6 LONDON 2012

I think we are moving in the right direction, I think its got to start in schools, schools do have a tough job- in my event and in throwing you need good technical excellence and I think teachers have to be a bit more aware of what's involved in throwing, I know perhaps you need coaches that come into schools to help. You should have a very good referral system linking up to clubs like Ipswich Harriers, Bury St Edmunds or wherever, and have a little network of all the support services. So things are moving in the right direction and we are hoping by 2012 you are going to have some discus throwers, shot putters and javelin throwers – you've got some good talent here who might make the team and I'd be very, very pleased and honoured to see that happen so things are moving in the right direction but you've got to keep going, you've got to have a person like my late father who's always there on hand to help you and encourage you.

I think it's you ... inside its in you and if God has given you some sort of attribute you have to do your best don't you? And sometimes you have distractions or you're not achieving and you have to try to prove yourself . And I think you'll probably regret it later on but you only have a limited amount of years in which to have that perfection cos you know someone else is going to beat you eventually. You know you don't stay at the top for long. So you try very hard and I just think athletes and people who achieve in general are very good motivators inside and that's what they want ... very single minded. And that's how they are in their personality make up. Which ... I wouldn't say I was mad really, I just wanted to achieve and try to do my best in something I was gifted in.