

ETTA President at Queen's Jubilee

Author: Russell Moore

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For only the second time in English history we were able to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of a monarch and, it goes without saying, table tennis was represented at this prestigious event.

Keith Ponting, the President of the English Table Tennis Association was present at St. Paul's Cathedral in the heart of London to join in with the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation.

The only previous occasion a Diamond Jubilee was celebrated was back in 1897 when Queen Victoria marked the milestone in her reign but it's doubtful many people will remember that!

Mr Ponting was understandably very humble about his appearance at the cathedral and subsequent reception at the guildhall.

He said: "The service and reception were truly unforgettable.

I have never attended anything like that in my life before. It was very clear that everyone there felt it was a great honour and a humbling experience.

My overall perception was 'what is an ordinary bloke like me doing here!'"

Numerous honoured guests were in attendance including the current Prime Minister, Conservative leader David Cameron, who spoke with the ETTA President – revealing his love for table tennis in the process.



ETTA President Keith Ponting talks to PM David Cameron

Mr Ponting said: "At the reception we were introduced to the Prime Minister David Cameron who told us that he enjoyed playing table tennis and has a table at No. 10.

His children are very keen and he plays with them. He said that he had improved since he played against the American President, Barack Obama."

He added: "As President of the ETTA it was a great honour and privilege to represent the ETTA and the sport of table tennis on such an historic occasion."

Unfortunately, the celebrations were slightly overshadowed by the absence of Prince Philip, who fell ill prior to his 91st birthday and was unable to attend, which Mr Ponting acknowledged was a detriment to the overall proceedings.

"My lasting impression was of the sadness felt by the congregation that our dearly beloved Queen walked down the aisle of St, Paul's on her own without her sick husband who has always been by her side throughout her reign."

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