

Ted

Ted Dickson was a phenomenon, a special, unique human being. We are all unique, but if you'll allow me emotional correctness over logical correctness, Ted was extra unique. He often used the Yiddish word Mensch in relation to some of the people he knew. My understanding of Mensch is as a description of a compassionate, civilized human being. To me Ted was the ultimate Mensch - caring, generous and giving, both sympathetic and empathetic, totally trustworthy and discrete when it came to confidences, and ever ready to learn and explore - with his books, radio's 3 and 4 and more latterly U3A as prominent media in this pursuit.

I met Ted about 30 years ago at the Hampstead group, which is well represented here today. We were always reasonably pally in the early days, but our friendship was further cemented by an incident which vividly demonstrates the pervasiveness of Ted's circle of friends. Ted was a master at cultivating, nurturing and maintaining friendships. I was visiting an ex-work colleague on a visit to the Lake District. She took a phone call in my presence and I heard her say "Hullo Ted". I mischievously remarked - that isn't the TED I know by any chance, a railway signalman from London. And of course it was! Ted knew her though his friend Peter, who had bought her previous home from her and with Ted had become new friends of hers.

((On a nice spring/summers day)) I feel sad for Ted being no longer able to experience and share life's good things, now and in the future with his many friends. But Ted has chosen to forgo such opportunities, in order to be where he is now. I must try to accept and respect his decision while carrying the sadness and managing the huge void in my life brought about by his absence. Ted was one of my best friends, someone I could confide in with complete trust in his honesty and discretion. He was always there for me, and in some ways like family but more so - someone who challenged the "blood is thicker than water" hypothesis. As far as I was concerned Ted was always going to be my friend for life, and I his friend for life, no matter what (and the "what" did include some challenging behaviours resulting from his inevitable demons, especially when he was drinking). It was always a case of till death do us part, and sadly that scenario is now with me, and all of us. I used to see a lot of Ted during the week at U3A, which I had mentioned to him, and in which he subsequently got me involved. We were now both effectively retired and I looked forward to sharing more pursuits and time with Ted. And now I am sadly deprived of that, as are so many of his friends.

Ted could be massive in people's lives, certainly in mine. I am going to miss him terribly, but he somehow lives on in the presence of his wide circle of friends, many of whom I have befriended, and will hope to keep in touch with. In my religion we have a stone setting a year after the funeral, which brings family and friends back together. I would certainly like to subscribe to annual get-togethers in fond and happier memory of Ted.

Thank you.