

30 years since the Calgary Winter Olympics: Eddie the Eagle celebrates campervans, motorhomes and his favourite ski destinations for sloping off this winter

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Nearly 30 years since he ski-jumped in Calgary representing Britain at the 1988 Winter Olympics, 'Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards heads to the Motorhome and Caravan Show 2017 to reminisce with live audiences on his Olympic career, the joys of travelling around Europe in his own campervan, and recommends where he would ski this winter.

"I can't believe Calgary was 30 years ago," says Eddie. "Time flies! But it's been an incredible three decades and I've travelled to so many places." An accomplished downhill skier even before taking up ski jumping, Eddie acquired his own VW campervan when he was 19, in which he drove thousands of miles around Europe to train and compete.

"It wasn't like the campervans and motorhomes of today. It had no heating, but it had a kettle and a cooker and it was my little hotel: I loved it. I would generally park at the bottom of a valley where it was warmer and drive up each day to find work shovelling snow or working in a hotel kitchen, and to train for skiing. At minus 20 degrees the old campervan would freeze overnight both inside as well as out, but boiling the kettle would soon thaw us both out. I remember a stone smashing the windscreen over a bank holiday weekend in Europe so no garages were open, and I had to drive 300 miles with no windscreen. I loved it, but eventually I sold it to raise money to go to America.

"I love the idea of going off skiing in today's modern campervans and motorhomes. The luxury is unbelievable: incredibly insulated and heated, comfortable beds and every mod con, even satellite TV! It's easy to park up in 'aires' in France and many other countries. For me skiing is recreational now, and it can be expensive, so I might head to Bulgaria, Romania or the Czech Republic. I loved Courchevel 1850 in France: I jumped there training for the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympics, but it's very sophisticated nowadays. Chamonix, Les Arcs and Les Deux Alpes are great too. Probably my favourite ski place is Kicking Horse in British Columbia. It's a tiny resort with about 70 black runs and phenomenal snow. One location I try to go back to every year is Mayrhofen in Austria. It's beautiful, there's excellent links to smaller resorts on the same lift pass, and it's as good for beginners as it is for expert skiers. The idea of parking up in a motorhome, skiing, and then maybe moving on the next day to find the best snow really appeals.

"I'm still just as excited to put on a pair of skis now as I was when I was training to jump, although since Calgary it's as often at a UK dry slope as it is on snow: places such as Gosling Sports Park in Hertfordshire, Swadlincote in Derbyshire and my home slope in Gloucester. I learned to ski and did much of my early training on a dry slope. Snow is great, but if you can't afford a ski holiday, it's a great alternative."

Eddie opens the Motorhome and Caravan Show on 17 October, which runs until 22 October at Birmingham's NEC with over 700 leisure vehicles on display; all the new-for-2018 models; and new product debuts daily including Airstream's relaunch into the UK. Although there's no skiing, a classic VW campervan display featuring some of the best examples of iconic 'split screens' and 'bays' from the sixties

and seventies, should take Eddie back to his ski-jumping days.

Tickets are on sale now for the Motorhome and Caravan Show 2017, and start from as little as £8.50*. Children 15 and under enter free. Visit www.mcshow.co.uk or call 0844 873 7333.

Notes to editor:

*£8.50 Senior (over 60s), £9.50 Adult when booking before 23:59hrs 16/10/17 after which time prices revert to the on-the-door price of £12.00 Senior and £13.00 Adult. A £1.25 transaction fee applies. Calls cost 7p per minute plus your 'phone company's access charge. Car parking is included in the ticket price. No dogs (except assistance dogs). Children 15 years and under go free when accompanied by a paying Adult/Senior. Tickets are non-refundable.