

David Bareford Transcript

JENNIFER

Dr. David Bareford, my name is Jennifer d'Alton. I'm a director of the British Balloon Museum and Library. I'm really excited that I've actually managed to catch you with all the emails and things and to find out a lot more about you. I hope.

DAVID

I'm glad, I'm glad we have this conversation, because I'm very, very, very impressed by how the BBM&L has achieved this lottery money, and they've been working so very hard over the last year or so to get all this information. So I do congratulate you and your team on such a marvellous effort.

JENNIFER

Thank you. That's brilliant. So, you born in Peterborough? Yes,

DAVID

yes, a true, true Fenlander. And all my family originated in that area,

JENNIFER

right? Well, I was born in Stamford a month earlier? Yes,

DAVID

My father was born in St Ives, and before that, the family came from Somersham and Bluntisham, very close to Pidley, where we've had our National Championships. But at that time, Pidley was under the water. Good heavens, was it really? Yes, Pidley is minus two, so it was actually part of this, the low-level coastal area that was drained by the by the Dutch. Yes,

JENNIFER

Good heavens, I didn't know that. Hm, oh, and so did you go to school around there?

DAVID

Yes, went to school in Peterborough. I was there until eight or nine, and then my parents moved down to Kent, where I stayed until I went to university in Bristol, which is where my ballooning started, really.

JENNIFER

So when did you see your first balloon? The seventy somethings, seventy-three?

DAVID

It was before that, yes, I was somehow, I was driving my motorbike to my grandmother's in Peterborough from Bristol, and I passed Cirencester, and I saw a balloon there. And I thought that is such a rare sight. Of course, everybody had stopped because it was seventy-three, everybody had stopped to see it. And I thought I was so lucky to see it, but I wasn't one of those people who sat there and said, I must jump into a balloon.

JENNIFER

So what happened then? You saw your grandmother, and rushed back to Bristol

DAVID

Yes, yes, then continue my studies. I occasionally saw a balloon up in the sky. At that time, I actually had a flying scholarship from school, so I had a fixed wing pilot's licence and was in the university Air Squadron, and I occasionally saw a balloon very, very occasionally up in the skies and in above Bristol.

And I thought, well, it's all very well going up there. You then look at the view. You don't seem to go anywhere. You get a look at the view. And then after about 10 or 15 minutes, yes, well, that's the view. I might as well come down. So it wasn't something that really enamoured me, but it was purely by accident that after my training, I went out and did my first jobs in Weston Super Mare and Bath, and then came back to Bristol, where I went back to the same flat that I was in as a student. And there in that flat at the time was Philip Clark, and he showed me slides of balloons inflating.

And I thought, well, it doesn't interest me that much, but I always like to have a go and look at everything. So so he said, if I was keen to go out and actually have a look at the process of the balloon launch, but that was all of it. And so it was only about three weeks later, in August of seventy-four that it was lovely evening, and he invited me out. And I said, Oh yes, I'll come.

He was scraping around for crew, and all he could get was a couple of other people in the flat who'd had flights, and they were also not that enamoured. So they said, David, why don't you have your Why don't you fly? That was after Philip said, If you come out six or seven times and crew for me, you might get a flight. So that put me off anyway. So my first attempt, my first meeting with a balloon, I got a flight. And it was just, I mean, I was just bowled over. We took off. I wasn't.

We weren't over the hedge at the end of the field. Before I thought, this really is real flying. And after about 20 minutes, he said, I know. I said to him, I said, I need, can I have a go at the burners? So he looks a bit startled. He said, Yes. And then he said, Oh, I must land there because I've been promising the farmer a flight. I said, You'll never land there. He didn't. So went on for about an hour. We landed. Perfect landing, stand up, landing, lovely. All receiving. And I said, how many hours does it take to get a balloon license? Then it was twelve. Is twelve? And I thought, well, I've got one hour already because I've had my familiarization flight, but I couldn't afford a balloon. He wasn't going to teach me to fly balloons, so I thought that was a wonderful opportunity.

By the time I be able to afford a balloon, I would probably have moved on to something else.

JENNIFER

But you, you mentioned that you had a pilot licence and you got yours on aeroplanes. You got your ppl with only three days of training, six hours. How did you do that?

DAVID

In the flying scholarship? Yes, I went solo after six hours. The weather was good, and they had confidence in me, and so they said, off you go. So that was it.

JENNIFER

So that's one tick under your belt. So now you had to find a balloon to fly in and things, tell me about Crepe Suzette?

DAVID

Yes, yes, that's right, yes, unbeknown to me at that time, it was a group of people that at the Bristol Royal Infirmary who were trying to form a syndicate to fly balloons. And they asked me, and at that time, I was toying with the idea of plunging all my worldly savings of a year's hospital medicine into combining with a vet who got an Auster aircraft. And then this question came up, would I like to join the syndicate? And I thought for about three or four days about it, and then I thought, no, it has to be ballooning. So I joined their syndicate. They were keen to have me, mainly because I lived with Philip Clark in the flat, and he could teach us how to fly. So, so I was, they were keen to have me to for that connection. And also, obviously, as I had my fixed wing licence, I was exempt some of the ground exam.

So they were, they thought they could get me through first. I'd get my licence first, and then I'd turn around and teach them.

JENNIFER

So who were your syndicate?

DAVID

There was John Widger, who was in chemical pathology next to haematology in our in our laboratory-based medicine. There was Ann Featherstone, who was an illustrator at Bristol University, close to Philip Clark, Graham Henley, who was a GP, myself and John Widger's father. How many does that make?

JENNIFER

If you count Philip Clark? Then that's five

DAVID

No, he wasn't. No, he was, he was, and it's Colin Morse, who was a laboratory-based clinician, medical laboratory scientist at the lab as well. So yes, so that was all. That was six of us. I plunged my three hundred pounds. The balloon cost eighteen hundred pounds, and we have never looked back, we got that.

JENNIFER

But then was it right you got your licence in seventy-five, who checked you out? Who was actually your trainer?

DAVID

Yeah, Philip Clark did almost all my training. David, David?

I think Dave Turner did a couple. I had one flight with Crispin Williams, actually, just after he got his licence. But I got checked out cos I went to Cirencester, one of the Cameron weekends, and they were keen for me to get checked out. And Don said he would, but he was very busy trying to sell balloons. But then they all turn around and said, 'Don, Don, David's coming up here to get his licence checked out. You have to fly him so,' so Don Don.... I hope this isn't being recorded too hard, because otherwise the CA might be on to Don. But Don took me up in the balloon with the sales person, the person he was trying to sell a balloon to. We flew for 10 minutes. We landed. He said, Yes, you've passed. He got out and walked back with the chap to sell him another balloon which he was going to fly? And he said, 'you can also go off and do your solo.' So my solo wasn't quite witnessed.

JENNIFER

So brilliant. That must be so exciting when you actually get your licence.

DAVID

Yes, yes. It was yes, yes, yes. And you remember, I then turned around and as obviously had to teach the others. So for the next 80 hours, I actually almost never touched the burner because I was teaching all the others.

JENNIFER

So did they all get their licences?

DAVID

Uh, yes, yes, yes. Six hours except John Widger's father, but everybody else got their licence.

JENNIFER

And then the names, yes,

DAVID

yes. And then then, then I locally, I was they asked me if I'd help out at the little balloon meets. And I did the Met for that.

And then Then one day in seventy-five I got rung up by Julian Nott and he said, Would you, would I like to do the Met, the Met for the British Nationals? I felt so honoured. There was they were obviously scraping the barrel. But I felt very honoured anyway. So I went up there and did the Met for the British Nationals, for the the prize, prize job at balloon nationals in Castle Howard, yes, and I was doing renowned met forecasting was obviously, in those days, absolutely appalling. And I rang Bortree, and I said, what the weather's like?

And he said it's alright. He said, there's a few thunderstorms around, but there's nothing within two hundred miles. It was all very hazy.

And we sat there, and I gave a briefing. I said there's no thunderstorms for two hundred miles. just as I finished my sentence, there's this massive clap of thunder. No, yes. So, so I thought, well, I don't think I'll be doing a Met Officer again for the National so I might as well, if I can't beat them, join them. So, so, so I then thought I'd compete next year, because I being in the Met officer, because obviously went,

went out and watched them fly into targets. And I do think this was really good fun, actually. And so that's that, that's how I got into competition ballooning.

JENNIFER

So you were, you've already qualified as a doctor then?

DAVID

yes, yes.

JENNIFER

And you went out to South Africa, were you doctoring or ballooning?

DAVID

Yes, no. I thought I'd use my doctoring to find a job abroad, and it had to be, I hated America, actually, so it had to be somewhere which spoke English. And I had been out in Zambia when I was a medical student for my elective, and I quite enjoyed Africa. So I thought I'd, I'd go, and I just wrote for jobs in Africa. There was none, none to apply for. I just wrote saying, Would you like me? And so the professor in Cape Town said, Oh, you can come down. And I thought, well, I'll, I'll give up ballooning for the one or two years I was going to be out there. And if I enjoyed ballooning that much, I'd started again when I came back. So I sold my share in the Syndicate, uh, left, went to South Africa.

Looked at South Africa for five minutes. I said, What do you mean? This has to be area you go ballooning. So I then tried desperately to find out how I could balloon in South Africa. And of course, at that time, there's only one real balloonist out there, and which was Terry Adams, yes, and he was up in Johannesburg, and he wandered down once on his travels with a balloon with the National Bride championship, where he travelled around with him with his Ford balloon, and we had a short flight. And he said, Well, come up, but come up to Johannesburg and fly with us when Jenna has Johannesburg, whenever you have a holiday. So we went up then and thoroughly enjoyed it. And he lent me a balloon for their one of their first national championships. And so I thought, Well, I must, I must try and form a syndicate in Cape Town. And I was there for I extended it from one year to two years, and the second year, I started looking around. Terry actually lent me a balloon for whole month, and we and I was still working full time, and I flew thirty-four flights, wow, and fifty odd people, and managed out of that, find four people to form a syndicate. And he sold us Old Angel Baby, his first balloon, he made it out in South Africa.

JENNIFER

Flamboyant, wasn't it? Sorry?

DAVID

Flamboyant balloons, yes, yes. And it was owned by Jeanette VAN Ginkel, who's very keen to support us. And then I turned around then, and in the last six months, they had uh trained for them through their balloon licences.

JENNIFER

Well done. And Karin, where did you meet her?

DAVID

In Battle Creek in eighty-five, Yes, she was, uh, observing. She was an observer, and she we had a flight. It wasn't, wasn't one of my best, best competition flights. Anyway, the crew and us all went and had breakfast afterwards, instead of her going back as an observer to check in and we seemed to get on quite well. And then there was a balloon meet coming up in in Holland. So I wrote to her, believe it not, there was nothing other than writing letters then to communicate with. I wrote a letter saying, Would you like to join me as crew in Holland? I heard nothing more. The letter got to her brother, and her brother stashed it somewhere and forgot about it. And at the last minute, she was given the letter, and she said, I'll come so, so that's, that's the start of it, yes,

JENNIFER

when? When was that? Was that before South Africa? Or after?

DAVID

That was afterwards? Yes, yes, yes,

JENNIFER

I see. But she won the South African national balloon champions didn't she for three or four years.

DAVID

For three years, yes, yes, yes, no, it's very I was just chucked in the last one, because we were outside as being in Cape Town, and we weren't associated with the Johannesburg lot. And in the interim, I'd train Eric Roberts, who lovely chap who is English, and he'd been out there working for British Leyland, and he

managed to get a sponsored balloon by Leyland. And so we went up there as two teams as the cave called the cape aeronauts, and we came first and second. So we were we, we did a bit.

JENNIFER

Excellent. So it says that you came back and moved to Leeds. Yes. Did you not in between? You must have gone to see your parents. Did you ever fly them?

DAVID

Yes, yes. And that was early on actually. My father had one or two flights early on. None of them was a stand-up landing. We were all always ended up in about three or four flights, dragging through fields. But he, he thoroughly enjoyed it. My mother was always very reticent fly even in fixed wing aircraft. And in the end, she said, Okay, I'll come up with you. So we took off. We flew out of the field, over a tree. She said, that's high enough and far enough if you land on the other side, I'll walk back so that. That was her one and only flight, really. She said that she'd she at least you could say she put it in her diary.

JENNIFER

Yes, quite Yes. Quite important. If your son's going to go off and mend people and have this wild hobby, you've got to be part of it, haven't you?

DAVID

Yes, yes. They were there. She was always very worried about it. But when I came back from South Africa, obviously, I came back from South Africa and in, literally, in September or August for the National Championships, which were only two or three weeks afterwards, and I had no crew, but my mother and father crewed for me, which was lovely.

JENNIFER

How brilliant, they were young, and fit. Was your father in the Air Force. I mean, you got an Air Force Scholarship,

DAVID

No my father was in the army. In fact, I don't come from any aviation or medical family history at all.

JENNIFER

Rather exciting, actually, yes.

DAVID

Now my family were all engineers. I was going to be a steam engine driver, but once they got rid of steam engines, I thought I'd have to think of something else, but you'd probably do it now as well.

JENNIFER

You've got, you joined the Pennine region, yes, and you were on their committee for a few years. How did you become the I've got somewhere you're a BBAC chairman for a bit?

DAVID

Yes, somehow I wouldn't say I like committees, but I always feel that I should do my bit in the organisation of these clubs. And as you say, I was in the Pennine region, and then I joined the main BBAC committee, and then became chairman, I think, in 1999 just before, Just before, foot and mouth. So my first year I was there, as I tried to resolve the issues of ballooning and Foot and Mouth, yes, which had its traumas.

JENNIFER

Yeah, I bet it did. That's when a lot of people started flying abroad, wasn't it?

DAVID

Yes, yes, we did. We went, we went out to Italy and flew in Todi and went to Germany and flew there.

JENNIFER

Yes, and was Karen still an observer? She a pilot, by the way?

DAVID

No, she, she could she, she could fly. She could fly very well, actually, but she never bothered to get to finish and get a pilot's licence. So,

JENNIFER

One small thing that I did find out that it said here that you flew all your three children from near the maternity hospital within three days of their birth. Is that right?

DAVID

That's correct? Yes, yes. We started with Stephanie. She born in 1991 in July, and they made, I said, I thought I'd take my child home in a balloon, and they looked at me sort of offhand, and I said, and I had to sign a waiver. I thought, this is very amazing that a midwife will go out and dump a child in a car which has probably got bald tires and no MOT, and that's okay, but taking a person out in a qualified balloon that's got a certificate of airworthiness. No, no, you have to have a waiver anyway.

So we inflated the balloon in the car park, took it to the entrance to the maternity hospital. Quite a few of them came out and watched us fly off.

Yes, very, very nice. And then, because once you do it to one child, you can't make it a favourite. So then Dom comes along in 1993 in July, and so, so we did the same so inflated balloon in the carpark he was only 22 hours old when he flew. We inflated a balloon in the car park. And the jobs worth car park attendant comes along says,

What are you doing? What are you doing?

And we said, we're just collecting one of the patients, and they said, he said, not for maternity, is it? We said, Yes. He said, I was here two years ago. Great. He said, Well, carry on,

Because Ben was born in December, which is a little bit more challenging. That was with the weather anyway. But luckily, he was a large baby, so he had to stay in hospital for three days, which just delayed it for the perfect weather window. So we took off. It was snow on the ground. We took off, wow. And actually that and landed at a pub car park, but sadly the pub was closed at that time of the morning. So there you are. Yes,

JENNIFER

So, none of these laws about they must see over the edge of the basket. Yes, quite.

DAVID

now, when we took Ben, we took all the others at the same time we had, we had our seventy-seven so I admit myself, Karen, and then the three children, and Zoe, Philcox, who was having to look after one of them.

JENNIFER

So yes, and what? What balloon was this?

DAVID

That was the that was the Pro Sport balloon? Actually, I was, I was sponsored very, very kindly by, by Pro Sport Seaton Healthcare in, in Leeds for, oh, sorry, in Oldham for 15 years, all, all through Norman Stoller, who's, who's a great benefactor, and Norman...

JENNIFER

Norman, sorry, Norman, Norman. Norman Stoller, okay,

DAVID

yes, great benefactor, he really supported me as a sportsman, rather than trying to milk me for the advertising. But we know we got, we tried to get the balloon on in many papers and news articles as we could. We actually got, got the balloon on Match of the Day. Once we decided to try. And we tried, try, Kidderminster was in the was it the one of these knockout cups with playing West Ham at home? So we thought we'll fly over at halftime. So we did a pilot-controlled rate of approach task. We had to fly over the stadium at halftime, and it was quite windy and a bit wet and boggy, and we had to go out about three or four miles, and we took off. We did actually fly straight over the stadium at halftime, and it was all match of the day, and they zoomed up and saw us. We were waving. We waved to kill them in to Harrier supporters flags to make it look good. So,

JENNIFER

Nice one. So, and then something you've got the freedom of the City of London about 15 years ago. How did you ...? Why? Right?

DAVID

Well, that was, I'm not sure how that all came back, but it was, there was a bunch of balloonists that they thought that that they would, they would all give us the freedom of the City of London, which is very nice. We went to the Guild Hall, or the Mansion House, is it, I don't know, somewhere, somewhere in London, next to Paul's Cathedral, and all said out oaths and that, that was it. Yes, we were, we were all in. We all joined the Japan girl guild of air pilots and navigators. Yes.

JENNIFER

It means, you can take sheep over Westminster Bridge

DAVID

I can take sheep and yes, and I, if I'm hanged, I can be hanged with a silken cord.

JENNIFER

Oh, David, what?

What can you say? I quite Yeah. All you've flown all over the world, you must have a room, especially for your medals and cups. Looking at this list here,

DAVID

yes, but Dominic. Dominic's caught me. Catching me up already. Actually,

JENNIFER

he is a bit yes. Now, was there any flight when you thought, oh, no, this is the end. This is awful.

DAVID

No, no, not really. I've always been really quite optimistic that whatever, wherever you are in a balloon, the balloon will look after you.

JENNIFER

Have you ever had an awful passenger?

DAVID

I've had two white knuckle passengers in my life, two passengers who who've literally had white knuckles. I mean, one of them was one of my crew. He came out with me many times.

We've flown quite a lot and at one time he said, Oh, you haven't flown me. Then I flew somebody else up to six or seven thousand feet. He said, You never flown me that high. So I said, I'm sure there'll be a chance anyway. We're in a competition. And I took off, and we started climbing. We got about three thousand feet, and he said, he said, I'm not liking this. He said, I think we need to come down. I said, we can't come down. I'm in a competition. I'm trying to get the wind in the right direction. So we continued up by about five thousand feet. He was really a lump of Jelly in the bottom of the basket. He was going to be sick. And I said, be sick. You have to be over. Hang ahead, over the side of the basket.

Anyway, anyway. We after about a quarter of an hour we came down, and, of course, we got down about four thousand feet, and he felt, he felt a lot better, but he, I don't think he was going to do that again. And the other one was the local vicar, and that, you think, was he's getting closer to his boss, you know, you think, Yes, feel more relaxed, but he didnt.

JENNIFER

You flew – well at the last BBM&L luncheon you told us about Kilimanjaro. It was an amazing flight, an amazing event. Actually, more than just a flight. It was a whole adventure, wasn't it?

DAVID

Yes, it was yes. These are organized by Ultramagic balloons. They're Ultramagic adventures. That was the third or fourth, and they are just marvellous. Josep Maria Llanos Costa, who who's the owner, really, of Ultramagic balloons? He goes off. He goes off to Africa, and he pre organizes everything to the last dot on an eye and then he takes out, you know, say 20, of experience balloonists he always it takes out, but also 20 or 30 of his staff. And if the staff have actually been, and he has such an immensely loyal staff there, and if they, if they've been with him for, I don't know, 10 years or something, they would be eligible, and they get a, I think, a very subsidised or free trip out on these adventure adventures, a lot of them, they're not, they're not sort of balloon pilots or balloon crew. They're seamstresses. But they just like the idea of these adventures. And whatever happens, everything will seem to go virtually to plan. And of all the adventures that I've been on, I don't think really that there's more than one flight that we haven't been able to achieve, and it's just staggering, really.

JENNIFER

So how many have you done with him? Four?

DAVID

We've done Tanzania twice and Kilimanjaro twice, that is, we've done Madagascar, and we've done and we've done the Andes, maybe. So that's four Yes.

JENNIFER

So whereabouts, did you do the Andes from which Andes went? Yes,

DAVID

Andes is large countries? No, we went down to Charlton, right down in Patagonia, yes, and flew in, flew around the glacier, glacier there, and then we had another flight up there. Then we travel way back up to Mendoza and then flew then drove inland to take off very close to the Chilean border to fly back. And again, it was amazing.

The balloons left Chelsea the Patagonia, and they had a 1500-mile trip to do to get to Mendoza. Within a day, we flew back to Buenos Aires and went back on to Mendoza. We got there, had been a heavy snowfall, so we were supposed to stay at a hotel up in the Andes, in a ski resort. And the ski resorts hadn't opened at that time, but the road was totally impassible. So there were we in a bus, in a bus from the airport, without ability to get to a hotel. Uh, at about half past nine at night, we and no hotels, no food, and within an hour, Joseph had organized a place to for them to feed literally forty of us, and a hotel and so, so that all worked out. And then the next day, we waited for the pass to open. The pass opened up to the hotel. We went up to there. Then we then we tried to look at where we were going to take off the following morning and found the car park that we're supposed to take off on, very close to Chilean border. And at that time is a bit snow covered, but so we went up there the following morning, and he got a vehicle came down to start. The grader came down to clear all the snow from the from the car park, and it operated for about 10 minutes. Got completely stuck against the boulder. So we then waited another half an hour, and another big snow shovel came along that it got this, it got the grader out, and then they both started clearing the snow. And we just about cleared all the snow when Mr. Jobsworth came along and said, You haven't got permission to take off from this car park. Josep said, we have, oh, but you haven't got the piece of paper.

He said, No, no, the piece of paper hasn't arrived yet, but it is on his way. Never mind. You can't take off here. No. So was Joseph worried at all? No.

He said, Okay, fine. Instead of arguing with him, he said, Okay, fine. So we left, and I thought it would go down the hill to somewhere a bit more sooner. No, went further up the valley towards Chile and found a flattish area very close. You could see the Chilean border from it. And we took anything time was getting on then, and we had to fly literally one hundred miles back over the Andes to a place to land. And he wasn't at all worried, and we started inflating. He inflated and a gust took him and took his balloon and just gift wrapped it over the back, over his retrieve vehicle, no, and I thought, well, he might be able to get off, but the gusting will get worse, and none of us will follow. But it was the one gust, and they moved the

balloon back, got the balloon inflated, flew off, and then, then we followed. And we all had very successful flights. And that's the fastest I've been. We went up to 113 miles an hour over the Andes.

JENNIFER

You didn't ! In a in a basket,

DAVID

in a basket. Thats ninety-nine knots.

JENNIFER

Oh, my goodness, that's incredible. That's, I mean, they can't even serve balls that fast at Wimbledon!

DAVID

yes. So lovely flight.

JENNIFER

So most exciting flight you've had is what? Because you sounds like you have some hundreds,

DAVID

it's so difficult. Yes. I mean, that flight was the, obviously, the flight over Kilimanjaro, when we flew straight over the centre of the crater at one thousand feet above, which, again, was just so, so beautiful that we had the wind direction that could get you in to that point. And what, what is so frustrating was I was taking up the official photographer and cameraman and the idea was that as we approached the crater that he was going to launch his drone, and the drone would fly around us as we went over the crater. And we got there, and he just couldn't get the drone to work. And so we all sat there trying to get this drone to work. And so most of us weren't concentrating so much on using nothing another method to share us over the crater. And then he subsequently found out, of course, is that he hadn't disabled something. So you can't launch a drone which is moving. The drone has to be stationary when it goes off. So that was a bit frustrating, but it was a wonderful flight. It was his first flight ever in a balloon.

JENNIFER

But the photographs you showed at the BBM&L luncheon were stunning.

DAVID

Yes, yes, yes, yes, it's lovely.

JENNIFER

So where to for you and Karen now, I mean, it's now to August. You, I assume you've got the Bristol Fiesta, have you?

DAVID

No, we're, we're off to the British Nationals in which is in being held in Germany with the German Nationals in Burgebrach in two weeks' time My competition skills, I have passed whatever I had. I passed all on to Dom because I've got none left. Dom and Steph, I have obviously none left, because now I realize what makes skilful competition pilot. Now I haven't got any.

JENNIFER

I doubt that very much,

DAVID

But I partake. I thought I'd partake just to take the numbers up. Yes, but there you are. Yes.

JENNIFER

Is Dominic in Australia.

DAVID

He's still in Australia. Yes, he flies balloons over Melbourne in their summer, but he's he was tempted to stay behind, and he's doing it now in that Autumn, He's then going to fly in Indianola in a couple of weeks' time, and then from there, straight to the British Nationals. And then a week off. And then it's the European Championships in Weisselberg, in Austria. And then, and then he goes off back a bit of a time. He's going to help with the he's going to help crew the Gordon Bennett. And then then he's going to go to Saga in in November.

JENNIFER

And you two are going to Saga, aren't you?

DAVID

No, no. Stephanie is, my daughter, but we, they don't want us to crew out there. I've had wonderful times in Japan. I must say, it's such a beautiful country to fly over. The people are so friendly, it's so safe, and they are so polite. And as I said, I've had some wonderful competitions there, but that's it. Time moves on.

JENNIFER

Wow. So you are babysitting? How old's your grandchild now?

DAVID

Just over two to two coming up to two and two and a half. Really, May she was born, and know the grandchild is going out with Stephanie, just as we dragged all our children out to our competitions. I mean, we're all there in ninety-seven when I want to win the world in ninety-seven so it's very nice that she follows in our footsteps.

JENNIFER

Yes, we dragged us all over the world. We went ballooning to Qatar once, uh, Charlotte was then seventeen, very beautiful and blonde, she is still beautiful, and there were these Princes who wanted to buy her for a racing camel!

DAVID

The nice thing about ballooning with children is that you have the opportunity to get up in the middle of night and wake them up rather than the other way around.

JENNIFER

Yes, amazing, isn't it? Yes? Well, I think David, that I think you're a fascinating man. I think we're really lucky to have you, sort of as part of our council. And, you know, just part of the ballooning world that is full of exciting people, and you're one of them,

DAVID

Right? So it's a of all. I mean, I was a person who started off trying different sports like climbing, canoeing, and sailing and obviously fixed wing flying, but ballooning you meet, obviously, in a way, likeminded people, great and you meet great people. It gives you a massive opportunity to see the world from a different aspect. I mean, you go to a country that like Africa, and, you know, in Tanzania, you fly and you will land in a village that hasn't seen a tourist. You know, the trouble with tourism is tourism, the people who receive tourists become corrupted and start doing what

tourists want, and they're not typical, and it's only in ballooning, where you actually sit and land in a place which is completely removed from, from, from that aspect. And it's just wonderful how you meet you will meet people who have got nothing, and they will offer everything. Africa's very similar. You land in the middle of nowhere, and suddenly they you're surrounded by fifty people, and you think, what? Did they all come from? You know, there's, there's nothing there, and they all suddenly appear,

JENNIFER

yes, smiling too, yes, yes. Unlike England, where you get the wave.

DAVID

We, I had the opportunity to fly in Soweto actually, with Ormorod and that, that was an experience.

JENNIFER

We're very lucky to be part of a sport which is on its own, isn't it?

DAVID

Yes, it is quite Yes, it's a great adventure. And as I say, said in my talk 'that in ballooning, you may not know where you're going, but it's mirrors my philosophy in life, in that you may not know where you're going, but you might as well enjoy it when you while you're getting there'.

JENNIFER

Yes, yes, absolutely. Well, David, thank you very much for spending all this time with me.

DAVID

It is a pleasure.