

TELLY LEGEND LOVES CELEB CHATTER

Anyone ask me to stop name-dropping? Yes.. David Beckham does!

THE MIKE WARD INTERVIEW



GEOFF SHREEVES Sky Sports Ace

A VITAL GOAL:
Geoff helps to
raises funds for
music therapy work

WOW, Geoff Shreeves certainly enjoys his celebrity anecdotes. Out they're pouring, one after another.

"I remember taking Mick Jagger to the England-Argentina game at the 1998 World Cup," he's telling me, matter-of-factly.

"When England went down to 10 men, Mick turned to me and went: 'Well, he'll just leave Shearer up top and put Merson out wide right, won't he?' Mick knows his stuff."

Oh, yes, it's not just the obvious football folk who fill the pages of Geoff's brick-thick contact book. Not just players and managers he's mingled with during 20 years reporting from the frontline for Sky Sports.

No, it's also celebs from totally different worlds, whose love for the game has enabled Geoff to enter their orbit. Football, it seems, has opened all kinds of doors for him.

He says: "With many of the interviews I've tried to get with people I don't know, Kevin Costner or Michael Caine, I've gone through their PR saying I want to do a piece, and it's been: 'Oh, what's it about? Which film? What will the questions be?'"

"And yet as soon as I've said it's about football, it's been: 'Yes, no problem, I've just spoken to him, you can go round his house, here's his home number...'"

Famous

Kevin Costner, eh? "Yes, that was out in America. Kevin even invited me on to the film set. 'Do you know Paul?' he asked me. I said: 'Paul who?' He said: 'Paul Newman.'"

"I said: 'Well, I know him, but I don't think he knows me!'"

To be fair, Geoff is well aware how his torrent of celebrity yarns can come across. And he's happy to be teased about it. Do people sometimes ask him to give the name-dropping a rest?

"Yes, David Beckham always says that to me!" he chuckles.

Mind you, who can't really knock it when it's put to as good a use as it is for Nordoff Robbins, the music therapy charity of which Geoff is chairman.

Every year this charity, which uses music to help people deal with a variety of challenges, including autism and dementia,



holds a huge fundraising dinner under the banner of Legends Of Football, where a major figure from the game is duly honoured.

And when you're setting up an event on this scale, having famous people on speed dial doesn't half come in handy.

"The year before last, we were short of an auction prize," Geoff recalls. "So I just rang Jose Mourinho. He's been a recipient before. I said: 'Do us a favour. Can you host four people at Manchester United?'"

"He said: 'No problem at all! That one went for 30 grand.'"

Picking up the honour at this year's do, a fortnight from now -

and signing up to help raise further funds in the months ahead - will be ex-Arsenal boss Arsène Wenger. Geoff is beyond chuffed.

He says: "We've been asking him for nearly 20 years but up till now he's never been able to commit. He's been sort of hermit-like in his devotion to Arsenal."

Being a music-themed charity, Nordoff Robbins always books a top act to perform at the dinner.

Roger Daltrey played last year, when Frank Lampard got the prize. The Lightning Seeds were there for Steven Gerard's inauguration.

And when Ryan Giggs picked up the award, The Stereophonics

popped along to perform. This time it's Rudimental. Which should be great, I suggest, when the time comes for the guests to hit the dancefloor.

I wonder, will Arsène go ruddy mental to Rudimental?

"He told me some time ago that he's a talented dancer," Geoff reveals. "We normally have a few drinks and let our hair down, so let's wait and see..."

● **Legends of Football will honour Arsène Wenger at a star-studded event on Monday October 7 at JW Marriott Grosvenor House London. For details and to book, go to lofootball.co.uk**



CALLING TUNE: Geoff is charity leader

