



Obituary: Derek Tremayne, former ETТА General Secretary

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The former ETТА General Secretary and Vice-President, Derek Tremayne, passed away on Saturday, September 15, aged 88 years.

Derek was a man of great charm and warmth with a wonderful presence and the consummate professional. He joined the ETТА on 1st December 1966 and spent eight years in his post of General Secretary, with a staff of two, making a great impact during his time in office.

His appointment had to be ratified by National Council which was the procedure at that time and there was a long discussion on Derek's suitability as he did not have table tennis experience. Fortunately for the Association, his position was confirmed and the Association benefitted enormously during his tenure.

As well as his day-to-day duties Derek was a supreme negotiator and negotiated major sponsorship agreements including with Norwich Union Insurance and Coca Cola.

Derek forged strong links with the Sports Council and negotiated television agreements with BBC and ITV from 1966 onwards. On one occasion Derek was contacted on a Monday for a televised match two days later to fill in a blank programme slot – despite the exceedingly short timescale it was arranged.

Organising a major tour of the UK by the Chinese Team in 1972 following a visit to China by England after the World Championships in Japan, 1971, was another of Derek's considerable achievements.

This included the coup of arranging with Hawker Siddeley the provision of an aircraft to bring the Chinese Team from Sweden for a tour and take the players and officials around the country to the various venues in London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Dublin. (Hawker Siddeley were trying to sell Tridents to the Chinese at the time).



Derek Tremayne and members of the Chinese team meet Princess Anne (Picture: Jalmar Photography)

During the tour the Chinese had requested a meeting with the Prime Minister and royalty. Again a successful outcome at No 10 Downing Street, meeting Edward Heath, and meeting HRH Princess Anne.

Derek produced the booklet 'Spotlight on Table Tennis' in 1968 which set out where English Table Tennis was and plans for the future. An interesting read with much relevance today.

On another occasion Derek prepared a report on the World Championships in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, which was used as a blueprint for the very successful World Championships in Birmingham, 1977.

On the playing front Derek was the Organiser for both the English Closed and the English Open for several years and was involved with the European Junior Championships in 1970. Derek was a member, Secretary and Chairman of a plethora of committees, including the World Championships Steering Committee in 1974, all of which benefitted from his wisdom and expertise.

Derek moved on to become the Director of Lilleshall National Sports Centre but still kept in touch with table tennis mainly through his links with the 100 Club. He last attended their dinner in 2015 and also attended the TTE AGM that year.

Doreen Stannard, Honorary Past President of Table Tennis England, said: "Derek opened up a world for table tennis that hadn't been envisaged before. His drive and ability to obtain sponsorship certainly changed English table tennis. He was a loyal friend and his friendship was for life."



Derek with the Chinese women's team (picture: The Times)

Table Tennis England President Jill Parker MBE, said: "It is with great sadness to hear that Derek Tremayne has passed away. He was one of the great ambassadors of English table tennis and the first full time General Secretary of the ETTA from 1966-1974.

"Following the historic 'Ping Pong Diplomacy' trip to China in 1971, Derek Tremayne was given the responsibility of organising the return trip to England for the Chinese team in 1972. This visit by the Chinese team was one of the highlights of my career.

As well as pulling the whole tour together, Derek arranged for both teams to meet Princess Anne and the then Prime Minister, Edward Heath at 10 Downing Street. He worked prolifically on the marketing front obtaining sponsorship from Norwich Union Insurance, Coca Cola and Mothercare to name but a few.

"After leaving the ETTA I was delighted to come across Derek in his capacity as Director of the National Sports Centre at Lilleshall. The England team trained at this centre for up to a 100 days per year throughout the 70s and 80s. Needless to say Derek always kept a watchful eye on the progress of table tennis and to have such a friendly, enthusiastic and welcoming person at Lilleshall, always made our time more enjoyable.

"Table tennis was very fortunate to have Derek's support over such a long period when great success was enjoyed by the England team. A true gentleman, who will be sorely missed."

Our thoughts and condolences go to Maureen and all Derek's family. A service to celebrate Derek's life takes place on Friday October 5 at 2pm at St Nicholas Church, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7AY and afterwards at Newport Rugby Club, TF10 8BU.

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