



Obituary: International umpire Heather Masters

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Top-class international umpire, Heather Masters, has passed away aged 90. A prominent umpire in the 1970s and 1980s, Heather became a County Umpire in 1973, National Umpire in 1978 and gained her international qualification two years later in 1980.

Heather was an umpire at the World Championships in Birmingham in 1977 and the 11-day tournament meant very long hours for the officials in the playing hall. The umpires returned to their accommodation at Birmingham University campus rather weary after long days compounded by a half-hour coach journey to reach their sleeping quarters.

However, Heather, along with Doreen Stannard and Joyce Love, every evening organised the umpires lounge' at the halls of residence and despite tiredness the occasions became a delight of camaraderie fuelled by a never ending supply of tea, coffee, biscuits and even cake which helped keep up the spirits of the 134 umpires.

Heather was married to John Masters who was also a top international umpire who umpired the Men's Singles at the 1977 Worlds – a sign of his calibre.

A tribute to Heather's abilities came when she became the first female umpire to be given the honour of umpiring the Men's Singles final at an English Open, a position which had always been the preserve of male umpires.

As well as the World Championships in Birmingham, Heather was selected to umpire at several other international events which included two Commonwealth Championships, Edinburgh in 1979 and the Isle of Man in 1985. She also officiated at the Scottish Open in 1980, the Belgian Open in 1981 and the Welsh Open in 1981 and 1983 as well as numerous prestigious tournaments in England.

Heather wasn't only an excellent umpire; she was also a player of some note playing for over 40 seasons. She was a defensive player who became county champion of Berkshire and Oxfordshire as well as winning several trophies in the Newbury League.

Doreen Stannard, TTE Honorary Life Member and Past President remembers Heather: "I became friends with Heather when she joined husband, John, as an umpire, she had a great sense of humour. We shared many memories of our tournament days and often during phone calls we reminisced of past occasions. I last spoke with Heather on May 8th, her 90th birthday; she was in good spirits enjoying her day."

Our condolences to Heather's son Peter, daughter Susan and all family.

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