

## **IF YOU HAVE A GROUP, ANY SIZE, THAT YOU THINK COULD BENEFIT FROM AGE-FIT, PLEASE READ THIS MESSAGE**

Matching a group to the right exercises is easy. Getting older people to start to converse, to state their opinions, to describe their memories is not always so easy. You can see on the web site that I am very open about my wide ranging life experiences, good and bad. I can find subjects connected to or interesting to other older people and encourage them to react.

**Conversations, discussions, even arguments during exercise sessions is an essential element of a successful Age-Fit session.**

**Ideal time allowance is one and a half to two hours. I am making the time to undertake three morning sessions a week**

**Physical exercise can be spread out over the time intermixed with many different things to keep minds active. Physically - no pressure. Just always improving flexibility, balance and posture. Strength will be increased without realising it.**

**You need no investment. No sports clothing – no lycra! No special facilities just space 1.5m square per person and chairs to sit on. Groups made up of 60+ year olds can exercise and discuss brilliantly in a lounge environment.**

**I am used to making it work in whatever facilities are available. No investment is needed**

**In good weather it is even better in a garden. Probably the best group size can be between 5 and 20**

**Session costs are £150. If you are interested please read on and if you wish contact me [iain@age-fit.com](mailto:iain@age-fit.com) or 07808 789597**

**Sorry for all the 'I's but it is about me**

- I had a brilliant **education**, two extremes – junior county primary then 11+ to a wonderful public school, Eltham College
- I have had an **international business life**. I speak good French, reasonable German and Italian and some Czech and Spanish. I managed companies from 3 employees 400 in the UK, 110 in Belgium and 2000 in Czech Republic
- I have had a **very full sporting life** –. **Rugby, athletics, tennis** and **motor racing** are no longer possible but I continue to compete in **golf** with playing partners less than half my age
- I have a **family** with very wide ranging experiences, from **international sport** to **heavy metal** music (Black Sabbath, Judas Priest and many more)
- During my business life and my sporting life and through my family I have been fortunate to meet and often to befriend

**very special, very interesting people.**

- I, together with the machine tool industry that I believe to be so necessary for this country, have been badly treated by year after year by incompetent governments. **This has cost me many millions.** We have **lost wonderful homes.** How I have dealt with it while I maintained a fight I could never win may also stimulate conversation and opinion, *and argument!*
- **People are usually surprised that I am more disappointed to no longer have the working capital to fulfil my machine tool ambitions than to no longer have those wonderful homes**

My machine tool company <https://www.vtt-wb.com/> has reduced to a very small size so I now have some time spare to help others enjoy better the ageing period. This is something I started when I had **my own gym** a few years ago. **Now it is Age-Fit** 30 years ago I played my last game of serious rugby, aged 50. It was in South Africa for Blackheath Golden Oldies against a former Springboks team. We lost a very good game. During the 46 years between that day and my first race, aged 4, I won quite a few trophies – they are brilliant for stimulating memories. Back in my millionaire days I covered the walls of my 4 car garage with photos and trophies. Our recent serious downsize has left me with half a garage but putting these trophies up has triggered a lot of very pleasurable memories. Coming from the printed photos eras I am developing a simple way to divide the photos, family, business, sport, friends – easy to pull out and enjoy the memories again.



A small wall, a lot of trophies, a lifetime of memories



My first race and first win

## A quote from my only British political hero – “I am easily satisfied by the best”

**MY LIFE – summary** (*how do you summarize 80 very full years?*)

The first major event that went on to raise my life potential - I won an 11plus scholarship to **Eltham college**. Coming from a council house background **my targets and ambitions** quickly grew in the environment created in this really great school. Just at this time my father was taking a risky career move decision and starting his own two men.one woman (my mother) machine tool rebuild business

Most of my business life has been in the machine tool industry despite leaving Eltham College and going to **Loughborough Colleges** with the intention to be a **PE and modern languages teacher**. A serious rugby injury playing for Loughborough finished the PE/gymnastics route.

My father asked me to help him for 6 months before progressing the language teaching route. Those six months were to become 15 years.

*I became obsessed with machine tools, an obsession that was to last all my life. **Machine tools are vital** to a country because they are the machines that make the components that are needed to make all other machines and products. Without them you go back to the Iron Age*

After a year my father threw responsibility on me for all sales. I take a lot of pride in the success we had growing this tiny machine tool trading company to become a major international machine tool trading group, **the best in the UK**

An unhappy family dispute caused me to leave and start my own company in 1976. Success after success made me strong enough **to buy, in 1989, the UK no. 1 machine tool builder, Wickman Bennett**. It was losing money, the reasons were obvious and I turned it round quickly to make sales of £40m with profits over £4m during the first accounting period, 16 months. How the government destroyed my company and the whole UK machine tool industry in the ‘machine tools for Iraq’ fiasco is a very sad and stupid story. Not for this document but google ‘wickman bennett – the scott report’. *I really can stand on a soap box and talk about politicians*

By the time the government recognized that they might have been irresponsible it was too late for most UK machine tool companies. **Wickman Bennett was unable to complete and deliver £87m of UK machines to Iran**. I lost millions. My working capital reduced to a level that was too low for the fight I was to undertake.

**Since then I have been in a 30 years fight to revive the UK machine tool industry**. Unless I win the Lottery I finally give up that fight. **Was it worth it?** I try not to think about the money but look at the positives instead. I conceived and managed the design and build of nearly **100 world class machine tools** now working in some of the worlds great engineering companies. **100 is a fraction of what could have been – that is the really big frustration**

**In 2010 I first thought to give up the fight and I opened my own ‘fitness for all’ gym and spent half my time as a fitness professional – I obtained my Level 3 and Level 4 PT certifications aged 67 – rather unusual!**

**I am the second of four generations of fitness professionals**. My father was and my son and my granddaughter are fitness professionals. My father was a fine athlete and an international standard athletics coach. My son played rugby for Scotland then broke his neck while a member of the squad that won the 1989/90 Grand Slam. He recovered to become a top level S&C and SQA instructor working with international teams and individuals in rugby, soccer, motor racing, cricket and golf. He now designs and supplies to first class fitness centres especially in UK and France – recently Jersey and Wasps Rugby. My grand daughter owns and runs MegaBox, a gym in Leamington.

My own sporting experience as a competitor and as a coach/instructor is extensive – see later

**Business experience and skills**

**Some things I have learned, developed or achieved during these successful but sometimes difficult years.**

***I do not expect to have the opportunity to use these again but being able to engage in conversation about all these things and many other subjects is part of my strategy for helping older people to keep their minds alert as well as improving health and fitness***

Apart from the first nine years in business with my father I have been the Managing Director of every company where I have worked. The only time I have not been a shareholder was when I was head hunted to be MD of these two companies

- In 2000-2002 with interpreters I managed the restructuring of a 2000 employee machine tool company in the **Czech Republic**
- In 2004/5 in **French** language I managed the turn round of a Belgian engineering company of 110 people

Although machine tool engineering is a very high level mechanical and electronic engineering profession my responsibilities as managing director were more commercial than 'hands on' technical.

- developing the marketing strategy, preparing material and films to aid my hands on selling efforts.
- I have had the major negotiating and selling responsibility in every company I worked in.
- Our machine tools have unit sales values between £300,000 and £1.5m
- My largest 'personal' single order value was £9m for 10 machines – it could have been £87m but for the government/DTI nonsense thirty years ago
- communicating and motivating has been strong all my life whether with older or younger people, customers or my own staff. **The same in sport from mini rugby to 'Golden Oldies'.**

**In addition to strong French I can communicate quite well in German and Italian and have very basic Czech and Spanish.** I have successfully encouraged people to lose inhibitions and learn a language

My life has been early mornings, long days, extensive overseas travel, negotiating contracts with some of the worlds best known engineering companies making aero engines, missiles, tanks, power generation turbines, railway equipment, oil and gas equipment, mining, steel. Sport has engaged me at very high level – playing, training and coaching

I have arrived at 80 years old still working full time, competing at golf with guys 20 – 40 years younger.

**I would like to help others have a similar energy and alert mind, feeling ready to take on any task.**

#### **MY SPORTS LIFE – summary**

My own most important sport was **rugby. England U19**, First class club rugby at Blackheath and London Scottish when they were in top 10 in England. I played for many invitation teams. Later I **coached Blackheath** and was Director of Rugby when the game went professional. Aged 50 I played my last game - for Golden Oldies against Former Springboks in South Africa. Other sports – **Tennis, Athletics, Sunday soccer.**

I was in 1974 one of the first coaches to introduce youngsters to mini rugby

In my forties I raced **Jaguars** and **Porsches** with satisfying success.

Three years ago I decided to play **golf** regularly and have just beaten 80 for the first time.

**Rugby** – as well as the major shoulder injury that changed the course of my life **rugby has hammered my body** All 5 lumbar vertebrae fractured, broken leg, dislocated

ankle/foot, dislocated shoulder (the other one) broken collar bone, broken jaw, broken nose (at least 10 times). Dislocating and breaking all my fingers and both thumbs has probably been the most painful to live with

I have a fight every day to prevent arthritis stopping me from enjoying life, continuing in business that has involved a lot of travel and being competitive with younger guys in my current sport – golf.

I have a very simple exercise focus that fights the wear and tear all over my body. **I work on building muscle strength around all my joints and keeping them as flexible as possible - simple**

I played top level rugby but missed out on full international opportunity. Ill timed injuries did not help that ambition. However, I enjoyed playing with and playing against most of the great rugby names from my era. I have some great programs and press reports – brings the memories flooding back

My biggest love was Sevens rugby and I had a lot of success but my greatest memories were at the end of my career when we went to the wonderful Amsterdam Sevens tournament that was sponsored by Heineken. I took three teams at three levels and we enjoyed great success competing in 6 finals, winning two

**MY SPORTS WERE – Athletics, Tennis, Motor racing, Rugby netball, Skiing and now Golf**

**MY BUSINESS LIFE – most of this can be seen in photos, films and powerpoint presentations in the history section of the VTT-WB web site <https://www.vtt-wb.com/>**

- summary
- 1961 – 76. non stop success, from very little to the best in Britain
- 1976 – 1992. The ‘millionaire’ years – even greater success – just one political interruption
- 1992 - 1993. **Destruction.** My company and my industry destroyed by government ineptitude and ministerial lies
- 1993 – 2000. My machine tool obsession is to revive a UK machine tool industry. **The first fightback**
- 2000 – 2002. Headhunted to reorganise a 2000 people company in Czech Republic
- 2003 – 2008. **The second fightback**
- 2004. Part of the second fightback – managing the turn round of a 110 people loss making company in Belgium
- 2008 – 2010. **The third fightback**
- 2010 - 2011. Give up the fight – set up my gym and become the oldest Fitness Professional student. Machine tool concentration now on service and upgrading
- 2016. New hope. A contract with the premier aero engine builder starts **the fourth fightback**
- 2016 – 2021. Huge progress in my ambitions for the UK machine tool industry, then disappointment
- 2022. One ‘kick in the teeth’ too many. **The fight is over.** Our business will continue but the ambition for the revival of the UK machine tool industry is over. **Was it worth the fight?**

As time permits I will be adding photo folders to the Age-Fit web site – great for my memories and mental stimulation, but may also encourage others to keep using those memories