

DAVID'S SECRET FEAR

You only have to chat with Evelyn Ward for a while, or with one of David's old school pals, to realise that it's nothing new . . .

I'm talking about the hint of the dare-devil in David. Although, on the surface, you could take him for a quiet, unassuming guy, he doesn't like to be beaten by anything.

Like most boys, he could always be driven to do something by the challenge: "I dare you to!" But, with him, it was never simply a question of the fear of losing ace . . . He positively enjoyed the spice of danger.

THRILL

He remembers the thrill of surfing by night:

"I knew it was crazy and that, if I came up against a rock in the dark, I could well lose my life. But it was the danger that drew me to it with a special magnetism."

"Weren't you ever afraid?" I asked incredulously.

"Sure . . . I was scared silly," he smiled. "It was that shiver of fear down my spine that I went for! I've always loved the excitement of brushing with danger."

I couldn't help wondering whether that was why David always threw himself into new sports right at the deep end . . . I had already heard that he had zoomed through the early stages of skiing and gone straight for the big

slopes, as if the first steps were a bit too tame for him.

"I guess that could have something to do with it," he grinned when I asked him about that, "but I think I ought to add that I did seem to take to skiing pretty easily. So I guess I wasn't taking the big risks that a lot of folks seemed to imagine!"

DANGER

Of course, I realise that everyone's life has some element of danger . . . How often are we told that you take a risk even crossing over the road these days?

But, without any degree of exaggeration, I think it's safe to say that David has had more than his fair share of danger! He has been within an inch of death several times during his twenty-three years . . .

There was that terrible moment when he was scuba diving in Hawaii and he ran out of oxygen. He was weighted down by the heavy equipment and gasping for breath — unable even to make for the surface until someone could unharness him . . .

There was the night when he lost his path on the precipitous cliffs above the Pacific Ocean at Point Dume. Hundreds of feet below, he could hear the water crashing against jagged rocks, and he knew that one false step would send him crashing

down to join them . . .

And then there was that night at the Doelenhall in Rotterdam when his microphone could have brought death to David. By some miraculous fluke, one of the musicians in his back-up group double-checked the equipment. He found that the mike which David would have grasped only seconds later had a voltage high enough to kill him instantly.

But David still goes scuba-diving whenever he gets the chance. He still enjoys late-night rambles over dangerous cliff-tops where he can hear the pounding ocean beneath him. And he picks up the microphone lovingly without a hint of fear that it might ever happen again.

NOT SCARED

I asked him if he ever thought about the dangers that could be involved:

He laughed. "If I worried about the possible dangers all the time, I'd have been in the nut-house or dead long ago!" he told me. "It's kinda like asking an air-line pilot if he's scared of heights . . . you know?"

I laughed too, and it eased the tension.

I had a question which I wanted to ask David, but I wasn't quite sure how he would react, and I didn't want to spoil the nice atmosphere and the pleasure of rapping with him like this.

