

Keith Ponting obituary and funeral arrangements

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Rosemary and Keith Ponting at the Queen's Jubilee earlier this month

It is with the deepest sadness that we inform you of the passing of the English Table Tennis Association's President Keith Ponting who died on Wednesday 20th June 2012.

Keith had worked as a volunteer in table tennis for over 60 years and his constant presence at English table tennis events will be sorely missed.

[Funeral Arrangements can be found here](#)

He began his career in the sport as the Press Secretary for the West Wiltshire Table Tennis League in 1949. He remained involved in the sport wherever his job in the printing industry took him, including Frome, Harpenden and Beccles until he finally settled in Exeter in 1967 where he was League Secretary until 1989.

Keith was also secretary of the Devon County Table Tennis Association since 1972 and he also held the role there as President.

His volunteer work didn't only include sporting endeavours but also encompassed charity work including being counsellor for the Exeter branch of the Samaritans.

Nationally Keith gained recognition and was part of a number of key English committees. He served on the National Council since 1969 including roles as a member of the Tournaments Committee before becoming organiser of the National Team competitions where he still worked with the Senior British League this season.

He was also involved with setting up the Calendar Working Party in the 1970s before he joined the Management Committee in 1997 as the Vice-Chairman for Competitions.

His experience across the sport eventually led to his succession of former World Champion Johnny Leach MBE as the President of the ETTA on Saturday 9th July 2011. It was a role that Leach had held for 24 years.

Having also worked as a volunteer during the 1977 and 1997 World Championships, 1994 European Championships and 1998 World Veterans' Championships as well as an Olympic Qualifying event he had truly experienced all the aspects of the sport that table tennis has to offer.

Keith's work has been recognised many times by his peers who made him a Honorary Life Member of the ETTA in 1983, awarded him as the first winner of the Ivor Montagu Award in 1972 and also the Leslie Forrest Award in 1982 and the Malcolm Scott Award in 2002.

Recently Keith attended the Queen's Jubilee at St. Paul's Cathedral with his wife Rosemary where they met Prime Minister David Cameron.

His closest friends and acquaintances left their memories to commemorate a wonderful life:

It is over 50 years ago that I met Keith when he was the organiser of the County Championship competition, one of the most important competitions in the ETTA calendar. Keith was an excellent organiser, a stickler for detail and for the welfare of players and officials.

Keith was a friend and colleague whose company I valued. We served on Management together and when there was a change of Management his expertise was rightly recognised and his service to the Association continued.

The ultimate honour was his award of the office of President at the 2011 AGM tragically cut short by his untimely death. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word, a family man who will be missed by all who knew him. Our thoughts and prayers are with Rosemary and family at this sad time.

Tony and Pat Chatwin, Honorary Life Member of the ETTA

I first met with Keith in the early 70s, when I joined National Council in 1978. The late Arthur Upton and Keith became my mentors, always willing to give advice, provide help and make the fairest decision to any problems.

Both to me were great characters. The Association has lost a lovely man and I have lost a very good friend - gone but never to be forgotten.

Doreen Stannard, Honorary Life Member of the ETTA

Keith has worked on behalf of the ETTA nationally since the late 60's and his contribution to our sport has been recognised on a number of occasions not least when he was elected last year as our President.

He took on this role in his stride and has represented the ETTA at many functions and events.

Val and I will miss his company, friendship and support, one of the last communications from him was whilst we were away on holiday with pictures of him and Rosemary at the Queens Celebrations at St Paul's Cathedral.

It is a very sad time for our great sport but Keith will be remembered by us all.

Alex Murdoch, ETTA Chairman.

I first met Keith Ponting in the late seventies and quickly realised how dedicated he was to table tennis and to the ETTA.

Keith and I worked together behind the scenes at numerous English Championships and also at the Europeans in Birmingham, the Olympic Qualifying Event and the World Championships in Manchester.

He always had an eye for detail and put in a tremendous amount of effort to ensure that things ran as smoothly as possible.

His main love within the sport was probably the Senior British League, a competition with which he was involved from its inception. I have had the pleasure of working closely with him in the running of the League for the past twenty years and know how dedicated he was to making it successful. He put in hours of work as Chairman and Secretary and always did his utmost to manage the affairs of the League as professionally and fairly as possible.

Over the years we became good friends and also enjoyed the social side of things. Only two days before his death he sent me a message saying he was looking forward to having a drink with me at the 100 Club dinner.

Keith's passing will be a great loss to English table tennis and he will be sorely missed.

Aubrey Drapkin, ETTA Vice-President

On behalf of all the professional staff, both past and present, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to Rosemary and the family. Keith was admired, respected and loved by us all for his unfailing dedication to the sport and for his constant support for members of staff.

I first came to know Keith in 1979 during the first season of the English National League, a competition we now know as the Senior British League and which under Keith's stewardship has become one of the ETTA's most successful and popular competitions. Keith was a lovely man and I will remember him with great affection.

He will surely take his place in the pantheon of truly great ETTA administrators and how fitting it was that he should finish his table tennis career as our President.

Richard Yule, ETTA Chief Executive

Keith Ponting has been one of the ETTA's leading and most outstanding officials and for the last 45 years. Keith was the Secretary of the National Team Competitions Committee which was chaired by the former ETTA President, Maurice Goldstein O.B.E. in the 1960's. At that time the National Team Competitions, including the Willmott Cup for men and the J.M.Rose Bowl for women and the National team competitions, were massive events. These were the first national competitions that the Ormesby Club entered and it is in this respect that we had a great deal of contact with Keith over the years.

In 1978/9 Keith was part of the three man steering committee, together with Colin Clemett and myself that formed the ETTA National League, which later became the British League. Keith was appointed as its first organizer, a role which he had fulfilled with great credit until his untimely passing last week.

Throughout the whole of that 45 year period, Keith set standards of organization and administration at an exceptionally high level. These were very big, time consuming roles. They were carried out with the utmost efficiency, competence and fairness. All of the documentation and entry forms right through to the notices for the conferences were produced on time and with complete accuracy. Everyone had 100% confidence in Keith throughout the whole period. Keith's attitude was always to help teams and clubs, whilst at the same time following the rules and being fair to all concerned. I know that all of the British League clubs really appreciated Keith's contribution.

Keith was a member of the Management Committee in the period when I was Chairman where he did more than just work hard for the Committee. He also gave me his full support and loyalty which could always be relied upon.

Keith took all his positions within the ETTA seriously and did his very best for the sport. Just two weeks ago he was present in his capacity as President making the presentations at the National Under 14, 13, 12, 11 Championships and last weekend he was acting in the same capacity at the National Team Competitions finals in Wellingborough. Nothing was too much trouble.

Keith was often accompanied by his wife, Rosemary, who always gave him the support he needed in order to help table tennis. Keith will be sadly missed by all who knew him and will be impossible to replace. Our thoughts are with Rosemary and his family at this sad time.

Alan Ransome OBE, Honorary Life Member of the ETTA

[More tributes to Keith Ponting can be found here.](#)

If you would like to send your memories/condolences to honour Keith then e-mail in to rmoore@etta.co.uk

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