



Obituary: Fred Groom, 'legend of umpiring'

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Fred Groom, the only surviving member of the first English umpiring team invited to officiate at an international tournament, has died at the age of 89.

Croydon-born Fred qualified as a County Umpire in 1955, a National Umpire four years later and became an International Umpire at the first IU exam in 1973.

Before that, at the 1969 World Championships in Munich, he was part of that first team of English umpires invited to officiate at a foreign tournament.

Numerous other international trips followed over the next 20 years as he umpired in Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Isle of Man, Switzerland and Wales.

At the World Championships in Birmingham in 1977, Fred was one of three Umpires Managers, alongside Doreen Stannard and Harvey Webb, in charge of an umpiring team of 134.

Doreen, now Honorary Past President of Table Tennis England, said: "After meeting Fred in the 1960s we were lifelong friends, he was a legend in the umpiring world."

Fred was also very active at domestic competitions as well as a regular member of the team of officials at the English Open.

Colin Clemett, former longstanding Secretary of the Technical Officials Committee (TOC) and the architect of the IU qualification, said: "Fred was a modest man who always under-rated his own ability and never really understood why others rightly regarded him as one of our best umpires."

A funeral service will be held at Shepton Mallet Crematorium on Thursday August 29 at 12.30pm.



The match officials at the 1977 World Championships parade in, led by Doreen Stannard ahead of Harvey Webb and Fred Groom

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