

# Days Around Ted, My Da

## By Tony Keenan (Son)



Ted Keenan standing outside the Lighthouse at St. John's Point, Donegal, circa early 1970s.

Ted was some man. I called him Ted as I worked with him for a number of years and I wasn't going to call him Da in front of work colleagues. My two children, Carla and Dwayne always said to their grand-father "Well Ted".

Da from my early memories had a great whistle he could do from his mouth. Da fancied himself as Tarzan! Instead of the call, Da whistled when he wanted me home, while I was outside playing with friends. When Ollie Ledwith heard the whistle, he always made the remark "Tony (AJ) – Time to go home!"

Da loved to keep his car clean, if you smoked, or dirt on your shoes, you had no chance of getting into his car. Da loved watches, cowboy movies, country music and replica guns. He could mimic a good impression of John Wayne! He had a great sense of humour, was very stubborn if he took the notion loved a good row to clear the air! Many a good enjoyable row we had.

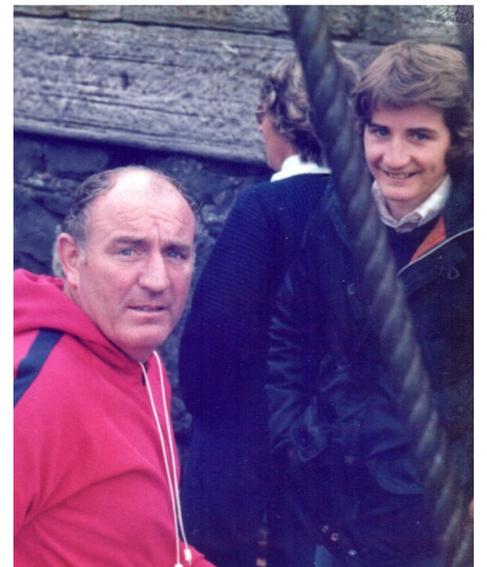
Some would say that I am very like him. I will let people who know me, decide that! My routine in the summer months when his true focus was on training for the Channel swims in the early 1970s, I was about 8 years old. Home life was revolved around times and tides. I suppose everything adjusted to suit the tides. Ma (Bridie) would say "Dinner at 11.00 am or whatever time your home?"

I travelled with Da in the car for his routine swimming excursions to Bundoran, 'Break Horsepower' wasn't as powerful then as it is now! Listening to country music on an 'Eight Track' (I can hear the younger ones asking 'what's an eight track?'). The song 'Your Cheating Heart' – I will never forget. The free flowing banter we had, and the contented silences.

I use to sit in the car, waiting, waiting and waiting until Da just got fed up swimming, not tired, just fed up! Then I would spring into action, run down to the water's edge with a big towel to cover his leather like strong shoulders, a small box for his ear plugs and flip flops to stop the sand sticking to his feet. I can vividly remember the strong smell of the salt water coming from his body. To me then, he was a "Giant". He would slip me a few 'bob' to play in the Bundoran amusements, this was my time to keep him waiting.

Da was a joiner by trade known in the trade as a 'tasty joiner'. His skill, precision, attention to detail and the care he had for his tools. To this day, I still admire his joinery work in my home.

My brother Brian was his only coach. Da had no team behind him, no physiotherapists no psychologists, he had a great saying "I have a weak mind and a strong back!" and he had me as his travelling partner. Da to me was one of a kind! Some man...



Ted Keenan and his son Tony at Donaghadee Pier.



In later years, Tony Keenan and his Dad Ted Keenan.