

[Transcript] Conversations / Bruce Englefield's devilish charm

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Tasmanian devils are the largest carnivorous marsupials on the planet. They look adorable with their stocky squat bodies, whiskers and black button eyes, but they have powerful flesh eating jaws and at night they emit a screeching murderous howl that sounds like the devil himself, hence the name. Some years ago Bruce Englefield and his wife Maureen came to Tasmania from England on a holiday and almost on a whim they decided to buy a wildlife park where there were Tasmanian devils and Bruce became entranced with these fierce and beautiful creatures and he decided he needed to know more about them and he earned a PhD in animal behaviour.

Bruce was from England where he'd been a TV sound engineer and a farmer. He knew almost nothing about these creatures other than from the Looney Tunes cartoon and so he was amazed to see

them spinning like the cartoon character does. But when he discovered they were spinning out of pure frustration Bruce became determined to make life better for them and so he set up the Devil Island project to create large island enclosures to breed the devils and keep them free of the devil facial tumour that has decimated the wild population. But more than that Bruce Englefield has had a life that's spun him in all kinds of different directions and the key thing is that he never stopped learning never stopped finding out new things about the world. Hello Bruce.

Hello Richard. Do you remember seeing one of these devils for the first time?

Absolutely yes it was quite awe-inspiring when I'd only seen the cartoon character to see them in real life it was a well it was a life-changing moment because I realised that this is an animal that's very different from anything else I'd ever seen in behaviour looks attitude everything about it was unique and once I'd seen it for an hour I was hooked and that's why we came to Tasmania.

I've seen a photo of you cuddling a Tasmanian devil called Monster. I didn't know you could do that with a Tasmanian devil. Well the secret is that if you take a Joey and you hand rear it and it learns that it can have total confidence in you they're very friendly animals and we've had female devils that would allow you to pick them up examine their pouch and see their joeys perfectly relaxed. Monster looks very happy and very content in your arms like a pussycat almost. Yeah they would relax but in the photograph Monster is looking at the photographer so to say this is my friend don't do anything wrong I'll take your arm off. Probably could too with a bit of a go. So you migrated to Australia in your 50s but how old were you when you first started dreaming of coming to Australia Bruce? Well I would have been round about 15 at grammar school and we were given the task of writing down if you like our dreams our ambitions goals what would we like to do given free range so I wrote it down in a diary that I had at them. Do you have that here? Yeah I've got it with me. Can you read what you write in that diary? I can just about read my writing as a 15 year old things I want to do June 1958 and number one was see the Sydney Harbour Bridge because obviously in school the Sydney Harbour Bridge was still quite a new thing and so it took my imagination it is wonderful engineering feat. Number two was to play for England. Number three was to have coffee at the cafe in Harris that's in the drawing of the Arc de Triomphe. Number four was to own a car. Number five was flying an aeroplane. Number six was build a house to live in and number seven well be on desert island discs which was a favourite radio program in the UK and get married and have children sing on the BBC meet the queen and the last one I think was to own a zoo. You grew up in Romsey in the south of England

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what do you remember of Romsey in the post war years Bruce? Well all my relatives worked at the local brewery my grandfather was the blacksmith farrier and I remember as a youngster I could just jump up and grab the bellows to put the air into the charcoal so that he could work the steel and of course Romsey's fame is that had more pubs to the size of the town than any other place in England because the local brewery was strong and co and the slogan was you're in the heart of the strong country and other memories I remember what seemed as a youngster queuing for hours when the queen got married to the Duke of Edinburgh and they spent the honeymoon at Broadlands the home of Lord Louis Mountbatten which is just outside Romsey and so they came and drove up through the street and I remember my father who was a big six foot one copper picking me up and putting me on his shoulder and I think I would have been about four at the time and I was quite scared you're dead served in the armed forces was he not around for part of your early life do you remember him coming into your life I've got this vague memory of being petrified the first time I met my father I know I must have met him when I was 18 months old but I don't remember that but I do remember when he came back from the war and I would have been

four coming five and I remember this huge male with a deep voice and he was big suddenly appearing and was told well that's your dad I think it probably was instrumental in me not having that good a relationship with my father until I got much older in my teens I was almost frightened of him because he was a disciplinarian and dad would give us corporal punishment but he never hit me I was too clever to avoid it well normally with a disciplinarian father things go bad when you turn in your teens what changed in your teens the thing that changed was the fact that in retrospect things come into perspective and I understood he was a policeman he couldn't have sons doing anything wrong because anybody he did anything to would say well your son did it so we were told what to do and we had to expect to do it and as I grew up the almost fear of my father became respect and once I started to respect him that came that he was actually a great carer my mother provided the love she provided all the love and the home comforts and my father provided the discipline which was important part of growing up in life you met your wife Maureen at quite a young age how did you meet her well involves my father because going to grammar school quite expensive and police officers didn't get paid that well in those days and to put it mildly I didn't get my head down to study when I was 16 and I had to take my exams but I was much too involved in sports and girls and and generally just enjoying life to really study and when I took my ordinary levels well I didn't fail completely I did get some but my father said well you can stay on because I know you're capable of doing advanced level but no more serious girlfriend so on and so forth right so for two years I got my head down I studied I retook my O levels that I failed took my A levels on June the 16th 1961 and that was the night that I met my wife you met her that night I met her that night she had finished her exams on the same day and both of us had decided to go to the local youth club and that's where I saw this beautiful apparition across the room some enchanted evening and three and a half years later we got married and I tend to say it wasn't love at first sight it was lust at first sight yeah and and it still is when my wife walks into a room even if it can be filled with 20 women she's the one that I look at and it won't go away so after school you got a job at the BBC how did you wrangle that well my brother always worked for the BBC and it seemed sensible and in those days if you had a grammar school education and you had your exams you were head hunted

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I was head hunted by the post office by a computer firm burrows all offering me a job but when the BBC offered it I had to go up to London for an interview and obviously they thought I was worth taking on board and of course the best training in the world was offered by the BBC so you were working as a sound engineer and working a lot of outside broadcasts were you working with some of those great old sound engineers that went back to the 1930s the king's speech era of sound engineering brothers indeed all the engineers that I worked with had come through the war and they were they were just wonderful that they sort of took me in their arms and the stories that they had to tell were were just amazing of how they got through the war because in those days we've recorded on disc and so if you're out in the field with a huge Humber super snipe with all the gear in the back trying to get close to the action and it was also difficult to record gunfire because it would cut into the disc the way that the engineer did it was he'd managed to get hold of a Luger pistol and so while Richard Dimblebee was giving his report about the war and he'd fire the Luger into a dustbin so that you would get that sort of woo sound and and and there were lots of stories about my old engineer in charge who was R.H. Wood

a wonderful man he had a way with words of mixing up different sayings I remember I was trying to work on an amplifier and find a fault and I was looking into it and with all the technical instructions and R.H. walked in and he just said eye angle field it's no good looking for the needle if you can't find bloody haystack and of course R.H. was the one who actually took out a lot of the stammer when the king was doing his speech so this is quite this isn't as it was portrayed in the movie the king's speech it was a different thing how did he remove the stammers from the king's speech in those days in those days on disc you could mark the disc with a yellow china graph to the point where you needed to lift the arm off the disc slide it sideways and pick it up again and there were some very dexterous ladies who would do this editing and the way you did it was you put a piece of paper underneath the disc so the turntable will be going round but the paper would stop the disc going round so if you wanted to cue it all you had to do was release the paper and the disc would immediately go and you'd fade it up and so you could take out stammers and even on news reports they would come back to the studio and need editing and that's what these these women were doing then bruce in a remarkable incredible turn of fate you got a job as a sound engineer on the benny hill show yes well when i was at the bbc i did outside broadcast but i realized that radio was a bit on the decline for an engineer i needed to be in television and then tem's television started up and they offered me a job and then lo and behold the next thing is benny hill's turned up the benny hill show used to have a lot of the old tropes of silent movies the original silent movies comedies but with sound effects laid on was that you making the kind of sounds and the comedics of the sound effects as well benny taught me a lot about comedy and sound effects and timing and how to use sound to enhance what was visual for instance if you see a person getting on a bike and you realize there's no saddle you know they're going to sit on that spike so you want a sound that goes with it not the sound of tearing trousers or anything and i found that the crushing eggshells was just the right sort of sound but when you played the sound you waited for the first laugh when people realized what was going to happen and you delayed the sound until the rear end actually hit the spike that way benny got two laughs and all the time when you work with benny he was an absolute perfectionist very clever man spoke three languages fluently and of course i'm an animal behavior person so i observed behavior but that's what benny did he observed people

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and used that observation to write all his scripts he was quite a lonely man apparently like he he i think he proposed marriage to two women and both of them turned him down he lived quite a solitary life a very frugal one yes did you see that side of him well yes i mean he would arrive outside rehearsals and if you didn't know he was a famous star you would never realize and he would just leave the studio and go up teddington high street to buy a newspaper and but he also did a lot for charity and children's homes and that sort of thing which you never hear about of course but he was a very wealthy man that sound effect that was very often employed was him slapping the poor head of poor old jackie right you know that that tiny diminutive man with the bald head and would have that kind of yeah sort of sound but not quite that did you was that as recorded like the sound of a hand slapping on a head or did you do something else for that no that was added in post-production the way we got the sort of comedy sound was to use some wallpaper paste in a bucket and gave benny a brush and he just flopped it around to get that sort of what sound yeah but if you if you watch it and listen to it the slapping is not in sync with the hand going on to the head which makes it even funnier of course right yes it's not in sync that's the point isn't it and I learned that to my cost because when I got a new digital dubbing system where you could move sound effects very easily digitally I spent two hours syncing up the slapping with the hand going on the head benny walked in the door and he said no that's not right we don't want it in sync the effect is cartoony isn't it it's not realistic that's right that's right but it's funny yeah and if it was realistic it wouldn't be funny no that's right why is he hurting that man yeah but if it doesn't sound real if the reality isn't there then it becomes cartoony and funny yeah yeah so then you went to the whole new phase in your life gave the tv and radio work away and decided to become a farmer with Maureen tell me about the first farm year you set up for yourself well while I was working in television one of my relaxations was on my small holding where I had a few sheep and chicken and the odd cow and the odd pig and I went to agricultural college on my days off to learn about all of this and realized you know I was thoroughly enjoying it so I transferred from television to farming as well as slotting in building the odd house you built your own house I built three in all together so we both went off to evening classes I learned bricklaying and she learned how to build the covers to go on chairs and things so we were able to buy a second hand sofa and she covered it and it looked wonderful and we used to go there just like children really get the bricks out mix up a bit of sand and lime build all the brick walls then break it down in the evening and put the bricks away and go back the next week and I was also persuaded that I should take on board a border collie that was causing trouble to a friend's neighbor and she was just going up the cricket ground and rounding up the cricketers and taking their ball and my neighbor saw that I had some sheep and she said you need a sheepdog to work these sheep and of course I knew nothing about sheepdogs and how to train them and everything the only time I'd ever seen a sheepdog was on my uncle's farm and she used to go and get the cattle in but that got me interested in sheepdog working sheepdogs and trialing and I found that I was quite good at training sheepdogs what is it about sheepdogs is there a moment when you see something in what a sheepdog does when you know that a sheepdog knows more than you do oh yes yes it took me a while to learn to look at my dog and understand that they've been honed for centuries to do the work that they did I mean there are

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remarkable stories of sheepdogs who come all the way from north with a flock of sheep down to Smithfield

in London and then the shepherd would go home and leave the dog to find its way home and they would

I had one particular dog Scott who was a beautiful looking dog but gosh was he intelligent when it came to sheep I was working one day and I was trying to get the sheep into the pen and I looked at Scott and he looked at me and I'm sure he was saying in his face you get out the bloody way and leave

it to me and I'll get the sheep in stop interfering with the gate and everything so I stood back and sure enough Scott had picked the lead sheep he knew which was the one that would cause trouble or that would lead the others in so he concentrated on getting that one in and the others followed in and shut the gate and and I I seem to remember I won that trial and as I walked off this experienced

old shepherd looked at me and he said he's taking you a while I knew exactly what he meant so there's a moment when you have to resign yourself to the superior intelligence oh indeed indeed and of course not only in the sheepdog trialing but working the flock Scott was amazing how he would work things out I remember one occasion when I was trying to get a particular you with its lamb back into the shed but because she had a bit of fly strike and I sent Scott off to bring the sheep back with her lamb and of course the you turned on Scott stamping her feet because she was protecting her lamb so what Scott did was came round the other way and made her come towards him stamping and he gradually backed all the way to the shed with the sheep coming back and he'd worked out that that was the way to shift the you not to try and herd her back but to keep challenging her and she would come at him and get her and the lamb back in the shed I'd love to witness a thing like that that must be fascinating to watch a dog that can understand all those things yeah so was it this that led you to go back to uni and then do a master's in animal behavior this your your work with sheepdogs well it certainly I found I don't know why but it was in me training the dogs and they seemed to respond to me and I was using a different sort of method that most of the shepherds used which was quite brutal sometimes and I believed that the farm dogs they learned if they weren't being shouted at then they must be doing the right thing whereas my thing was praise them effectively if they were doing the right thing that's when you praise them and when they're doing the wrong thing you leave them to work it out it was much more of a sort of reward based training than as I say punishment training and once I sort of worked this out I started getting people asking me so how do you train your dog and then they talk about their horse and then there were cats people ask me about their cats and I thought well I don't know a lot about cats and things and that's when I thought I need to understand far more about animal behavior and then the opportunity came up with a new course which eventually led to a master's in animal pet behavior what then brought you to Tasmania it was just a friend who'd visited and said to me you'd love it in Tasmania because of your love of animals and the environment and conservation and things and he just said you should go to Tasmania if you're going anywhere and we were planning to visit Australia anyway because we have friends here and that's when we got to Swansea and I said well I've come all this way I want to see a tassie devil where's the nearest wildlife park and the rest is history yes going to see a tassie devil at a wildlife park is a wonderful thing it's a whole other thing to say let's buy the wildlife park Bruce how did you hit on that idea well I say it was my wife but she says it was

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me right and she knows my mad ideas and I always say you know particularly to younger people if you've got a dream or an ambition or a passion go for it don't listen to people who will give you all the reasons not to do it and this was another of my mad ideas you know as I said when I was 15 I said I'd like to own a zoo we got to the wildlife park I went round it was a it's a big park you know it's 80 acres and I'd seen the devils and the free range kangaroos and the whole park and it sits with a large lake and then extends all the way down to the seashore and we were sitting in the restaurant having a cup of tea and well between the two of us one of us said I could spend the rest of my life here now I think it was my wife and she thinks it was me but nevertheless I just said well we could I see it's up for sale so I called the owner over and I said I see the places up for sale what's involved well sadly it was owned by Neville Quinn whose wife got murdered at the Port Arthur massacre and she was the animal person in the wildlife park Neville was the infrastructure person which is why he decided the time had come to get out and so he said well it's lock stock and barrel make an offer and that's what happened and like so many things in my life once you set a ball rolling things seemed to happen we had to go up to Loncest in the next day and I remember walking along the street and I said well if we are going to buy a wildlife park we need

to get some solicitor to represent us here in Tasmania and she just pointed upwards to a sign Douglas and Collins in Lonceston so I walked in the door and said to the receptionist look we're thinking of buying a wildlife park could we have reference and so that we've got somebody to contact

and she just pushed a button and said I've got a couple here who are thinking about wildlife park he said come in it was meant to happen

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Now you'd had a lot of experience with animals in the UK but a wildlife park in Australia would be a completely different thing it's a whole different subset of animals where you totally swamped when you started working on this newly acquired wildlife park

When we got over it was more run down than I thought it was and so we were concentrating on trying to get the infrastructure up for the animals and of course my wife and I we were working 16 18 hours a day and how old were you at this point well we'd have been 58 so it was quite a challenge and of course I had to learn all about the animals I'd never dealt with the public as such before even taking money was quite a challenge I just wasn't used to it you know working atill and that people actually give you money I'd always have to work to earn it so it was a big challenge and we managed to get to the wildlife park up and running quite well and then sadly only 14 months after we arrived my daughter was nearly killed by a drunk driver and she spent five weeks in a coma in Hobart hospital and her husband they'd come out with us they had two young

children one was just over one and one was four and suddenly their mother is taken out of the equation and my son-in-law was the infrastructure manager very good at fixing things and so suddenly

we're in a situation we've taken over a wildlife park and 14 months in our daughter who was the sort of marketing manager and publicity for the park is taken out of the equation and that really did challenge us as a family to get through it and did your daughter recover no she still has a serious acquired brain injury but she did live but she now struggles because her frontal lobe is

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damaged so she has to live in the now and every morning when she gets up her brain is trying to organise itself because she's forgotten where she is what things are and so on and of course it had a big effect on us and the children trying to grow up with a dysfunctional mother who changed a lot but we survived and she's still a loving daughter and still keeps in touch and were you were you were you tempted at times to just sell up and go back to England where things were familiar no no it it never occurred to us to to sell the wildlife park or move out because the opportunity was there for us to help with the children and there's no better place really for children to go up than in a wildlife park in Australia too in Australia and of course we had after Steve Irwin's sad demise Terry came down with her two children to our wildlife park and so there was a sort of empathy going on there with the children and they all went off and playing young Robert and Bindi he was a lovely lad he was only about four and I asked him if he'd sign his autograph and he said Mr Englefield I don't normally do that but for you I will four years old you know amazing amazing Terry Irwin was very generous in helping the Devil Island project what were you noticing about the devils the Tasmanian devils in your wildlife park and their behavior well the first thing I noticed was their aberrant behavior with spinning there are papers written of devils in the wild that have been studied and none of them mentioned seeing the devil spinning this is a characteristic in the you know lini tunes cartoon the devil spins yeah yeah and I can only imagine that the cartoonist visited Tasmania and saw a devil in a wildlife park because they do not do that in the wild so so why was it spinning what did you conclude well it's frustration of not being able to exhibit its normal behavior devils run kilometers at night looking for food they just like running and of course at the time the specification for keeping devils it just seems horrific at the moment when I think of it was 25 square meters of concrete five meters by five meters of concrete to keep a wild animal in and all the Australian zoos supported that regulation and when I tried to get it changed they fought tooth and nail not to get it changed and with another wildlife park owner from Tasmania we set up the the wildlife institutes of Tasmania and fortunately there was Dr. Irone Skiara in the department who understood that things needed to change and he was on our side and he helped write new specifications for keeping devils and wombats and even owning a wildlife park because when I came to Tasmania nobody asked me did I have any qualifications for looking after animals or anything so you wanted to change the conditions by which the Tessie devils were living on within this wildlife park how did you change it well I worked with the other wildlife park owners in Tasmania and Dr. Irone Skiara from the department and we wrote up what we thought was a reasonable size for the devils which was basically 400 square meters instead of 25 square meters and although the mainland gave us a lot of trouble and trying to say that that's not needed you won't be able to display the devils properly in those sizes of enclosures it did go through in Tasmania and of course because it was a Tasmanian devil we were able to say well you want devils you build the enclosures of the correct size and once we built them the devils didn't spin anymore you got the idea for the devil island project tell me what this was and how you got it up and running well because of the devil facial tumor disease the department had decided they would take devils from the wild that were clear of the disease and breed them in captivity and unbelievably when they built facilities on Marar island they built facilities that were only half the size of the specifications for keeping wildlife park devils it sounds just

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unbelievable but that's what they did and of course when I went over to visit and pointed it out they then had to get a phd student in to say well it's all right to keep them in there because they won't be seeing visitors so that was the the start of a bad relationship because I understood and and so did the other people who joined me in the devil island project so what was the project that took can you explain what the project was well the idea was that if you're going to take devils from the wild and then breed from them it's a total nonsense to put them in small pens and try and breed them there and then think you can put them back in the wild it's much more sense to put them in huge enclosures and let them breed themselves and then you've got

devils that are suitable to go back in the wild because they've still got wild behavior and you're doing this on an island so they can't receive the infection they can't get infected with the facial effectively it was fencing that created a land island it's not surrounded by water you don't need the most right it's double fenced so that no devils could get from the outside once we knew that the disease was passed by biting then that's the common sense you know that if it's passed by biting make sure they can't meet and then you can breed and of course one of the things that was thrown up was well if we breed them in captivity we can make A with B and we know the genetics and it all gets terribly complicated after 20 generations you won't get inbreeding whereas my idea was put all the devils into an enclosure and let them sort out themselves who breeds with who

and I was told oh the male you'll get a male that will monopolize all the females and so all of the devils will be related didn't happen never did we get more than one female with one male because I knew from a behavior point of view once a male devil has decided which female he fancies and once the female has decided she'll accept that male and they can be very nasty about that it's up to the female who decides who she'll mate with and if she doesn't want to mate and you put them together in the pen you're going to end up with a dead male devil she actually allows the male to take her by the scruff of the neck and drag her back to a nest that she's already built and then they mate and then she tells the male clear off leave the kids to me so how did you raise the money for this project through well I went on tv and said this is the project I wanted to do and to raise money I was going to run the London Marathon at what age 66 and that was because

my father died of a heart attack when he was 66 and I wanted to make sure that I got really fit and so I thought well I'll run a marathon or trained for to run a marathon were you a runner at that stage no no no no no right no not at all I kept fairly fairly fit but not fit enough to go running so I knew I was going to have to do a fair bit of training and the day after I went on television Fiona Hoskin who was a chef tv personality worked with Tetsuya ran the restaurant up in Lonsleston rang me up and said look I saw you on television would you like somebody to run with you so I went and saw Fiona expecting to see this Amazon who was really fit and wanted to run a marathon but I'm sure Fiona won't mind me saying that she didn't look like an athlete but she said she'd train and my wife was with me and so on the way home she said well if Fiona's going to do it I'm going to do it so how many were there were there were 10 of us running to raise money for this prayer yeah and we all went to London and pay for ourselves and raised a bit of sponsorship and we all ran it and there was a surgeon from the north and a nurse and a school teacher and various others all committed to it but all these wonderful people that came on board and gave all their time and raised the money and having Fiona on board she managed to persuade

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Tetsuya to come down to Tassie and we put on a devil of a dinner in Hobart and in Lonsdale and we also had Jan Cameron on board and she said well I'll match whatever fun whatever money you raise I'll match it and she didn't realize that we raised 160,000 on the one in Hobart and she matched it so between those two dinners we raised half a million dollars so you got the project up and running with yes we got we got the money together and was it successful very successful the first devils that went across to Mariah Island to be released came out of our devil enclosures and there were other devils that they were trying to keep in facilities at Cressy that were starting to spin and so they took them out and put them into one of our enclosures Devil Islands and it all worked extremely well the biggest problem I had was when I said I was going to do this Parks and Wildlife and the department were against it they said no and of course what they then said is we won't give you devils to go in the Devil Islands if you build them but fortunately there was a gentleman Nick Mooney who years ago had taken devils and put them onto an island off the coast and the aboriginally people there said originally there weren't devils and when they were being given the island back they wanted the devils removed so Nick dropped them off to me I'd already built some quarantine facilities so we were able to put those devils that couldn't possibly have had the disease in quarantine and we built the enclosures and I told the department and the minister that I'd actually got the devils to go into the enclosure basically sticking one finger up because when I proposed it after that typical politicians they said will give you full in kind support so what did that mean no money but you carry on and do it and then the day I was due to open the first Devil Island enclosure at Nature World I got a call that the minister would like to come and open it and announce that the devil had become a threatened species and so I said yeah okay fine and from that point on they embraced the idea but it was thanks to Nick Mooney going to the committee and saying look this is a good idea actually and I've been to visit and I've seen what's proposed and I think it's a good idea you've also done a PhD you made Tasmanian of the year so much has happened in your life we go through that list of yours again and just go through each of those things on your your list that you wrote when you were 15 one by one see the Sydney Harbour Bridge check play for England no you didn't play for England you did that's the one thing you didn't get well I did you did because I did that with my sheepdog trialing I made the England tea all right so I did actually play for England that's number three to have a coffee in the famous painting of the Arctur Triumph and there's a cafe there with people outside and you've done that oh yes number four number four was to own a zoo you've done that and then flying an aeroplane well of course back in 1958 that was quite a dream so that's number five what's number six build a home to live in so I did that I did three of them and the first one I built I virtually built everything apart from putting the tiles on the roof because I wasn't qualified to do that and then beyond desert island discs well I did that later on when I was in Australia actually there was a program very similar where you pick your pieces of music I said Michael Throsby's show yeah classic a film yeah where are we up to now oh get married and have children that was number eight number nine was sing on the BBC well I was a chorister of the royal church of music um and the BBC came to do a broadcast at our church and then number 10 was meet the queen well I did that on several occasions when I was on outside broadcasts not formally but be in the same room as this wonderful lady you know it's not easy being a queen and she was great at it a really hard worker sadly she's gone but I remember her for

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her incredible work ethic and her sense of humour quite early in my day when they had the Commonwealth ministers were all coming together for the Commonwealth conference and at the time the Canadian premier was Pierre Trudeau and he was very much into the Pierre Cardin type of clothes and all the swinging image of the 60s in London and everything and what was supposed to happen was the queen was in the front and they supposed to come in and just give their hand and say a few words and then leave and he came in got to the queen and completely dried and she said well I think we ought to stop the recording and if you'd like to go in we'll go again knowing the media and as he went out through the door she just clicked her fingers and said how's that for a swinging image and of course we all roared with laughter and I can't imagine what it was like for the guy just outside the door then having to come in but it was just how's that for a swinging image sometimes I think that the people who were looking after the queen thought she was stupid she wasn't she could see it all she knew what was going on I remember a time when they were dedicating the war memorial at Runnymede to the American Air Force and everything was all ready but it had been very dry and overnight the grass had sort of gone rather brown and so they got out the green paint to paint the grass and unfortunately just before the queen arrived a lot of dandelions in the next field decided it was time to get rid of all their seeds so all this white stuff came across stuck to the grass and you saw the queen arrive and you could see she looked and said oh yeah they painted the grass and that's the dandelions on it and you know thinking that the queen wouldn't understand the grass dies if it gets tired you know but uh yeah yeah there was some very interesting times Bruce it's been such a pleasure speaking with you and thank you so much well thank you for having me on Richard you've been listening to a podcast of conversations with Richard Fidler for more conversations interviews please go to the website abc.net.au/conversations