



CUMMINGS' GOINGS

with BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Mark Cummings



Photo: Mark Cummings/Kenton Cool

I'LL NEVER BE COOL

Have you ever had a friend who was always just that bit better than you at everything? They were the best at sport, super good-looking, academic success came easily... but, despite all that, you really liked them. That's the true test of a friendship – dismissing their superiority with a flourish of jocular self-deprecation.

I have one such friend who is very cool. He's so cool because he's climbed Mount Everest 16 times, he's achieved the Seven Summits – the highest mountains on each of the seven traditional continents – and he's the only Brit to ski down two 8,000m peaks. Oh, I forgot to mention his last

name is Cool. Kenton Cool lives in the Cotswolds and I got to know him many years ago when he'd call me 'on air' from Everest base camp and we've had a chat about his latest mission.

I once interviewed him from near the summit and the phone line was much clearer than when we called him at his then home in Quenington.

I've always scratched around for something I can say I'm better at, but he even trumps me at the art of public speaking as he's also an internationally renowned motivational speaker. On a recent wintry walking trip to the Yorkshire Dales, I thought I'd give the Kenton 'look' a go. Having

trained with my pal Chris on the slopes of the Stroud valleys for our northern adventure, we were delighted when we saw the weather forecast. We had freezing temperatures accompanied by blue skies and dazzling sunshine. This gave me the excuse to buy a cheap pair of sunglasses, whip out my walking poles, spruce up the Kenton facial hair and pose on a stile. I think you'll agree, when you place our images together, we could be brothers!

Maybe not. The only thing I think I've got over Kenton is that he's a committed Saracens fan... a clinical, cold, unpopular club who will never be loved.

ABOVE:
Who is the coolest of them all: Mark Cummings or Kenton Cool?

TWO OUT OF THREE IS BAD

Quiz time. What cost £26.3m in the early 1970s, is still used today, helped us enjoy a calmer, quieter Cotswolds and later had to be redone because they made a mess of it?

The answer is the M5 through Gloucestershire. The A38 used to be our route to Bristol and onto Devon and Cornwall. Can you imagine the snarl-ups on a Bank Holiday through Gloucester?

Once this section of the M5 was completed, it was noted that there was one small issue. Pretty much the whole of the county's stretch was just two lanes each way, whereas north and south the motorway had been built with three lanes!

Unsurprisingly, the bottleneck always happened in our county and so they had to add an extra lane. The remedial work cost a fortune and, while being carried out, caused even more delays.

Men of a certain age must store this fact and bring it out while on the M5 so you can 'impress' your grateful passengers.



Photo: Forest Green Rovers

Dale Vince with Duncan Ferguson

BIG DUNC

In a previous life I was a sports reporter.

The most taxing and nerve-racking job was the post-match interview with the manager. Depending on their nature and general disposition towards you, it could be a very uncomfortable experience.

I had the joy of trying to have a word with Brian Clough when working in Nottingham, which was usually an impossibility.

I covered a team managed by the legendary Neil Warnock for a couple of years and we had a love/hate relationship which ended well when I left the sports department to become a presenter. I have great sympathy for my colleagues when I

hear them getting beaten up by some of our local bosses. Over the years, Steve Cotterill, Mark Cooper, and Bobby Gould have proved 'interesting'.

Big Duncan Ferguson has now been tasked with saving Forest Green Rovers from relegation. The former Everton legend comes across very well. He's passionate, enthusiastic, experienced, happy to try vegan food and tells it as it is.

I wish him and the club all the best, and fingers crossed my colleagues never experience the treatment he handed out to the lily-livered centre-halves back in the 1990s.

EVERYONE CAN BE SNOOTY



Photo: Tracy Spliers

Exactly how snooty is The Snooty Fox in Tetbury?

I'd like to give a big plug to all our wonderful, iconic, magnificent pubs and hotels around the Cotswolds who want us all to come in and enjoy their hospitality.

It's easy sometimes to assume some of these stunning establishments are a bit posh and exclusive. The majority aren't and they want us to pop in for just a coffee or a light lunch.

One of the most accessible and friendly places I know is The Snooty Fox in the heart of Tetbury. It was formally known as The White Hart, was rebuilt in 1851 by Robert Holford, the man who designed

Westonbirt Arboretum. It became the centre of upper-class social activity and the place to go and be seen. The ballroom upstairs was the ultimate destination for the great and the good where the local Beaufort Hunt would dance the night away.

It still retains the glamour and the style of those days while being an easy place to drop in for a local ale or simple sandwich lunch. Currently the team there is recreating a little bit of history by reopening a historic side entrance to enhance the notion that anyone can pop in off the street and enjoy a drink.

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