

Duo's dedication rewarded by royalty

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Two dedicated table tennis volunteers have been honoured with a prestigious Torch Trophy Award, presented by the Duke of Gloucester.

Bev Scott-Johns of New Milton TTC in Dorset and Vernon Hughes from Yatton Keynell in Wiltshire, both attended an awards dinner in London this week.

The Torch Trophy Trust was established in 1962 to support and recognise the outstanding achievements of volunteers in sport.

New Milton club secretary Bev Scott-Johns was nominated by treasurer Malcolm Floyd for his exceptional service to the sport and the local community, including filling almost every position within the club at various times during 30 years of volunteering.

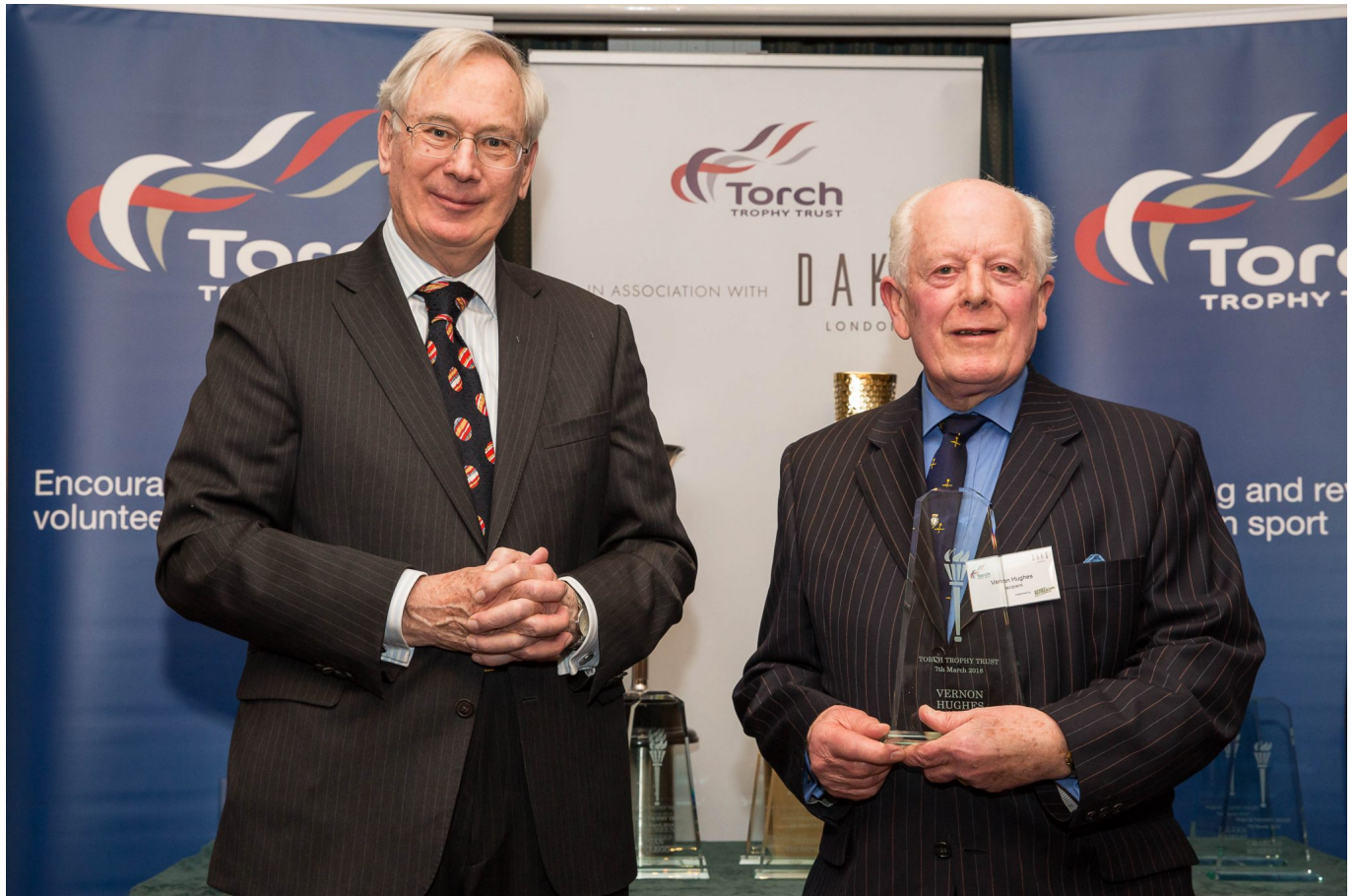
Bev said: "I felt quite honoured and proud and it was a wonderful night which went very well."

Vernon Hughes was put forward by Wilf Adams in recognition of founding the club, raising funds and organising tournaments despite being in his 80s. He has given 15 years of service.

England great Sir Bobby Charlton CBE, President of the Trust, was also on hand at the ceremony at the Army and Navy Club in London and had praise for the prize-winners.

"Without people like Bev and Vernon, sport simply wouldn't exist," he said.

"We're very lucky in this country to have an army of volunteers but these awards are given to only a handful of people each year. They are in recognition of being one of our most devoted sports volunteers, so each of our winners has my personal thanks and my appreciation."



Vernon Hughes with the Duke of Gloucester

The Duke of Gloucester, who presented the awards, said he believed that award-winners were also role models for those around them.

He said: "Volunteering is the lifeblood of the United Kingdom and it's an honour to reward people who give up so much of their time and their energy for others. I hope they act as an inspiration to the people around them."

The Torch Trophy Trust was founded in 1962 by the late Commander Bill Collins RN, then honorary secretary of the Amateur Athletic Association.

It exists to encourage, reward and recognise the UK's three million sports volunteers. The Trust's awards are unique in acknowledging the breadth of the contribution of volunteers in sport, something which has been at the heart of its mission since it was founded 56 years ago. The Trust is supported by Daks of London.

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