

Obituary: John Hardcastle

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John Hardcastle at the WBL (Photo courtesy of John Upham)

The English Table Tennis Association are sad to hear of the passing of regular and favourite umpire John Hardcastle.

John, born on April 24th 1938, umpired mainly in England but also officiated in the Isle of Man, Wales and the Czech Republic. John also spent a long time as the County Umpires Secretary for Yorkshire since 2001.

He achieved his County Umpires qualification on the 18th November 1980 and his National Umpires qualification on the 8th March 2009.

His funeral is to be held on the 27th December at 13:00 from his home, 13:15 for the funeral at St Mary's Church and 14:30 at Ardsey Crematorium where he will be dressed in his Olympics uniform trainers, blazer and hat. A wake venue has yet to be decided although there is a Facebook page set up in his honour where details may be updated.

Below is a message and poem written by his nephew Ben Rigby.

Thanks to everyone for their kind words. I am his nephew and cared for him in what was unknown to be his final months and he stayed jolly and true to the end a little tired but never changing a great caring man, here is my ode to and memories of our last weeks.

My last days with my best friend.

*Thanks for helping me Ar Ben
He'd tell me from his chair
As we squeezed his feet into his slippers
N then I'd trim his hair*

*What ya want for tea mister
I'd ask him from my seat
"what ya reckon I shud av Ar Ben"
Well what ya fancy ta eat ☒*

*"A couple o bacon sarnies I think" he'd say
Do ya think that'd be ok
Course it will you sit tight it'll soon be on its way*

*N here's ya tablets for tonight
And ya others for int morning
As we finished watching our daily pointless
I'd catch the old lad yawning*

*Come on mister time for bed
N I'd took him nice n tight
Then tell him who my best mate was
And kiss that man goodnight*

*Not knowing that'd be our final days
I now treasure that memory dear
It seems hard to take and comprehend
The thought that your not here*

*I wished to make you look smarter
Wish a shave and fresh cut hair
While you slept tight Sat on your floor
You looked so peaceful there*

*So some last goodnights to my hero
I'll miss you all the years through
N when am next at cup final
I'll save a seat for you X*

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