

Tribute to Mike Lewis

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Michael William Joseph Lewis – a distinguished name for a distinguished man, but known to many as Mike – he was truly a man amongst men!

Hard working, enthusiastic, selfless, loyal, modest, determined, committed and genuine – and that was just in his spare time as a volunteer. A man who spanned generations, belied his critics and served the sport of table tennis with great distinction.

Mike had a love of table tennis and was devoted to voluntary work at local, county, regional and national levels. Devotion is a strong word and Mike achieved what he did with his wife Christine in the background working away, supporting, typing, taking calls and alongside him at events organising and trying in vein to slow him down!

A wonderful ambassador for the Bristol Table Tennis league – instrumental in league development and coaching, he worked tirelessly in the background for over 50 years, organising, encouraging and cajoling. In addition Mike served the county of Avon and the south west region.

Mike was a great talker but he was even better at getting things done. When all around him said it couldn't be done, Mike just got on in his humble and determined way and usually did it.

Without the major input from Mike, things would just not have happened.

At a national level Mike made his biggest contribution during 1991 – 2003 on the ETTA management committee as vice chairman of development. This was a period when the development of table tennis in England really made a massive difference to the state of the sport as it was then. Mike's main contribution was in the field of facilities where, with significant help from the ETTA, fifty multi-table table tennis centres located throughout the country were opened and the large majority of these are being run by clubs that are still operational today.

Mike drove countless miles attending meetings in pursuit of partnerships by either brokering deals or supporting others; he was truly a team player in fact he was the captain of a large team.

As a volunteer, Mike Lewis spent somewhere in the region of 40/50 hours per week, every week, working for the ETTA providing leadership to the Head Office staff in Hastings and the Development

Officers located throughout the country.

And this was in between his devotion to his job at Bristol zoo, and his devotion to his beloved Christine and their family.

In addition, many local clubs were helped and encouraged to obtain grants through the Sport England Awards for All programme which assisted hundreds of local organisations to the tune of in excess of £2m.

Another important part of Mike's legacy was the establishment of the British Leagues for Women, Juniors and Veterans – these competitions continue today and are as strong as ever – a testament to his vision and a legacy of his hard work – this legacy continues for the benefit of thousands of table tennis players throughout the country.

In recognition of these great achievements and monumental efforts Mike was elected a Vice-President in June 1993 and an Honorary Life Member in June 1997 by the English Table Tennis Association.

Readers will understand this is and was a colossal contribution to English Table Tennis – Mike did it all with Christine at his side and with a little help from his friends.

I have had the privilege of knowing Mike for more than 25 years, working very closely with him for 10 of those years. I am well placed to tell you what many of you (who knew him) probably already know, that above all else, Mike was a warm and engaging man, he knew his limits but he was able to trust and to delegate, but in the hard work department he had no equals! Mike had time for everyone and from his integrity and warmth came respect in bundles.

Thank you to former ETTA Chairman Alan Ransome, O.B.E. Terry Toghill Bristol League chairman and Robert Sinclair (ETTA General secretary) for their contributions to this tribute.

Mike Lewis – a GENTLEMAN amongst men; rest in peace.

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Mike Lewis was Vice Chairman of Development during my Chairmanship between 1991-2003 and this was a period when the development of table tennis in England really made a massive difference to the state of the sport as it was then. Mike's main contribution was in the field of facilities where, with significant help from the ETTA, fifty multi-table table tennis centres located throughout the country were opened and the large majority of these are being run by clubs that are still operational today.

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Another important part of Mike's legacy was the establishment of the British League for Women, Juniors and Veterans as part of the Development Department. Mike and his wife, Christine, were the organisers of the first of these competitions, the Women's British

League, which is celebrating its 25th year at the next event in Doncaster in February. Following the success of the Women's weekend competition, the Junior British League was established, followed by the Veterans British League. At that time the Senior British League was organised on a home and away basis. The amount of time and effort that was required to create and organise all of the above was enormous and this legacy continues for the benefit of thousands of table tennis players throughout the country.

There was more than this in the Development Department at the time, but the above simply highlights the most important points. Mike's work for the ETTA Development Department was, of course, in addition to his long contribution to table tennis in the Avon and Bristol area.

Mike will be sadly missed.

Alan Ransome, O.B.E.

ETTA: Mike was elected as Vice-President on 26th June 1993 and as Honorary Life Member on 28th June 1997. Vice-Chairman (Development) from 1991/2 to 2002/3. National Development Committee Chairman 1991-2002/3, National Councillor 1979 to 1991 and 2004 to 2013, National Coaching Scheme-Region 1 Secretary 1979 to 1986,

Coaching Committee Regional Chairman 1982 to 1986, Regional Development Advisory Panel Chairman 1981 to 1985, National Co-ordinating Committee Chairman (South West) 1985 to 1990, Women's Committee 1990 to 1991, Veterans' Development Committee 1991 to 1998, National Sports Council liaison 1991 to 2003, Veterans' Liaison Panel 1991 to 1994, Membership Committee 1994 to 1998, Facilities Panel 1994 to 2003, Liaison Officer to BTTAD 1994 to 2003, Representative to ESTTA 1994 to 2003, former Chairman/Organiser of the Women's/Veterans' British League and former Organiser of the Woolwich Junior British League. Qualified as County Umpire in July 1977 and as a Coach in 1970.

Avon County TTA: Umpires Secretary 1988 to 2013, Vice-Chairman 1999 to 2013.

Rob Sinclair

General Secretary (Updated December 19, 2013)

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