

The hymn

Morning has broken

seemed particularly apt,

given Ted's love of gardening

and vegetable growing

and the wildlife that his pretty garden attracted.

Blackbirds and other birds too indeed spoke to Ted,

grateful for his tender care and cherishing.

But the tune to

Morning has broken,

championed by Cat Stevens,

is in waltz-time.

312, 312, 312...

And this too seems particularly apt for Ted,

and invites us to see his 83 year long life as a waltz.

I see a waltz as a progression,

it gets you from A to B,

but by a meandering route rather than the shortest route.

Themes are repeated,

you go forwards and backwards,

new areas are explored:

people are drawn into your life's dance

Ted's waltz began on a farm in southern Poland.

Poland: the birthplace of Chopin, champion of the waltz.

So a good place for Ted's waltz to start.

Ted,

or Tedeiussz (Ted-ay-oosh)

to give him his proper name

was one of five children,

with Siaskia and Ginva his two sisters

and Frank and Cheslaw his two brothers.

After school Ted worked on the family farm  
until his life's waltz took him into dangerous waters.

At the age of 15 he joined the Polish Army  
to defend his country, threatened by Hitler's Germany.

Look at the Year 10 lads at Ryedale  
and think that Ted was only their age  
when he became a soldier  
and faced the full terror of Nazi aggression.

Any army marches on its stomach  
and it was during that time that Ted  
developed his life's skill as a chef.

Chef, soldier  
and soon prisoner of war,  
captured by the Nazis

and transported deep into Germany  
and imprisoned there for two years.

A time which would clearly be horrific,  
but which he never really spoke about or complained about  
to his family.

Ted's waltz took a turn for the better  
when the American forces breached the prison walls  
and Ted and his Polish comrades  
swam across the Rhine to freedom.

For two whole days,  
Ted and his exhausted comrades slept  
before being nursed back to health by the American Forces.  
Ted was quick on the uptake at picking up English  
and was soon placed in charge of his band of Polish brothers  
and was a good go-between.

Given the choice of being placed in Britain or America,  
Ted's waltz took him over the sea to Skye  
where he worked in the forestry business  
both as a chef and forester.

When his work brought him to Helmsley  
he met Annie  
and his life's waltz as husband and father  
truly began.

To start with the couple lived up at Old Ford,  
Annie's parents' farm at East Moors.

When Ted had finished his day job  
he gladly helped out on the farm,  
ever generous with his time and talents.

After the move to Helmsley  
Ted and Annie and the children

would frequently return to Old Ford for picnics,  
Ted painstakingly making the children hats  
with the rushes from the marshy ground,  
one of the particular ways Ted showed his love for his family.

Probably the chief and most distinct way Ted showed his love  
was through the gorgeous food he prepared.

Most of his life's work was as  
chef at the Black Swan,  
his skills were legendary,  
including home made  
garlic sausage  
smoked in his back garden.

Famous folk staying at the  
Black Swan  
raved on about his talent,



including the Polish Prince Radziville,  
who even came to tea at 42 Elmslac,  
in his chauffeur-driven Rolls,  
with all Elmslac Road goggle-eyed.

For 33 years Ted worked evenings and weekends  
and Christmases and Easter,  
nipping home during the afternoon lull  
to cook his family a hot meal:  
good, healthy, tasty meals  
concocted from original ingredients.

Ted was ahead of his time  
in that processed food,  
fish fingers  
tomato ketchup  
were definitely forbidden.

And feeding a family of ten  
meant that you had to work hard  
- it was only after 33 years at the Black Swan  
that Trust House Forte, the new owners,  
gave him his first Christmas off.

Also with a family of ten  
you had to have the skill to make the cheaper cuts  
taste delicious.

Back to the waltz imagery again,  
Canny Ted was able to dance around Ryedale,  
knowing the spots where the best apples were free and available,  
the best eggs.

There was the discipline of dance-time to his life,  
there had to be, juggling work and family.  
Meals would be served on time,

woe-betide anyone who wasn't ready.

As years went on,

Ted's waltz was centred on Helmsley

with few holidays, even day trips:

'What on earth should I want to go to Whitby for?'

Exceptions included

Scarborough –

driven there by 8 am

in time to buy the choicest sea-food for Annie –

and visiting his roots and his family in Poland.

The first trip back there was with Peter in 1963,

not the easiest time to drive

a bull-nosed Morris Oxford

behind the iron curtain.

Then a trip with Mark just the year before he died in 1976.

They took the family things

that were impossible to obtain in Poland,

like tin openers and Rick Wakeman LPs,

and returned with glassware and goose feathers

to make proper eiderdowns.

As well as bullet holes in the car door,

where they had been shot at at a checkpoint:

if Ted knew where his life's waltz was going,

then nothing and no one would stop him.

Latterly his life's waltz took him

through Warrick Place,

down Black Swan lane

into the market place and Castlegate.

It was a slow waltz,

with much talking and stopping along the way,

mostly danced along the middle of the road,

oblivious to traffic,  
with occasional stick-waving to warn off any motorists  
who were surprised by this octogenarian chef from Poland  
waltzing across their path!

As I said at the start,  
a waltz done well draws other people into the dance,  
and there are so many folk  
who owe their life's dance to Ted.

Annie, his beloved wife.  
Eight children,  
Sandra, Peter, Andrew, Eileen,  
Jeremy, Joanna, Mauritia and Mark.  
14 grandchildren,  
Rachel and Beverley,  
Ben, Luke and Ryan,

Jane and Iraena,  
Francesca and Edward,  
Matthew and Amy,  
Adam and Stacey and Sarah.  
Two great grandchildren: Millie and Barney.  
25 people who only existed on life's dance floor  
because of Ted.  
Ted adored his grandchildren and greatgrandchildren,  
as well as Toby and Benjamin,  
his honorary greatgrandchildren next door  
for whom he frequently bought chocolate.  
David and Helen, the boys' parents,  
proved marvellous neighbours,  
who kept an eye on Ted in his latter years,  
popping in to check up on him,  
driving him into Helmsley

when the weather was too bad  
for his Black-Swan-Lane-Waltz.

Today we mark the end of Ted's waltz on earth,  
an absolutely marvellous waltz  
which has taken him so far,  
all the way from Poland to little Helmsley,  
through so much danger,  
through so many achievements.

His waltz on earth may have ended,  
but his waltz in heaven begins,  
reunited in the arms of Annie and Mark,  
with Christ,  
with outstretched arms,  
welcoming him into an eternity  
where no food will ever be processed

and all celestial banquets will be on time.

We pray that that same Christ may wrap his arms of love  
around us  
and comfort us as we grieve for Ted  
and enable us  
to make our life's waltz  
as rich and marvellous  
as Tedeiussz (Tedayoosh) Dzierzek's.