

BBC RADIO 2

NIGHT TIME PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Sunday 21st June 2009

When I was a wee boy I was a Thunderbirds fan.

Now I'm all grown up and I'm still a Thunderbirds fan.

I remember sitting on the floor in front of the black and white TV, pushing one of the three magical buttons and waiting to hear those immortal words 'Thunderbirds Are Go!'

There was nothing more exciting than the swimming pool opening up, the palm trees folding back and Thunderbird 3 blasting off from Tracy Island. I wanted to be on the team of International Rescue, saving the world in half an hour every week. I wanted to be Scott Tracy, except not plastic with strings holding me up.

But there was one character in Thunderbirds I did not want to be but I fear I may have become. It's Lady Penelope's haggard looking chauffeur, Parker or 'Pah-Kah', as she called him. His function was to drive Lady Penelope wherever she needed to go.

As a father of teenage girls I fear I have become a hapless chauffeur. I am Parker.

When I arrive at the prearranged pick up points I notice other dads waiting around checking their chirping mobiles. We're all around the same age and when we stand together we look vaguely like one of those ageing rock bands that have been touring non-stop for decades. As we queue up in our taxis I assume they too have just received a text from their Lady Penelopes saying:
'RU Here Yet - Question Mark – XOX - Smiley Face'

Of course, I'm not complaining. I would do anything for my kids. Anything to make them safe and happy and the best they can be. That's what being a father is all about.

Every year On Father's Day I miss my father but I have good childhood memories of being carried on his shoulders, being protected from the bogie man and having my kite rescued from up a tree, and without the assistance of Thunderbird 2.

I remember his strong arms around me, comforting me, when I was devastated after losing my Thunderbird 4 down the plughole in the bath.

There are very few things as important to me as being a father.

So I am looking forward today to getting a card and maybe a cool gadget or perhaps a CD of apparently laughable old-fashioned dad songs.

So I will gladly be Parker to my Lady Penelopes for as long as they need me.

Because being a father.

That's what I call – 'FAB'.